

# Samanary

Monday, April 19, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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So far, the global response to COVID19 is a test we have failed

**Detailed News On Page-01** 

**India** should restore special status of IIOJK

**Detailed News On Page-07** 



Leo Messi fires Barcelona to win the Copa del Rey

**Detailed News On Page-06** 



## SEHR IFTAR

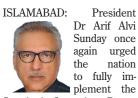
FAISALABAD LAHORE 04:45 am 06:57 pm SARGODHA 04:07 am 06:42 pm FIQA JAFARIA

CITY SEHR IFTAR 03:52 am 06:53 pm 03:57 am 06:50 pm 03:52 am 06:45 pm KARACHI 04:35 am 07:07 pm SARGODHA 03:57 am 06:52 pm

### **Briefs**

### **President** urges to follow SOPs

**DNA** 

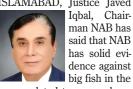


plement the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as the country witnessed a sharp spike in coronavirus cases in a single day. On his twitter handle, the president said the country had reported 6127 new Covid-19 cases during the last 24 hours which was close to peak figures during the 1st wave of the pandemic on June 13. He stressed upon the people to implement SOPs to contain its further spread. "6127 new Covid-19 cases reported yesterday, close to the peak in the 1st wave of 6825 on Jun 13. So PLEASE implement SOPs. 1- Wear Masks 2- Implement social distancing in bazaars and all activities 3- Ensure 3ft distance in masjid prayers. Wash hands frequently," he posted.

### Prestige. repute of NAB increased

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD, Justice Javed



cases related to money laundering, fake accounts, misuse of authority, assets beyond known sources and cheating the public at large. NAB has filed 1269 corruption cases having an accumulative value of Rs 950 billion which are subjudice in the learned accountability courts. Chairman NAB said that NAB during 2020 has recovered Rs 321.4829 billion from corrupt elements which is a record achievement in only one year as compared to other years which shows commitment and dedication of NAB officers towards performance of their national responsibilities in eradication of corrup-

### Inside..

tion from the country

FDA to follow comprehensive strategy for public relief - Page 02

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Pakistan reaches deal for China's CoronaVac vaccine - Page 08

### Multiple deaths in banned TLP, police clashes

Police says the violence occurred after "miscreants" – an apparent reference to TLP workers – allegedly attacked a police station and abducted the DSP

Classes from grades 9-12

Rest of the classes to start after Eid; strict

virus SOPs to be followed: Shafqat Mahmood

Highest single day

death toll in 2021

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Amid the deteriorating coronavirus situ-

ation. Pakistan has recorded 149 new deaths on Satur-

day – the second-highest coronavirus fatalities since the

pandemic emerged last year. This also makes it the high-

est number of coronavirus deaths reported this year, a

worrying sign of the third wave of the coronavirus is

intensifying across the country. The country's highest

death toll from the virus till date was recorded on June

19, 2020 when 153 people passed due to the virus. As

per the official statistics issued by National Command

and Operation Centre (NCOC), 6,127 new positive cas-

es have been reported during the past 24 hours after

ber.

exams this semester can do

so in October and Novem-

"Meeting was also informed

that Cambridge has decided

not to give teacher assessed

grades this year therefore

those not taking exams

will take them in the next

cycle Oct/Nov. Cambridge

also assured that all SOPs

will be strictly followed," he

71,836 tests were conducted across the country.

Board exams," he tweeted.

As the minister had an-

nounced earlier, exams for

classes 9-12 will take place

according to the new dates

announced by boards. He

said this will not begin be-

fore the fourth week of May.

Mehmood said Cambridge

had announced it will not

give teacher assessment

grades this year hence

those not appearing for the

#### BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Clashes erupted in Lahore between police and workers of banned Tehreek e Labaik Pakistan. Police said the violence occurred after "miscreants" - an apparent reference to TLP workers - allegedly attacked a police station and abducted the DSP, adding that it acted only in "self-defence". An operation against the TLP activists is still underway. "Today in the early morning, miscreants attacked Nawankot Police Station where Rangers and Police officers were trapped inside the police station and DSP Nawankot kidnapped and taken to the markaz," the Punjab police said in a statement, referring to the TLP headquarters.

It added that "at least one oil tanker with 50,000 litres of petrol has been taken by the miscreants to the markaz."According to the statement, the miscreants were armed and attacked Rangers/police with petrol bombs."Police and Rangers pushed them back and took back the possession of the police station," it said, adding that police did not plan or conduct any operation against the mosque or the madressah. "The action, if any, was in self-defence and to protect public property."

On Thursday, a notification declaring TLP as a proscribed organisation was issued by the Ministry of Interior shortly after the federal cabinet approved a summary to ban the party.

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Federal Ed-

ucation Minister Shafqat

Mehmood on Sunday an-

nounced important de-

cisions taken during a

meeting of the health and

education ministers of all

provinces. The minister

took to Twitter to share

the decisions taken during

a meeting of the health

and education ministers of

all four provinces. He an-

nounced decisions taken

during the special meeting

The minister said classes

of grades 9-12 will begin in

affected districts in a stag-

gered manner so students

can prepare for their up-

"A special meeting of Health

and Education Ministers of

all provinces and AJK/GB

was held today. The follow-

ing decisions were taken

with complete consensus. 1)

Classes 9 to 12 would com-

mence in affected districts

in a staggered manner to

allow students to prepare for

coming board exams.

with consensus.

### 'No negotiations underway with TLP

A sister publication of **CENTRELINE & DNA News Agency** 

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Sunday said the government was not negotiating with the outlawed Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) and no one would be allowed to challenge the writ of the government. "No negotiation process is underway with the TLP. We have been trying to reach a consensus with them for the past two months but they are not ready to compromise on their demands," he said while talking to media here on Sunday.

He explained when an organisation was proscribed, bank accounts and identity cards of its stakeholders were blocked and their movement was restricted. Regarding blockage of roads and highways across the country by the supporters of the proscribed organization, the minister said 192 locations across the country had been sealed by the banned outfit, out of which 191 had been cleared. "The situation is a bit tense at Yateem Khana Chowk in Lahore where the Jamia Masjid Rahmatul Lil Alameen is located," he said adding, "Currently, all roads including the GT Road and the Murree Expressway are open for traffic".

## DNA

Iaishankar He said begin in staggered manner

> be invited, he said. The event would highlight the role played by the Pakistani community in the progress and prosperity of UAE, he said adding, he would invite Prime Minister Imran Khan to the mega event. Qureshi said Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates would complete their

### Vaccination of 50 above citizens from Wednesday

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to start vaccination of people in the age group of 50 to 59

**KARACHI:** Prime Minister Imran Khan visits under construction Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital. - DNA

### 'My visit to strengthen UAE, Pak relations'

DUBAI: Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Sunday said his visit to United Arab Emirates would strengthen existing bilateral ties of both the countries. Speaking at a press conference here, he said that he would hold a meeting with the Foreign Minister of UAE (United Arab Emirates) on Monday. He clarified that he had no meeting scheduled with the Foreign Minister of India event would be organised by Pakistan in Sharjah in October this year to showcase the hidden treasures of Pakistan. At the event, professionals among the Pakistani community in UAE would

50 years long friendship.

STAFF REPORT

from Wednesday.

The decision to this effect was taken at a meeting of National Command and Operation Center chaired by Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar in Islamabad.

Asad Umar once again asked the people to get them reg-

### **UNSC** welcomes Saudi initiative

The initiative provides for a nationwide ceasefire, reopening of Sanaa International Airport and allowing fuel and food imports through the port of Hodeidah

**News Desk** NEW YORK: The UN Secu-

rity Council has welcomed

tion to the crisis.

### Saudia, Iran hold secret talks over Yemen

Saudi Arabia's peace initi- BAGHDAD: Senior Saudi and Iranian officials have held cial Envoy and negotiate ative launched last month direct talks in an effort to repair relations between the without preconditions, for to end the Yemeni conflict two countries, four years after cutting off diplomatic ties, an and reach a political solu- the Financial Times reported on Sunday.

The first round of talks took place in Baghdad on April a comprehensive political In a press statement 9, included discussions about attacks on Saudi Arabia by settlement, in accordance released on Friday, the Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi group, and was positive, the with the relevant UN Secucouncil said the Saudi FT reported, citing officials briefed on the discussions. initiative is in line with The report also cited a senior Saudi official, however, de- The council also urged the the UN Special Envoy for nying that any talks had taken place.

Yemen Martin Griffiths' The two regional rivals severed ties in 2016 over Riyadh's en and the country's youth peace proposal, Saudi execution of Shi'ite Muslim cleric, Sheikh Nimr al-Nimr, in talks in accordance with Press Agency reported. an outspoken opponent of the ruling Al Saudi family. The initiative provides for The talks took place as Washington and Tehran try to lying its members' commita nationwide ceasefire, reo- revive a 2015 nuclear accord, which Riyadh has objected ment to the sovereignty and pening of Sanaa Internation- to. The US is also pressing for an end to the ongoing con- territorial unity of Yemen. al Airport and allowing fuel flict in Yemen, which is seen in the region as a proxy war and food imports through between Saudi Arabia and Iran. - DNA

the port of Hodeidah. The statement added the council called on all Yemeni parties to constructively engage with the UN Speimmediate ceasefire throughout the country and rity Council resolutions.

participation of Yemeni womrelevant resolutions, under-

Continued on Page 06

### Qureshi, Afghan FM discuss peace process

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Afghan counterpart Mohammad Hanif Atmar, in a telephonic conversation, discussed the ongoing Afghan peace process.

Foreign minister Qureshi has been in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on a three-day official visit. During the telephonic conversation, foreign minister Qureshi reiterated that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was in the interests of Pakistan, a press release said. He said Pakistan shared all the peaceful efforts made for peace and stability in the region including Afghanistan and desired end to violent incidents in the country.

The foreign minister further reiterated



that Pakistan would continue its consistent reconciliation efforts for peace and stability in Afghanistan. He expressed the hope that under Istanbul Process, the Doha Agreement would be helpful in ensuring durable peace in Afghanistan. Afghan foreign minister appreciated diplomatic,

Continued on Page 06

### Covid death toll passes 3m

PARIS: The global Covid-19 death toll passed three million on Saturday as the pandemic continues to speed up despite vaccination campaigns, leading countries like India to impose new lockdowns to fight spiralling infection numbers. It is the latest grim milestone after the novel coronavirus surfaced in central China in December 2019 and went on to infect more than 139 million people, leaving billions more under crippling lockdowns and ravaging the global economy. An average of more than 12,000 deaths were recorded globally every day in the past week, shooting the overall toll past three million at around 0830 GMT on Saturday, according to an AFP tally

For comparison, three million people is more than the population of Jamaica or Armenia, and three times the death toll of the Iran-Iraq war which raged from 1980-1988. And the pandemic is showing no sign of slowing down: the 829,596 new infections reported worldwide on Friday is the highest number yet, according to AFP's tally. The daily average of 731,000 cases registered over the last week is also close to being a record. India's capital New Delhi went into a weekend lockdown Saturday as the world's second-most populous nation recorded 234,000 new cases and 1,341 deaths. - AFP



Monday, April 19, 2021

Court verdicts must not be misjudged

**DNA** 

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister

(SAPM) on Political Com-

munication Dr Shahbaz Gill

on Sunday said they always

paid respect to the courts

with honoring its decisions

and Pakistan Tehreek-e-In-

saf has no influence on the

He said Pakistan Mulsim

League-Nawaz (PML-N)

was telling lies on the

matter of Shahbaz Sharif's

bail, adding, the court de-

cisions must not be misin-

Addressing a press confer-

ence along with Syed Ali

Shahbaz Gill said Maryam

Aurangzeb's concerns about

the decision of granting bail

to Shahbaz Sharif was aimed

to give impression about the

He said news about the

bail of Shahbaz Sharif was

released through TV chan-

nels of their choice. He said

the PML-N leaders were

exposed before everyone

through telling lies and now

they were making hue and

cries over "injustice" with

He said PTI has always re-

spected the judiciary and its

decisions and it has no influ-

Shahbaz Gill said total

assets of Shahbaz Sharif

were Rs 2.1 million in 1990

which were increased to

Rs 25 million in 1998 and

further increased to Rs

seven billion from 2008 to

Similarly, he said that the

total assets of Hamza Shahbaz were amounting to Rs

10 million in 2001 which

was touching the figure of

Rs 530 million today and

instead of the father, all

the amounts were trans-

ferred to the son's accounts

through Telegraphic Trans-

He said that a heavy amount

was transferred in the ac-

count of Hamza Shahbaz

through 23 TTs and an

amount of Rs 1.5 billion was

transferred in the account

of Salman Shahbaz through

same way.

Shahbaz Sharif.

ence on it.

change in the decision.

Bukhari Advocate here,

terpreted.

### patients die

**DNA** 

FAISALABAD: As many as nine more patients died of the COVID-19 in the district, while 206 persons tested positive during the last 24 hours.

A spokesperson for the health department said on Sunday the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 741 in the

He said that 1,655 tests for coronavirus were conducted in public and private sectors labs during the same period. He said that so far 10,955 patients had recovered from the disease while total active cases in Faisalabad reached 4,549. He said that 305 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital and 106 at the DHQ Hospital for COVID-19 patients.

At present, 243 patients, including 143 confirmed ones, were under treatment at the Allied Hospital while 72, including 20 confirmed, were admitted to DHQ Hospital. He further said that 2,941 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district.

### 27 shopkeepers fined in Hyderabad

**DNA** 

HYDERABAD: The district administration on Sunday imposed fine of rupees 216000 against 27 shopkeepers for overcharging rates fixed by the government in different talukas of Hyderabad district.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Fuad Ghaffar Soomro, the Assistant Commissioners and Mukhtiarkar of City, Latifabad, Qasimabad and Hyderabad Rural visited different markets for checking prices on fifth day of holy month of Ramzan.

The officers of district administration also visited 82 shops for checking prices and found 27 shop owners charging prices higher than the fixed by local adminis-

According to official statement, in City taluka 04 shops out of 20 were fined 42000, in Latifabad 09 shops out of 22 were fined for 150000, in Qasimabad 10 shops out of 21 were fined 50,000 while four shops out of 19 were fined 2000 in taluka Hyderabad rural for charging higher rates against approved prices.

The officials of district administration also issued warming to 14 shopkeepers to refrain from charging higher prices of essential commodities failing which strict action would be taken against them.

#### 733 corona patients recovered in Punjab

**DNA** 

LAHORE: As many as 733 coronavirus patients recovered on Sunday in the last 24 hours, reported by the Health department.

According to the data shared by the health department, 181,968 coronavirus patients had recovered so far in 200 public sector hospitals being run under the control of Specialized and Primary & Secondary Healthcare departments across the province.

Barrister Nabeel Ahmed Awan, Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department said while talking to media that 6513 beds were reserved in all government owned hospitals for coronavirus patients, out of which 4149 beds were unoccupied. Likewise, 1607 beds were reserved in government hospitals of the provincial metropolis and 786 beds were vacant so far, he added. The Secretary SHC&MED said that in view of the surging coronavirus pandemic, the Specialized Healthcare Department had arranged 3103 beds in isolation wards of all government hospitals in the province, out of which, 2378 beds were vacant.

However, 446 beds for coronavirus patients were reserved in isolation wards set up in the government hospitals of Lahore and 309 beds were unoccupied, he added.

## Briefs Nine more COVID-19 Inatients die FDA to follow comprehensive strategy for public relief

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Director General (DG) Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Dr. Faisal Azeem said that a comprehensive strategy would be followed for public relief and urban development.

Addressing an introductory

meeting here on Sunday, he said that suggestions of the FDA governing body members and local political leadership would be welcomed for executing development projects. He said that their suggestion and proposals were important for decision making. He expressed his determination in completion of development schemes and said that strict monitoring would be carried out for ensuring use of quality material in development works.

He said that applications re-



Markaz would be redressed on priority and FDA one window counter would take appropriate measures to facilitate of the visitors. He said that record of properties was being digitalized and smart cards would be issued to owners of the properties which would help to eliminate the chances of any fraud and forgery.

He said that crackdown against illegal housing be brought in the orbit of relevant law completely. He informed the TEPA would be made functional to implement the traffic management plan with the cooperation of local political leadership. He hoped that the general meeting of governing body would

be convened shortly and

necessary decisions would

Lateef Nazar, Additional Director General FDA Amer Aziz. Chief Engineer Shahid Mehmood, Directors Junaid Hasan, Asma Mohsin, Hasan Zaheet, Deputy Director Admin Yasir Ijaz Chattha and other officers were also present in the meeting in addition to governing body members including MPA Firdous Rai,

Vice Chairman WASA Sh. Shahid Javed, Ch Javed Sharif, Majid Husain, Mian Yasir Anwar, Syed Sultan Azam and Ch Nasir Mehmood.

DC visits fruit & vegetable market

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Ali has visited the fruit & vegetable market Sadhar today and witnessed the auction process there.

He said that bidding process of fruits and vegetables in the vegetable markets is being monitored regularly so that the prices can be kept stable.

He reviewed the bids for tomatoes, lemons, garlic, onions, green chilli, apples, bananas and other commodities and directed the officials of market committee to continue monitoring of bidding process so that the price of items could not witness any unnecessary increase. Rate list should be issued immediately after auction process, he added. Deputy Commissioner also directed the assistant commissioners to visit the vegetable market in the tehsils regularly.

Commissioner Assistant (AC) Sadar Umar Magbool, Extra Assistant Director Agriculture Muhammad Usman and other officers of the Market Committee were also present on the occasion.

### teams

team of the District Health Officer visited the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and collected swab samples of the entire staff for their PCR tests (Covid-19) in the committee room of the

As many as 51 samples were collected. Among these also include internees and other officials of the different departments manning desks of their respective depart ments at FCCI. These samples were collected on this special request of the Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed President FCCI. He said that FCCI staff is working like a family and we give top priority to their health

He said that SOP's are being strictly followed in FCCI Complex to keep its staff safe from corona while the staff is also using face masks and maintaining mandatory so cial distancing with each other as well as with the clients visiting the FCCI. – **DNA** 

### **DHO**

### visits FCCI

FAISALABAD: A special

### 590 hoarded sugar bags seized

LAHORE: The city district administration, backed by the police, raided godowns across the provincial capital on Sunday and seized

590 sugar bags. According to a spokesperson for the district administration, Assistant Commissioner Shalimar Mansoor Ahmed Qazi carried out an operation against profiteers in Garhi Shahu area and seized 360 sugar bags of 50-kg each. Assistant Commissioner City Faizan Ahmed seized 230 bags in Begum Kot.

The assistant commissioner warned the hoarders that action was under way in every tehsil of the city without any discrimination and all hoarded stocks would be seized by the administration.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Model Town Ibrahim Arbab imposed Rs 60,000 fine over selling sugar on high rates in ANF Mart Kahna.

He directed shopkeepers to sell sugar on the government rates and warned that overcharging would not be tolerated. - APP

### RPO reviews security arrangements

### **DNA**

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Imran Ahmar Sunday visited different areas of Rawalpindi to review the security arrangements, informed police spokesman.

SSP Operations Rana Shoaib Mehmood, SP CIA Tariq Mehboob and other senior police officers were also present.

SSP Operations Shoaib Mehmood briefed RPO Imran Ahmar about security arrangements put on

place. RPO expressed satisfaction over the security arrangements and directed to enhance security fur-

He said that it prime duty of police to protect the lives and properties of public.

He made it clear that strict

action would be taken who were found negligent in performing their duties.



### LCCI urge review of businesses closure schedule

### STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) along with the other chambers of commerce across Pakistan on Sunday called upon the government to reconsider closure of businesses by 6 pm and no business activities on Saturday and Sunday. Talking to media here, LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah

said that National Command Operations Center (NCOC) decided to close normal businesses by 6:00 pm during the month of Ramazan, but the business community was not satisfied with the decision and urged the government to reconsider the decision to save businesses from further losses. He said Ramazan was the month that increased the volume of business due to Eid, but shortening the timings for businesses would have an adverse effect on business activities. He said that reduced operational hours for businesses would increase the frequency of customers in the markets which would lead to further spread of Covid-19. He emphasized that the government should give a second thought to this decision and allow businesses to remain open until 10 - 12 am in Ramazan. He further said that before taking any decision that has a direct impact on the business class, the chambers of commerce and business representative bodies should be taken into confidence as unilateral decisions lead to detrimental consequences for business and economy.

Mian Tariq Misbah said that the third wave of coronavirus was all over the world but in nearly all countries, the businesses were operating with SOPs at normal timings. He said that reducing hours for business activities for a country like Pakistan would certainly be very harmful for the economy. He said that the previous lockdowns had already taken its toll on the business community pushing many businesses to the verge of closure while thousands of workers were rendered jobless.

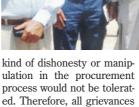
## Commissioner inaugurates wheat procurement drive

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Sagib Mannan along with Deputy Commissioner (DC) Faisalabad Muhammad Ali has inaugurated the wheat procurement drive by distributing Bardana (bags) among the farmers at Wheat Procurement Center

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Revenue Fazale-Rabbi Cheema, District Tanveer Food Controller Ahmed and other officers of Food Department were also present on the occasion.

Commissioner said that administration would successfully complete this important mission of wheat procurement. He said that entire admin machinery has been activated fully to monitor the wheat procurement drive so that necessary facilities could be provided to the farmers as Punjab government is taking serious steps for the service and welfare of farming community. He warned the staff of wheat procurement drive that any



dressed immediately. He said that apart from fair and transparent distribution of Bardana, regular procurement of wheat, easy payment of price and arrangements for the comfort of farmers at the centers are an important part of the policy of the government. Therefore, full attention is being paid to the transparency and provision of all possible facilities to the

of the farmers should be ad-

farmers. Deputy Commissioner Mu-

hammad Ali said that 11

centers have been set up in the district for procurement of wheat. He said that applications are being received manually and online for Bardana and on daily basis 4% Bardana is being distributed.

The wheat procurement centers have been set up at Sarshmeer, Darul Ehsan, Jaranwala City, Bachiana, Rodala Road, Jhok Ditta, Tandlianwala City, Kanjwani, Mamonkanjan and Sammundari where all arrangements are being monitored for the convenience of the farmers, he added. 1259 malls, schools sealed

malls, restaurants, marriage halls and private schools on charge of violation of anti-coronavirus SOPs and lockdown in the district since March 5 this year. Deputy Commissioner Mu-

The district administration

has sealed 1,259 shopping

hammad Ali said on Sunday that anti-coronavirus SOPs were being implemented in true spirit in the district by taking strict action against violators. He said that 840 shopping

malls, 290 restaurants, 44 marriage halls, 88 private schools were sealed during this period.

#### **Quality education mission of govt: CM Buzdar** quality education for every child. Under the Clean and Green Pun-

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that quality education for all is the vision and mission of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government and Daanish Schools were providing opportunities to the students for expressing their

Presiding over the 33rd meeting of Punjab Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence Authority at CM's office on Sunday, he expressed satisfaction that corona standard operating procedures (SOPs) were being thoroughly ensured in Daanish Schools.

The chief minister termed the performance of Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence satisfactory and said that they were imparting quality education to the poor but intelligent children in the backward areas. He said that a state-of-the-art boarding school would be set up in Kohe-Suleiman where quality education with boarding and lodging boys and girls students. Provincial Minister for Educa-

tion Murad Raas said that the government was making serious efforts to bring the standard of education in government schools at par with private schools. Chairperson Daanish

School Authority Samira Ahmed said that Daanish Schools and Centres of Excellence Authority was providing opportunities of

The meeting was informed that new Daanish Schools in Tandlianwala and Hasilpur would start soon. The meeting was informed that the historic building of Lady Anderson School in Sialkot had been restored in its original condition. Thirty-six students of Daanish School got admission to medical colleges, and 250 students to engineering universities on merit.

iab, 40,000 more saplings would be planted in Daanish schools. Member Punjab Assembly Khadija Omar, Secretary Schools Education and other officials were also present. EARLIER Punjab Chief Minister

Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that Rehmatul-lil-Alameen scholarships programme for poor and intelligent students of Punjab was being carried out successful-



According to a handout issued here on Sunday, he said that the purpose of the scholarship programme was to provide financial support to the deserving students. The government was determined to breach the gulf of economic disparity between privileged and impecunious strata of society, according to the teachings of Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Usman Buzdar said that under the Rehmatul-lil-Alameen scholarships programme, the government would ensure transparent and justified distribution of stipends. He said that students could apply for scholarships at the PITB from their homes. Intermediate Rehmatul-lil-Alameen scholarships would be awarded on the basis of matriculation results, whereas undergraduate scholarships would be given on the basis of intermediate results. He said that 14,000 intermediate scholarships and 891 undergraduate scholarships would be distributed among the students of public colleges and universities.

### Briefs

### **Smart** lockdown imposed in 10 areas of Rawalpindi

SHAHEEN HANIF

RAWALPINDI: Amid the steep rise in corona virus cases, at least ten areas in Rawalpindi have been put under smart lockdown.

According to the notification issued by the local administration, the lockdown has been imposed in Tabarak Line, Adiala Road, Judicial Apartments Civil Line, Kashmir House Mundra, Mohalla Gulshan, Kamalabad street no 3, Peshawar Road line number 5, Wah Cant, Dhok Chanial, Gojjar Khan, Hashmi Colony and other localities.

The lockdown will remain intact in the above-said localities of Rawalpindi until April 27. Punjab remains the worst-hit province in terms of deaths followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Till now 7,430 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab 4,551 in Sindh, 2,867 in KP, 636 in Islamabad, 433 in Azad Kashmir, 223 in Balochistan, and 103 in GB. Meanwhile, the country has reported 149 more deaths from corona virus, making it the country's highest death toll in a single day since June 29 last year while the positivity rate of infections was recorded at

### **IESCO Chief** for smooth power supply

8.52 per cent.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive IESCO, Ch. Abdul Razzaq said that during the Holy month of Ramzan it is our professional as well as religious responsibility to ensure continuity of Power Supply round the clock. To fulfill these commitments our all formations are mobilized. He said that before Ramzan monitoring cells were established at Sub Division, Division, Circle and Head Office levels and teams are monitor ing Power transmission and redressal of customers' complaints round the clock. Chief said that being a custodian of IESCO he is personally moni-

toring all field activities. He said that before Ramzan all weak transformers were replaced due to which transformers damaged cases due to over loading have been minimized. IESCO Chief Committed that we will continue the provision of best services to our valued customers and will prove our self a customer's friendly company. IESCO Chief said that for registration of customer complaints IESCO help line number 118 and complaint and monitoring cell numbers 051-9252933-6 are available round the clock.

### CTO directs officials to maintain traffic flow

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, Rai Mazhar Iqbal has directed the traffic wardens and field officers to take strict action against double and wrong parking of vehicles which create hurdles in smooth flow of traffic on city roads. According to a City Traffic Police spokesman, all the field officers including deputy superintendents of police (DSPs) and Inspectors had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against double parking, wrong parking and oneway violators particularly in congested areas to ensure smooth flow of traffic.

He urged the motorists not to park vehicles in wrong way on roads which causes inconvenience for other road users. Enhanced number of Traffic Wardens had been deployed at busy roads to clear wrong parking while lifters were also available to lift vehicles and motorcycles parked in a wrong way, he added. He said, wrong parking which was one of main cause of traffic mess on the roads would not be tolerated, adding, the vehicles and motorcycles found parked out of parking area would be impounded. – APP

### Masood lauds UN report on HR situation in IIOJK

"Voices for freedom won't be muzzled; staged encounters won't be masked by cutting off information. Truth is out; will be out. Don't coerce media persons into not reporting on these crimes. Such restrictions betray insecurity and panic," Khan said

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: While welcoming a letter written by the UN human rights experts to Indian government regarding human rights situation in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), AJK President Sardar Masood Khan said that the situation is far worse than the human rights violations mentioned in the letter.

He said that the UN rapporteurs have confined their report to mentioning only the violation of some of the rights of Muslims and other minorities, while we believe that the Modi government of India is engaged in hatch-

**O'z**bekiston

**Pokiston** 

ing conspiracies against the very existence of Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir. They want to turn the Muslim majority into a minority and make the territory of Kashmir a complete Hindu state. "India is trying to reduce the occupied state of Jammu and Kashmir to a political nonentity, reinforce religious and colonial othering of its people and finally strip off their defenses. Well, Kashmiris will never cease defending themselves," the president said.

Five United Nations human rights experts, through a letter to the Indian government, have voiced their concern over India's decision to revoke Kashmir's special status and enact laws that could

curtail the political participation of Muslims and other minorities. The special rapporteurs were for minority issues, promotion, and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression; the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and association; contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance; and the special rapporteur on freedom of religion or belief. President Masood strongly condemned the latest restrictions imposed by the Indian government on Kashmir based journalists for reporting facts about the incidents of violence in IOJK, he appealed to the global journalist's bodies to raise their

Embassy of the Republ

Uzbekistan in Pakis

voice against the unjustified restrictions on journalists and media outlets in IOJK.

"Voices for freedom won't be muzzled; staged encounters won't be masked by cutting off information. Truth is out; will be out. Don't coerce media persons into not reporting on these crimes. Such restrictions betray insecurity and panic," Khan said.

He said restrictions on independent reporting by journalists as an attempt by the Delhi government to infringe on human rights and freedom of expression. Sardar Masood added that journalists in Occupied Kashmir would never accept and endorse the Indian government's illegal activities.

Sardar Masood Khan further said that now the situation in IOJK had reached the point that Indian military and para-military troops stationed in Kashmir have started disobeying the illegal orders. The latest example of which is the female police officer who said that this is my Kashmir and I cannot be a part of the persecution against the people here. The female police officer's bold statement cost lost her job.

"The day is not far when cops and soldiers in Kashmir will start asking themselves how they would redeem their souls if they continue to be part of these killing sprees at the behest of fascists of a distant, foreign land," the state President concluded.

PHA to grow

Miyawaki forests

on all vacant lands

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: Vice Chairman Parks and Horticulture

Authority Rawalpindi Malik Abid Hussain has said that

PHA has started growing of Miyawaki forests on all avail-

able vacant pieces of land in and around the government

schools, colleges and other buildings in different parts of

the city. Reducing environmental pollution and helping to

make Prime Minister Imran Khan's "Ten Billion Tree Tsu-

nami" a success, these forests will grow ten times faster

than ordinarily planted trees. He said this while reviewing

the work being done for the promotion of Miyawaki forests

in different schools including Islamia Boys High School Liaqatabad, Government Boys High School Saidpur Road

and others on Sunday morning. He said that under the

guidance and directions of PHA Chairman Asif Mahmood, we are working with full attention and hard work. "No gov-

ernment-owned piece of land owned by schools, colleges

and other departments in the city will be left uncultivated,

our teams are working diligently to promote the Miyawaki

Forest with making ensure that our efforts bring full fruit of

hard work", he added. He said that for this purpose, the staff

of PHA and the responsible persons of the concerned govt

agencies would take full care of the plants and cultivate them.

### Commissioner inspects various sections of RRP

IBRAR KHAN

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Syed Gulzar Hussain Shah visited Ring Road project site to inspect various sections of the project.

Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority Capt. (R) Abdul Sattar Isani and Dy Project Director Abdullah were also present on the occasion and briefed commissioner on the project progress. Commissioner Rawalpindi division emphasized that project planning and execution was streamlined and timelines were met. The commissioner said that the officers and personnel working on the Ring Road project should complete the set targets as per the deadline. Strict action would be taken against those, who were using delaying tactics, negligence and incompetence, he added. He said that the project was very important for the people which would have a positive impact on the economic and civic life of the residents.

### Dumping station

ing garbage transportation Management tablished at Liaquat Bagh.

### threating lives RAWALPINDI: The dump-

station of Rawalpindi Waste (RWMC) Albayrak giving bad and stinking smell es-The pedestrians, motorists on Murree Road particularly have to face bad smell while driving.The people and offices in Arya Mohallah, Gawalmandi, Raja Bazaar, Chamanzar, Mareer Chowk, Moti Mehal, College Road, China Market, Rawalpindi Press Club (RPC) Water and Sanitation Agency, Rawalpindi Development Authority, Punjab Horticulture Authority, Rescue 15, Sports Complex, National College of Arts (NCA), TMA and several other offices have to face unbearable smell.

A Journalist Sajid Bangial told APP that despite repeated complaints and protests the civic body has not moved an inch to settle the issue, fearing that this would spread multiple diseases and safe haven for the mosquitoes and spreading of dengue fever, he added. Another Complainant Waheed Anjum pointed out that the station should immediately transfer as the corona third wave was most dangerous, the government was taking solid steps to contain corona virus. He said that no one can deny the importance of cleanliness, he stressed the need to keep the surroundings clean to avoid the diseases. - APP

### Profiteers to make quick buck in Ramzan

ISLAMABAD: The prices of daily use items have sky rocketed as profiteers, racketeers and extortionists have started their annual looting season of people by creating artificial price hike in local markets of twin cities with the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak. The traders are brazenly defying the official price list without any fear besides fleecing the people with both hands by openly flouting official rate lists, issued daily by local administration ceremoniously.

The rising trend in prices of essential items have multiplied the miseries of fixed income people, besides taking away several commodities off the Iftar menu as racketeers have made all sorts of arrangements to loot already inflation-hit middle and lower middle class. A survey of several markets of federal capital including Aabpara market, Super market, Sitara market, Bhara Kahu, PWD, Tench Bhatta, Saddar, Lalkurti, Commercial Market and several other markets of the twin cities reveals that banana is available at Rs 150 to Rs 400 per dozen while per kg rate of guava is over Rs 200. - APP



## worth millions of rupees recovered

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of police (Operations) Islamabad Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer said that Islamabad police accelerated its efforts against criminals and arrested 433 outlaws during the last two weeks with huge recovery of looted items worth 23.28 million, a police spokesman said. He said that, following directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman and

Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations) Afzaal Ahmad Kausar, renewed efforts were made and police achieved re-

markable success. SSP (Operations) told that, 67 culprits were arrested involved in dacoity. robbery, car/motorcycle theft with recovery worth 17.62 million while 45 absconders were held during the same period. Complete challans of 292 cases were sent to concerned apex courts, he added.

Syed Mustafa Tanweer further said that ICT Police had launched a special campaign against drug sellers/bootleggers for elimination of this menace from Capital.

During this campaign Islamabad Police have nabbed 30 accused and recovered 14.745 kilogram hashish, 832 gram heroin,560 gram ice, 86 gram cocaine, 172 wine bottles from them. 27 accused were also held for having illegal weapons and recovered 24 pistols.02 Kalashnikovs, 02 guns, 02 daggers and 127 rounds from them, the SSP maintained.

The SSP emphasized that, besides the law and order situation in the Capital. police accelerated their efforts against criminals and 264 accused involved in crimes of different nature were also arrested.

Dr. Sved Mustafa Tanveer reiterated that criminal elements would not be spared and those involved in such acts would have to face action as per law.

He has also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with Islamabad in curbing activities of such elements.

### Psychiatrist caught on camera sexually exploiting female Raja Pervaiz

ISLAMABAD: A renowned psychiatrist in Islamabad has been exposed after he was caught on camera allegedly sexually exploiting his female patient during the treatment, media reported on Saturday. The Islamabad psychiatrist was exposed by a team of media news programme, Sar-e-Aam, that carried out a sting operation in which a woman was sent to the doctor as a patient suffering from mental issues. The woman secretly filmed the entire conversation with the health professional, showing how he was asking for a sexual favour from the planted patient.

The Sar-e-Aam host later approached the doctor with the video evidence, however, instead of admitting his guilt, the doctor started giving lame excuses to defend his visible sexual offers to the patient. After seeing the patient accompanying the media team, the doctor claimed that she had visited him four times and was leveling baseless allegations against him to tarnish his image. "I have neither made any sexual offers to her nor committed any sexual act with her," the psychiatrist said despite his conversation during the video in which he could be heard making sexual offers while terming them a bid to lower the stress level.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed visiting Ramzan Bazaar and talking to a vendor about the current rates of goods. - DNA

### **Around 2m citizens applied for registration in NPHP**

"The possession of 1,508 apartments and housing units completed in collaboration with WWF under NPHP, has been handed over to the applicants," a Ministry of Housing official told media

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Around 2,003,940 citizens have applied for the registration in 'Naya Pakistan Housing Programme' (NPHP) during Phase-I and II, out of which 17,99,533 are eligible.

"The possession of 1,508 apartments and housing units completed in collaboration with Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) under NPHP, has been handed over to the applicants," a Ministry of Housing

official told media. He said, the ministry was taking various steps to facilitate low income people of the country by restarting stalled schemes, constructing new apartments worth Rs 109 billion.

The official said the ministry revived some stalled projects including Kurri Road Islamabad, Wafaqi Colony Lahore, G-10/2 Islamabad, I-16/3 Islamabad and I-12/1 Islamabad. These long stalled projects have been put on track and completed by the Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA), however, the work on I/16-3 and I/12-1 projects were in progress, he added.

Regarding the initiatives taken in Balochistan, he said Kuchlak road Quetta project was consisted of 1,350 housing units, which was inaugurated in 2019 on the land provided by Government of Balochistan. The official said the membership drive was executed and over 7,700 applications were received and automated balloting was also held successfully. The PC-I has been approved from

Development Working Party

(DWP) and endorsed by the PHA-F's Board of Directors. Bidding and tendering process has been completed, he said adding, letter of commencement to the contractors has been issued and work has also been started, he

added. Regarding initiatives taken in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, PHA Residencia Sorazai Project, Peshawar, he said land measuring 8500 kanal was provided by Government of KP and in first phase, PHA-F would construct 10.000 housing units.

About the awareness campaign of the projects, the official said all such updates regarding projects and schemes were available on the web page of Ministry of Housing and Works to keep stakeholders and allotees informed. Simultaneously, he said PHA and FGEHA have their social accounts on Facebook and Twitter, having complete information of the proiects. Moreover, projects campaigns were also being publicized through newspapers, seminars and media talks, he said.

### 6 thousand citizens facilitated through CFCs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has facilitated over 6,000 people through three 'Citizens Facilitation Centers' (CFCs) during the last month, a senior official said. Talking to media, he said all the CFCs had issued around 3,896 land fard, 984 domiciles, 546 international driving permits, 252 marriage certificates and 23 birth / death / burial Certificates in March.

He added that 328 arms' licenses were renewed while 46 firms were registered during the same period.

To a query, he said its facilitation centers were fully operation at various areas including G-11/4 sector of Islamabad, Tarlai and Bhara Kahu. The official said all the three facilitation centers had completely revamped and more services were added to serve the masses in an efficient manner.

He said at least 14 services were being provided at the centers that included issuance of domicile certificate, International driving permit, marriage / divorce certificates, no objection certificate for events, land fard, birth / death / burial certificate, renewal of arms license and others. The official added that earlier, the services were limited to only three.

Monday, April 19, 2021

### Briefs

### **PMNH** attracting visitors

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Museum of Natural History (PMNH) is attracting number of visitors particularly students from across the

The PMNH has four divisions namely Botanical Sciences, Earth Sciences, Zoological Sciences and Public Services.

An official of PMNH Ikram Raza told media, that the first three divisions were engaged in the collection, preservation, identification and research activities pertaining to plants, fossils and minerals and animals resources of Pakistan respectively, while the latter was responsible for mass education and popularization of the natural history through various displays, exhibits and dioramas.

He said the Virtual Orientation Gallery (VOG) was a creative achievement of PMNH in the field of information technology and consisted of informative software on the Natural History of Pakistan.

"VOG runs on a network of computer systems located in the PMNH Display Centre using touch screen systems for an interactive learning experience", he

### Islamabad reports 650 new cases in last 24 hours

#### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 650 new corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours.

According to an official of NCOC on Sunday, as many as 241 cases were reported on Saturday while 599 cases were reported on Friday.

He said so far 69,556 cases were reported from the federal capital and 636 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) while 56,399 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of the Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued surveillance of different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors.

They also started taking action on a violation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) related to the corona virus while visiting marriage halls, markets, and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration has been asked to seal shops, workshops, and restaurants on violation of

The inspection teams have been directed to impose fines on owners of different shops in case of SOPs viola-

### Artisans engaged in truck art training

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Arts (Lok Virsa) has been imparting training of truck art through its various short courses in collaboration with the master artisans of this skill.

Talking to APP Lok Virsa official Muhammad Iqbal said that traditional truck art technique was dying which needed concrete steps to preserve this form of art which also happens to be the source of income for a large number of people.

He said that due to COV-ID-19 pandemic our many scheduled programmes were postponed, adding that as situation will improve more training sessions would be arranged for the students of various schools. He said that earlier, special training programmes were organized in collaboration with Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and master artisans.

He said that Lok Virsa Exec utive Director was keen to impart training to maximum youth in all forms of arts

particularly Truck Art. In Pakistan, Truck Art originated in 1920s with the coming of Bedford Trucks, which were imported from

England. - APP

### Experts for measures to avert E-Cigarette health hazards

The nicotine is a gateway drug which greatly hampers the development of brain, especially in the young growing people

#### ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Efforts to raise awareness about the harmful effects of E-Cigarette need to be intensified to save people from health hazards resulted by this growing trend. The academicians and experts said this while sharing their views with the participants of the webinar 'E-Cigarettes - myths, realities and the policy, way forward in Pakistan' held by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI. While highlighting various

aspects of the issue, Dr. Javid Ahmed Khan from

Secretary

MoST visits

**COMSTECH** 

Headquarters

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Arshad

Ministry of Science and

Technology, visited COMS-

Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal. Choud-

hary, Coordinator General

COMSTECH welcomed the

Secretary at COMSTECH

Headquarters and gave

him a detailed presentation

on COMSTECH establish-

ment, objectives its past

programmes, current initi-

atives and future plans. Dr.

Choudhary informed the

Secretary about the achieve-

ments of COMSTECH by

mentioning many accom-

plished programmes and

Prof. Choudhary men-

tioned that COMSTECH

is only OIC organization

hosted by Pakistan which

functions under the chair-

manship of the President

of Pakistan while the Prime

Minister is the co-chair of

COMSTECH. COMSTECH

works for socio-economic

development of 57 OIC

member states through the

innlication of science and

technology.

projects of COMSTECH.

TECH Headquarters.

Secretary,

Mahmood,

Agha Khan University, said that more than thirty countries have already banned e-cigarette.

He said that the nicotine is a gateway drug which greatly hampers the development of brain, especially in the young growing people. The advertisement of e-cigarette needs to be banned as well as its use in the public spaces, he suggested.

Mr Khurram Hashmi, representing the Union Pakistan, informed the participants that the union is actively campaigning against unconventional e-cigarette and raising awareness about its neg-



ative implications for the health and environment. He added further that according to experts, such products are equally harmful for health, especially lungs and heart.

Therefore, a new legislation needs to crub the e-cigarette with the conventional cigarette.

Technical Advisor Bloomberg Project, SDPI, Mr. Waseem Janjua earlier highlighted that the E-cigarette companies spent \$ 1 billion annually on advertisements worldwide. He opined that

the E-cigarette contains more hazardous contents than the normal cigarette, but it is unfortunate that in Pakistan, e-cigarette is openly sold in the grocery stores of the posh areas. Mr. Muhammad Sabir,

Principal Economist at Social Policy Centre, was of view that a more evidence-based data is needed to determine the actual ratio of its use and thus, e-liquid or e-cigarette products could be clubbed with the conventional cigarettes in the tax net.

He suggested that a specialized survey should be conducted to determine the actual import share of

e-liquid in Pakistan. Head of Centre for Health Policy and Innovation, SDPI, Syed Ali Wasif Naqvi, while moderating the webinar, said that in the 21st century, the e-cigarette has been in use as an Alternate Nicotine Delivery Systems

but actually they serve as

the next generation tobac-

co products. He added that the economy of e-cigarette is expected to touch \$30 billion globally till 2022.

He proposed an immediate policy intervention in the field of e-cigarettes while evaluating its health hazards as well as loss to the national exchequer.

#### UNICEF supports TCV campaign in **ICT**

#### **DNA**

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has supported the Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV) campaign to immunize children against typhoid in Punjab and Islamabad Capital Territory through a campaign on social media, said the UNICEF, Pakistan Humanitarian Situation Report

According to the report, the exclusive hashtag #MissionTyphoid reached out to 30.7 million + unique users and created an impact of 93.4million + impressions. While UNICEF supported

an advocacy seminar on 'Protection and Promotion of Breastfeeding' at the President Office in the presence of the President, the First Lady, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health and UNICEF Representative in Pakistan, the report said.

### 1099 helpline a step for women rights

#### **DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) has emphasised to strengthen the grievances redressal mechanism to end violence and exploitation of women in Pakistan.

The 1099 helpline App was an important step towards strengthening these mechanisms for women rights, said an official Ministry of Human Rights.

Talking to media, he said that since the helpline was launched, it had received over 450,000 calls, 49 percent of which were related to Women's rights.

The App also provided an alternate and effective mechanism to launch and track complaints related to human rights violations.

He said the Ministry is committed to raise awareness among women and educate them on their fundamental

He said that 1099 Helpline App is already available for download on the Google Play store and the Helpline (1099) timings are changed. The new timings will be 9 am to 5 pm for week days only.

He said that the promoting women's rights and gender equality is essential for the European Union in its relations with third countries. "We therefore value the cooperation with the Government of Pakistan and the efforts to promote these

fundamental rights".

### Operation against illegal commercial buildings

### **DNA**

RAWALPINDI: On the direction of Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Capt. (R) Abdul Sattar Isani grand operations against illegal housing schemes and unauthorized constructions are underway in full swing to control illegal development of housing projects.

The Land Use and Building Control (LU&BC) Wing's staff including Incharge Demolition Squad and Building Inspector has sealed three plazas namely Prime Mall, Apex Building and Landmark Square in Top City Housing Scheme Islamabad.

The Director LU&BC Jam-

shaid Aftab said 14 notices and nine challans have been issued to the owners of illegal constructed buildings. LU&BC Wing has also received fees/charges of Rs4.8 million from various illegal commercial buildings last week in lieu of commercialization fee.

The owners of the above mentioned properties have violated approved plans / maps violating the Punjab Development of States Act 1976 and RDA Building and Zoning Regulations, 2020 and constructed illegal commercial buildings without approval and NOC. Under the directives of Di-

rector General RDA Capt. (R) Abdul Sattar Isani, the LU&BC Wing conducting crackdown against illegal, unauthorized commercial and residential construction activities including plazas, shops, schools and other illegal lands in RDA controlled area in Rawalpindi.



ISLAMABAD: Vice Chairman, Pakistan Security Agencies Association, Commander Asad Qurayshi presenting are also present during the event. – DNA

### PRGMEA supports PM's stand on trade with India

Garment industry fully supports the government to continue halting all types of trade with India until it revisit its unilateral and illegal measures of August 5, 2019 regarding held Kashmir

### KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Garments Readymade Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRG-MEA), supporting the Prime Minister's stand of 'no trade with India' under current circumstances, reiterated its demand of allowing duty-free import of fabric from across the world to overcome local shortage, as the fabric in Pakistan is being sold at \$2.5 against rate of \$1.5 in China.

PRGMEA north zone chief and vice chairman Adeeb Iqbal Shikeh, stressing the need for duty-free fabric import to encourage value-addition, suggested the government to review

hurdles hindering exports and to enable the textile sector to attain the exports targets.

Garment industry fully supports the government to continue halting all types of trade with India until it revisit its unilateral and illegal measures of August 5, 2019 regarding held Kashmir. We also appreciates the prime minister for instructing the Ministry of Commerce and his economic team to immediately take steps to facilitate the relevant sectors, value added apparel, by finding alternative cheap sources of import of the needed commodities, he added. There is also need to take strong action

against textile mafia who

its textile policy to remove are hoarding a huge stock to create artificial shortage to make money in line with the action taken against sugar cartel.

"We urge the government to abolish all duties on the import of fabrics, as value-added garment sector is facing severe shortage of basic raw material of fabrics, which may lead to a drastic decline in value-added textile export. We also want duty-free import of fabric," he added. He said that cotton prices have fallen by Rs400 to Rs10,800 per maund while no cut in fabric prices have been seen so far in spite of declining trend in global market.

"We appeal the government to withdraw all types of duties and taxes on fabric import following the abolishment of Customs and Regulatory duty on yarn in view of controlling shortage of apparel indus-

try's raw material.' He said that another important issue which has been hitting the exporters hard is the astute depreciation of dollar against rupee, because the garment exporters had booked their annual orders for the global buyers at the rate of Rs.167 per dollar, which has now nosedived to Rs153. The garment exporters are facing financial crunch, since their cost has increased because of dollar depreciation against rupee from 167 to 153 and increase in prices of cotton yarn by more than 40

percent, he said.

### ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is commencing final examinations for the programs offered in autumn 2020 semester including BA (Associate Degree) and

MSc in Television Production today i.e. Monday, April 19. According to the details, AIOU has established examination centers across the country for BA (Associate Degree) program while examination center has been established in the Department of Mass Communication for MSc Television Production. Roll numbers slips have been uploaded on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) for students' convenience. Roll number slips, downloaded from the website, will be acceptable in the examination halls. Upon the special directives of Prof Dr Zia Ul -Qayyum, superintendents of examination centers have been instructed to implement COVID -19 SOPs during the examinations in true letter and spirit. Wearing masks has been made mandatory for the students as well as examination invigilation staff.

AIOU extends

admission date

till April 29

Moreover, Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum has granted special. permission to the continuing students to submit admission forms for the forthcoming semester till April 29 in order to facilitate those students who could not apply for admission earlier on the account of 3rd wave of COVID-19 pandemic

to save their precious time. These programs include MA/ MSc (ODL), M.Ed, PGD, BA (Old Scheme), BA (Associate Degree), B.Ed, BS (ODL), BBA and certificate courses. The students can download new challan form from http://enrollment.aiou.edu.pk/sp21/ cuser/continue\_form till April 29 while admission fee can be deposited till April 30. Old challan forms are not acceptable as their validity is expired; therefore, students are required to generate new challan form. - DNA

### "Better Tourism, Better Life, Better World" launched ment of "green water and green

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: China Cultural Center in Pakistan launched the first episode of the micro-documentary series "Better Tourism, Better Life, Better World " on the Cultural Center's WeChat OfficialAccount and Facebook

page. "World Tourism Alliance Best Practice in Poverty Alleviation Through Tourism" as the blueprint, to provide Chinese experience on poverty alleviation practices, to contribute Chinese wisdom to the cause of global poverty alleviation and for international community to experience the achievement of China's tourism poverty alleviation, and to tell the story of China's tourism promotion for poverty alleviation.

The micro-documentary " Better Tourism, Better Life, Better World " is produced by the World Tourism Alliance, the documentary trip spans across multiple provinces and goes deep into China's grassroots vil-



lages. Finally, eight tourism poverty alleviation case areas were selected, and the documentaries were produced.

There are total eight episodes and each episode's duration is around 5 minutes. The entire documentary series is people-oriented. It is filmed from the perspective of individuals and families, pay-

ing attention to the interaction between nature and society, focusing on the improvement

livelihoods in the case areas, restoring reality through lens, and presenting tourism in an international context.

These documentaries also highlight how the natural endow-

and development of people's

The Director China Cultural Center in Pakistan's personal official page "zhang he qing" is

life better".

also premiering the micro documentary at the same time. Later this month "World Tourism Alliance Best Practice in Poverty Alleviation through Tourism Case" of 2018, 2019 and 2020 will also be published on the social media page of China Cultural Center in

mountains" has been trans-

formed into "golden and silver

mountains", telling vivid stories

of local people living a happy

prosperous life, interpreting and

disseminating the core concept

of "tourism makes the world and

This micro documentary series

has received highest praise and

recognition from the interna-

tional community. Starting this

week, China Cultural Center in

Pakistan is airing weekly two

episodes of the micro-documen-

tary series "Better Tourism,

Better Life, Better World "on

Facebook Official Page and We-

Chat Official Account.

### 05

### The third wave

HE most devastating coronavirus statistic which indicates the need for urgent change is not the infection rate, but the fatality numbers. Currently, both are on a surge in Pakistan. According to data released by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the total number of total deaths climbed to 15,982 while the total number of cases reached 745,182. It is true that Pakistan is conducting more tests than ever, with the government having conducted 65,279 tests in the last 24 hours. However, the rise in deaths attributed to the pandemic should wake everyone up to alarm that the third wave is well and alive in Pakistan, when the vaccination rate is quite low. 112 deaths have been reported just in the last 24 hours and according to the government's Covid-19 portal, 4149 more patients are in critical condition. Health experts had earlier estimated that the third wave would begin in March and recede in mid-April, but it is continuing even beyond that and our infrastructure and facilities are not prepared. Hospitals are on the verge of saturation, with Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) having exhausted its capacity and starting queues for beds in emergency rooms.

The spike in cases can no doubt be traced back to the skirting of restrictions in the last few months, with ongoing wedding functions, gatherings and rallies, with no heed paid to wearing masks and social distancing. The government in the last few weeks has tried to change gears and announced strict restrictions but again these do not seem to be taken seriously; the riots in the last days are just an example.

Stories being released of government members themselves violating SOPs privately further damage the resolve to adhere to pandemic regulations. Stringent SOPs and a faster vaccination drive need to be the government's top priorities this month. The example of our neighbour India, with its record 200,000 new Covid-19 cases in a day, should be a reminder of what our country could escalate to if the required precautions aren't taken.

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### Welcome to 1984

#### MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

HE dystopian novel by George Orwell, titled "1984" was first published in 1949, discusses the life of Winston Smith who is frustrated by the omnipresent eyes of Big Brother. This entity is a group working from behind the curtains aiming to control the lives of the people. Unfortunately, we are not living in very different times as shown in the novel.

The blackout of digital media websites in Pakistan on Friday, April 16, 2021, was nothing but an attempt by the concerned authorities to keep a certain faction within the confines of order. Without dwelling much on what happened on the streets of Pakistan during the days leading to the blackout, one must wonder what the future holds for freedom of speech. It is indeed the right of every citizen to speak their heart out and to communicate their thoughts and ideas to the masses.

However, to do so while damaging the public property or to hinder in the daily routine of the city and the country is not recommended at all. One must obey and adhere to the laws governing the dynamics of society. Here, the objectives of the government blacking out digital media are also not aligned with the freedom of speech. To blackout, social media websites for two to three hours show the government's competency to counter any retaliation from any faction that may arise within the country.

It also suggests that by blocking such websites, the government might feel comfortable containing any uprising – in any form that may occur. Truth be told, a faction that is well-connected needs no digital media website to mobilize. The factions of the society who have the intention to share their thoughts and demands must do so within the limits of decency. This will help in creating a positive image of themselves and the government will also facilitate their demands if done with modesty and respect.

### The Indonesia Economic Model

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Critical analysis of its macro-economy upholds that Indonesia's economic growth is starting to accelerate again after the economic slowdown

NDONESIA'S macro-economy has been geared up with the constant upward development of its domestic factors and healthy contribution of channel of production since its inception. It has been blended its natural resources, tourism potential, widespread of SMEs, service sector and last but not least nationalistic private sector to achieve numerous socio-economic miracles. It has been succeeding to achieve its desired goals of constant socio-economic prosperity, qualitative life, eradication of poverty, social networking and political stability because of supremacy of doctrine of a balanced and holistic approach between "growth" and "stability". Structural reforms have been playing a positive and productive role in the macro-economy of Indonesia which is a market economy in which the state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and large private business groups play a significant role. They account for about 60 percent of Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) and create employment to nearly 108 million Indonesians. Major industrial sectors of its economy include petroleum and natural gas, textiles and apparel, mining, footwear, plywood, rubber and chemical fertilisers. The services sector is equally as important to Indonesia's economy, accounting for 43 per cent of GDP in 2015. Agriculture on the other hand only accounted for 14 per cent. Indonesia has a market-based liberalized economy in which its government plays a significant role, including administering prices for some basic goods such as fuel, rice and electricity. In terms of value added, the industrial sector accounted for more

than 45 per cent of GDP. It is largest economy in Southeast Asia, which is a diverse archipelago nation of more than 300 ethnic groups. It has charted impressive economic growth since overcoming the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s. Statistical data upholds that now Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous nation, the world's 10th largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity, and a member of the G-20. It has made enormous gains in poverty reduction, decreasing the poverty rate by more than half since 1999, to 9.78 percent in 2020. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, Indonesia was able to maintain consistent economic growth, recently qualifying the country to reach upper middle income status. Indonesia has its own unique economic model which heavily relies on domestic production, savings, investments, proper mobilization and channelization of local resources, nurturing of human capital core and last but not least, positive domestic consumption. It follows a 20 year development plan, spanning from 2005 to 2025. It has been following people's friendly social development policies, business and investment friendly programs and plans since long which is now paying its huge socio-economic dividends.

It is segmented into 5 year medium-term plans, called the RP-JMN (Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Nasional) each with different development priorities. The current medium-term development plan the last phase of the long-term plan starts from 2020 to 2024. It aims to further strengthen Indonesia's economy by improving the country's human capital and competitiveness in the global market. Now its macro-economy is feeling the heat of unending COVID-19 due to which social development is compromised but its economic resilience is trying to streamline it. According to its national data its government implemented emergency fiscal packages equivalent to 3.8 percent of GDP in 2020 and to 4.2 percent of GDP in 2021, to deal with the health impact, provide relief to households and firms, and support the vaccine roll-out, and the recovery.

The World Bank is supporting the Indonesia's COVID-19 emergency response, including enhancing social assistance and health care systems, while also strengthening the resilience of the financial sector. Despite COVID-19 it still holds great economic potential. The central government supported to curb Indonesia's traditional reliance on raw commodity exports, while raising the role of the manufacturing industry within the national economy. Infrastructure development is also a key goal of the government, and one that should cause a multiplier effect within the economy with lots of multiplier effects. In the past so many years, it was often rated as an appropriate candidate to be included in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). Furthermore, CIVETS (Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa) also gained attention as its members have reasonably sophisticated financial systems and fast-growing populations which showed high levels of economic diversification, productivity, and sustainability of Indonesia. Standard & Poor's, Fitch Ratings and Moody have upgraded its credit ratings. Resilient economic growth, low government debt and prudent fiscal management have been termed as reasons for the upgrades and are key in attracting financial inflows into Indonesia in terms of FDIs and FPIs.

These FDI inflows, which had been relatively weak for Indonesia during the decade after the Asian Financial Crisis had seriously shaken up the foundations of the country, showed a

steep increase after the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. With promulgation of New Mining Law 2009 Indonesia reduced its traditional reliance on raw commodity exports and boosted the manufacturing industry. With the passage of time, the country is passing through from transition to transformation.

The Indonesian government under the visionary leadership of Joko Widodo has initiated numerous structural reforms aiming at long-term growth. The government rates high priority on infrastructure development and on investment and fiscal incentives that are offered to private investors. Moreover future of its macro-economy is healthy, productive and positive because of having abundant and diverse natural resources with young, large and burgeoning population, immense political stability, institutionalization of prudent fiscal management since the late 1990s, strategic location in relation to the giant economies of China and India, low labour costs and an emerging market.

Indonesia's micro, small and medium sized enterprises account for 99 percent of the total amount of enterprises which are active in Indonesia. They account for about 60 percent of Indonesia's GDP and create employment to nearly 108 million Indonesians. These micro, small and medium sized companies are the backbone of the Indonesian economy. Critical analysis of its macro-economy upholds that Indonesia's economic growth is starting to accelerate again after the economic slowdown. Now it has again started its journey from the 'Asian Miracle' to an emerging economy of the world.

Right from the beginning, Indonesian government has consistently prioritised stability over growth and followed a holistic approach to achieve its economic goals. President Joko Widodo's program of infrastructure development and economic reform has made progress. However, infrastructure investment needs to be substantially higher, public saving increased through a more comprehensive tax strategy, and business climate reforms recalibrated towards liberalising markets rather than just cutting red tape. Due to constant structural economic reforms, Indonesia is widely rated as a future economic giant. Now it is the world's 7th largest economy by purchasing power parity. It hopes that it may be the 5th largest economy in the world by 2030 and fourth soon after. On a market exchange rate basis, Indonesia ranks 16th in

the world but will likely enter the top ten by 2030. Being prominent regional expert I would like to suggest that Indonesian government try to change its national health system. More stringent, cross-sector regulations with detailed protocols for the safe operation of different types of businesses, with specific implications for the various stakeholders should be introduced at once. Lockdowns have channeled many people online for shopping, learning, entertainment, and working, accelerating the shift to digital services should be the new normal. Simultaneously, companies are pushing ahead with internal digitization for staff, customers, and suppliers (for instance, enhancing supply-chain visibility, offering digital learning experiences, and providing new channels to customers which ought to be implemented. Undoubtedly, culture of working from home, reducing long-distance travel, and other lockdown habits could lead to a permanent shift toward behaviors that are better for the environment. Companies and governments will seek to address supply-chain flaws revealed by the crisis encouraging domestic sources for strategic goods, such as food and medicine; and generally accelerating the digitization of supply chains.

On part of tourism sector, Indonesia could start marketing its lesser-known tourist attractions to a domestic audience to travel. It could also improve its tourism infrastructure, such as airports, and standards within the hospitality industry.

A mix of modern technology, automation may generate more jobs in Indonesia than are lost between 2014 and 2030. Resultantly, 9-24 million new jobs may be generated. It can build from the online-learning efforts and habits developed during the pandemic to teach those new capabilities more broadly and more quickly. So, journey towards smarter economy and key to further socio-economic prosperity rests on rigorous modernization of macro-economy. Qualitative infrastructure development is still a concern. There is an urgent need for better logistics to support home deliveries and improved digital infrastructure in general. Improved sanitation and access to clean water, as well as other improvements in conditions, such as a reduction in overcrowded living spaces and multiple access points to homes are the need of the hour.

As we know that Indonesia's domestic economic structure is different than most countries as about 90 percent of its GDP is comprised of a combination of household consumption (58 percent) and investments (32 percent).

As a result, the impact of COVID-19 on household spending has grave repercussions for the country's GDP. Household consumption is expected to drop 4.4 percent, or IDR 395 trillion, in 2020 which should be resolved through accelerating the social protection program to help the targeted community receive the support in time, for example with voucher disbursement and cash handouts. Moreover, suppress unemployment by being more proactive in supporting businesses in priority sectors to help more Indonesians keep their jobs may be a noble idea in this regard. In terms of financial reforms, further strengthening of capital market policy to expedite the index recovery to its pre-crisis level should be initiated. Indonesia can use knowledge from potential development and resolving it before creating a chain of bankruptcies. One approach is through a top-down injection of credit, such as providing working capital support to larger distributors.other countries, such as Malaysia, which has almost recovered its capital market. All efforts should be coordinated to prevent a massive credit crunch by quickly identifying it. Revitalizing manufacturing, acceleration of making Indonesia 4.0 initiatives to reposition its manufacturing strength from a low-cost labor location for commodity products to a high-productivity location for more value-added products should be implemented as soon possible. Indonesia should also focus on developing its digital economy. Its digital service ecosystem is still at initial stage with a focus on the domestic market.

Boosting of ICT spending to stimulate growth may be quick remedy in this regard. Increase of the quantity and quality of digital talents to enable the supply of innovative digital services may be a workable solution. Revolutionize logistics and supply chain with digital technologies should be the future of its macro-economy. Establish remote working as a standard model, dissemination of online education for high-quality access, improvement of the urban system for better efficiency and safety along with enhanced FDI with technology transfer and acceleration of government digitalization are the way forward.

### G20's missed opportunity

### Shahshad Akhtar

Equally important, govts receiving debt relief would need to commit to reforms that align their policies and budgets with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate agreement. Some portion of the restructured repayments should be channelled into a Fund for Green and Inclusive Recovery that would be used by the government for investment in SDG-aligned spending. Moreover, the Framework needs to incorporate adequate incentives to ensure that private creditors participate and bear a fair share of the burden

HIS month, G20 finance ministers agreed to a proposal to issue \$650 billion worth of the International Monetary Fund's reserve asset, special drawing rights (SDRs), and an additional six-month moratorium on debt payments for up to 73 developing countries. But while the agreement represents a step in the right direction, the G20 missed the opportunity to address the looming debt crisis in the Global South head on. Past debt crises ought to have taught us that doing too little, too late will delay recoveries and drive up the cost of debt restructuring for debtors and creditors alike. The world is still at high risk of repeating the mistakes that resulted in two lost decades of development in the 1980s and 1990s. Even before the pandemic, the Global South was heading for a debt crisis; but now, the situation has deteriorated dramatically. To its credit, the G20 was quick to respond in April 2020, when it approved the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. But while the DSSI gave some 43 countries breathing space by allowing them to postpone payments to public creditors, it did not change the net present value of those countries' debts.

Thus, in November 2020, the DSSI was complemented by a Common Framework for Debt Treatments Beyond the DSSI, which allows the 73 low-income countries that are eligible for the DSSI to request debt restructuring. But this, too, was a step in the right direction that fell short.

For starters, the new Framework applies only to low-income countries. Many of these countries do indeed need relief, but so do highly indebted middle-income countries that have been hit hard by the pandemic. Of the 124 million people estimated to have been pushed into extreme poverty in 2020, the World Bank reckons that 80% were in middle-income countries. Moreover, the Framework deals with countries' debt problems on a case-by-case basis, and thus fails to address the problem of lasting stigmatisation of any country that avails itself of relief.

Aside from the fact that many developing countries have already effectively lost access to capital markets, those that can still finance themselves through international bonds face growing risks. In anticipation of tighter credit conditions, emerging-market economies have weakened across the board since the beginning of this year. And developing countries have accounted for 95% of all downgrades by the three leading credit rating agencies since the start of the pandemic.

Finally, the Framework lacks a commitment by creditors and debtor countries alike to align newfound fiscal space with globally agreed climate and development goals. There is ample empirical evidence to show that climate-vulnerable countries tend to pay a higher cost on their public debt, and that climate change heightens sovereign risk. Countries that cannot invest in climate resilience and development will have even less debt sustainability in the future. Even without accounting for the additional climate risks facing low-income countries, an IMF analysis suggests that, as of the end of February 2021, more than half of those the Fund assessed were already in or at high risk of debt distress. Making matters worse, many developing countries are experiencing continuing net capital outflows, and the pandemic-aid money provided by international organisations is being used to repay private creditors. Given these problems, the Framework urgently needs to be revamped to allow for comprehensive debt relief oriented around a green, inclusive recovery. To that end, we suggest the following amendments.

First, instead of waiting for countries to come forward and apply for debt relief individually, the framework should recognise that a systemic crisis demands a systemic solution. The G20 should encourage all low- and middle-income countries whose debt is considered unsustainable to participate in debt restructuring. And when assessing debt burdens, the analysis must include climate and other

sustainability risks as well as estimates of a country's financing needs for climate-change adaptation and mitigation.

Equally important, governments receiving debt relief would need to commit to reforms that align their policies and budgets with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris climate agreement. Some portion of the restructured repayments should be channelled into a Fund for Green and Inclusive Recovery that would be used by the government for investment in SDG-aligned spending. Moreover, the Framework needs to incorporate adequate incentives to ensure that private creditors participate and bear a fair share of the burden. If a debt-sustainability analysis asserts that a country's sovereign debt is of significant concern, the IMF should make its programs conditional on a restructuring process that includes private creditors.

Here, Brady-type credit enhancements for new bonds that would be swapped for old debt would facilitate restructuring negotiations. To this end, we propose a Guarantee Facility for Green and Inclusive Recovery managed by a multilateral development bank. If payments on the new bonds are missed, the collateral would be released to the benefit of private creditors, and the missed payment would have to be repaid by the sovereign to the guarantee facility. Delaying an inevitable debt restructuring will leave over-indebted countries and their populations worse

repaid by the sovereign to the guarantee facility. Delaying an inevitable debt restructuring will leave over-indebted countries and their populations worse off. Governments will fail to safeguard their populations during this terrible health and social crisis, and they will be unable to invest in climate-proofing their economies. There is still time for the G20 to step up and provide all countries with the opportunity to pursue a green, inclusive, and resilient recovery.

 Project Syndicate (Courtesy Gulf Times)
 The writer is a former governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, is Chair of the Board of Directors of Karandaaz Pakistan.

### Briefs

### **Russia to** retaliate against Czech Republic

DNA

MOSCOW: Russia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said on Sunday it would take tough retaliatory measures against the Czech Republic over Prague's expulsion of 18 Russian diplomats on what Moscow said were unfounded and absurd grounds.

The Czech Republic expelled 18 Russian embassy staff on Saturday over the suspected involvement of Russia's intelligence services in a 2014 ammunition depot explosion that killed two people.

"We will take retaliatory measures that will force the authors of this provocation to fully understand their responsibility for destroying the foundation of normal ties between our countries," the ministry said in a statement.

### Colombia: At least 14 rebels killed

#### WEB DESK

BOGOTA: Some 14 rebels and one Colombian soldier have been killed in combat between guerrillas and the Andean country's military, army sources said on Saturday. Fourteen members of the Carlos Patino front - founded by former Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) rebels who reject a 2016 peace deal - were killed in the confrontations in Argelia, Cauca province, two military sources told media.

The rebels removed the bodies of their fighters, General Eduardo Enrique Zapateiro, the head of the army, said on Twitter. Zapatiero mentioned just 10 rebel deaths. In addition to the soldier who was killed, seven others were injured, Zapatiero said, after the unit was "at tacked indiscriminately with explosive artifacts."

#### Yemeni drone bombs airbase in Asir

### Foreign Desk

SANAA: The Yemeni army says it has carried out a new retaliatory drone strike on a major airbase in Saudi Arabia. Brigadier General Yahva Saree, who is the spokesman for Yemen's Armed Forces, said on Saturday domestically-manufac-Qasef-2K (Striker-2K) combat drone targeted King Khalid Air Base with 'precision,' Yemen's Arabic-language al-Masirah television network reported.

The base is located near the city of Khamis Mushait in the southwestern province of Asir, which Yemen. general said a 'sensitive target' had been successfully bombarded. He reiterated that the Riyadh regime's ongoing campaign and crippling blockade against Yemen gave the armed forces grounds for retaliation.

Yemen's Air Force conducted a number of operations against sensitive sites in Saudi Arabia last month, targeting the King Khalid Air Base and Abha International Airport, situated in the same prov-

Saudi Arabia, backed by the United States and other regional allies, launched the devastating war on Yemen in March 2015 with the goal of reinstating a Riyadh-friend-

The war has killed hundreds of thousands of people and destroyed much of Yemen's infra-

ly government.

structure. Yemenis are facing mal nutrition, hunger, and famine.

The popular Ansarullah movement, backed by the Yemeni Armed Forces and allied popular groups, has gone from strength to strength against the invaders, leaving them bogged down in the county. With an all-out blockade on Yemen in place since the onset of the bloody war, the country

is witnessing the world's

worst humanitarian cri-

sis, according to the UN.

### ASEAN urged not to recognize coup regime

The military govt has so far detained more than 3,140 people in connection with the coup, according to a tally by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP)

DNA

YANGON: Myanmar's newly-formed shadow government has called on Southeast Asian leaders not to recognize the military regime that seized power in a February coup. Moe ZawOo, deputy minister of foreign affairs for the parallel "national unity government" on Sunday appealed the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN ) to not legitimize the Myanmar Military junta by inviting its military chief to attend an upcoming regional summit. Moe also called on the regional alliance to give the Myanmar's parallel administration, which was

formed Friday by ousted lawmakers mostly from deposing Aung San SuuKyi 's party, a seat at the table during crisis talks next week. "If ASEAN wants to help solve the Myanmar situation, they are not going to achieve anything without consulting and negotiating with the NUG, which is supported by the people and has full legitimacy," he said. "It's important that this military council is not recognized. This needs to be handled carefully." Thailand's Foreign Ministry spokesman TaneeSangrat said in a statement on Saturday that Myanmar's military chieft Min AungHlaing will attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Indonesia on April 24.

Messi fires Barca to win Copa

del Rey over Athletic Bilbao

Min AungHlaing's invitation to the meeting of the 10-country organization has drawn scorn from activists who have urged regional leaders not to formally recognize the junta.

It will be Min AungHlaing's first official trip since he took power in a coup by deposing Aung San SuuKyi on February 1. The junta has ever since been en-

gaged in a brutal crackdown that has led to killing of nearly 730 people who were calling for the release of SuuKyi and the restoration of her civil government.

The military government has so far detained more than 3,140 people in connection with the coup, according to a tally by the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP).

SuuKyi, who is among the detainees, faces various charges, including violating an official secret act that could see her imprisoned for 14 years. Her lawyer has rejected the charges against her.

Unrest continued across the country on Sunday, with protesters rallying in Mandalay, Meiktila, Magway and Myingyan, showing support for the national unity government.At Palaw in the country's south, demonstrators chanted slogans and brandished banners that read: "Military dictators should not be allowed to rule. The dictatorship will be uprooted. Support the national unity government.'

Young demonstrators also staged motorbike rallies while carrying flags in Hpakant and Sagaing. Much of Myanmar remains under a curfew imposed shortly after the

coup, running from 8 pm to 4 am every night. Late Saturday, a young man was

shot and killed in Kyaukme town in northern Shan state while riding his motorbike during the curfew. "He was shot by the authorities when he and other his friends drove motorbikes around 9 pm. He was shot in the head," AFP quoted a rescue worker as saying. The United Nations human rights office warned on April 13 that the clampdown risked escalating into a civil conflict.

### Milan squeuze past Genoa

DNA

MILAN: Genoa's Gianluca Scamacca turned into his own net to hand AC Milan a 2-1 win on Sunday, their first in over two months at the San Siro. Scamacca's 68th-minute own goal put second-placed Milan eight points behind city rivals Inter, who travel to Napoli later on Sunday, and kept them on course for a return to Champions League football next season.

Stefano Pioli's side had not won their last six games in the San Siro in all competitions and were playing without suspended forward Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

They needed a win with third-placed Juventus, now four points behind, at fellow Champions League chasers Atalanta later on Sunday.

'We wasted a lot, we could have finished it earlier, but the important thing is the spirit to stay in the game until the very end," said Pioli, who has given up on catching Inter.

"Inter have taken too many points to think that we can still fight for the Scudetto (league title). "Winning was important. We will have to face important teams, Atalanta, Iuventus, Lazio, from here to the end they will all be difficult."

Ante Rebic put Milan ahead in the 13th minute with Rafael Leao, taking the place of Ibrahimovic, missing a chance for a second minutes later.

### **UNSC** welcomes Saudi...

From Page 01

It also called on Yemeni parties to continue implementing the Riyadh Agreement.

Security Council members denounced the recent cross-border attacks by the Iran-backed Al Houthi militia on Saudi Arabia, calling for an immediate end to the Al Houthis' escalation against Yemeni city of Marib.

The council also held the Al Houthi militia accountable for the danger posed by the Safer oil tanker, calling on Al Houthis to ensure an immediate and unconditional access of the UN experts to inspect and repair the long-abandoned fuel tanker

### squad clears on arrival tests HARARE: Pakistan's men cricket team has cleared

Pakistan's

on arrival COVID-19 tests in Zimbabwe. Green Shirts arrived in Harare yesterday after their successful tour of South Africa where they clinched the ODI and T20I series. The squad will start their training tomorrow at 1.30 PM (Zimbabwe standard time) at the Harare Sports Club. It must be noted that Pakistan will play three T20Is and two Tests against Zimbabwe. The T20I series starts from April 21. – **DNA** 

### Zimbabwe announces T20I squad

Zimbabwe announced a 15-members squad for the three-matches T20I series against Pakistan, scheduled from April 21 to 25. Williams Sean to lead the side which includes Burl

Ryan, Chakabva Regis, Chivanga Tanaka, Ervine Craig, Jongwe Luke, KamunhukamweTinashe, MadhevereWessly, MarumaniTadiwanashe, Masakadza Wellington, MufudzaTapiwa, Muzzarabani Blessing, Ngaraya Richard, Taylor Brendan, Tiripano Donald. Pakistan team has already reached Harare to play T20Is and two Tests against the home side. Remember, Pakistan beat South Africa 2-1 in ODIs and 3-2

### Zimbabwe series an opportunity to rest top bowlers

### WEB DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan bowling coach Wagar Younis has said that the upcoming series against Zimbabwe will provide the management an opportunity to rest top bowlers.

Talking to media in a virtual press conference on Saturday, the 49-year-old said that he's aware of the bowlers' workload and try to test team's bench strength in the two Tests and three T20Is against Zimbabwe.

"We are considering all options, knowing well that our

bowlers are coming out of long break because of PSL's untimely postponement," Waqar said. "We know well how much cricket top bowlers need. We also want to test our bench strength. Zimbabwe series would provide us that opportunity." The former cricketer was confident that a strong

combination bowling would be finalized by the World Cup T20. "Our effort is to prepare the

best combination for the coming World Cup. A few options we have with us and are trying to get a clear pic-

### Qureshi, Afghan FM..

off the coast of Yemen.

From Page 01 political and moral support

extended by Pakistan for a result-oriented Afghan peace process and thanked foreign minister Qureshi and Pakistani leadership in this regard.

Both sides also agreed to meet in Istanbul, Turkey. Foreign minister Qureshi also invited Atmar to visit Pakistan after the Istanbul process. They also exchanged Ramazan greetings.

### 8 people shot dead in Afghanistan

### WEB DESK

KABUL: Eight members of a family were killed when unknown attackers opened fire on them at a mosque in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province.

The shooting happened on Saturday night in the city of Jalalabad. According to Nangarhar Governor Ziaulhaq Amarkhil, the killings happened apparently over a land dispute.

Five brothers and three of their male cousins were killed. "The shooting happened at the time of the tarawih [extra prayers in the evening during Ramadanl. This was a targeted attack and initial information shows a land dispute was the reason," Amarkhil told Al Jazeera.

Clashes over land disputes are common across Afghanistan. The so-called blood feuds can last for decades, passing down through generations in a cycle of vio-

lence.

Last April, at least six tribal members were killed and nearly 20 others wounded in armed clashes over disputed land in the same province. The fighting lasted for several davs.

Nangarhar, a stronghold of the Taliban and the ISIL (ISIS) group, is rich in plains and is one of the most important areas for agriculture in Afghanistan.

### four minutes later in his honours he won as a player UEFA warns clubs to take part in a ESL

SPORTS DESK

SEVILLA: Lionel Messi

scored twice as Barcelona

thrashed Athletic Bilbao 4-0

in the Copa del Rey final on

Saturday to win the trophy

for a record-extending 31st

time with all the goals com-

ing in the last half an hour.

Antoine Griezmann put a

dominant Barca side ahead

on the hour when he turned

in a cross from Frenkie de

Jong, who doubled the Cat-

alans' lead three minutes

later. Messi suffered some

rough tackles from Athletic

but got his revenge with a

spectacular goal in the 68th.

tearing his way through the

defence down the right wing

and combining with De Jong

before dancing around an-

other defender to slot home.

Barca's captain struck again

10th Copa final when he

met a low cross from Jordi

Alba and fired the ball into

the bottom corner, his shot

proving too powerful for

Athletic keeper Unai Simon.

Griezmann thought he had

grabbed Barca's fifth goal in

added time but his effort was

ruled offside after a VAR re-

view. "It's very special to lift

this Cup as captain of this

club, it's a very happy day

"We knew Athletic would

play as they did and we had

to be patient with the ball

and try to create space. We

were all over them in the

first half and in the second

The Argentine hoisted the

trophy for a seventh time

while Dutch coach Ronald

Koeman earned his first

piece of silverware as Barca

coach to add to the glut of

they dropped off."

for this group," said Messi.

PARIS: UEFA and English, Spanish and Italian football authorities announced on Sunday that any clubs who take part in a so-called European Super League would be banned from all other domestic and continental competitions. European football's governing body said it had learned that some English, Spanish and Italian clubs might announce a breakaway competition. "The clubs concerned will be banned from playing in any other competition at domestic, European or world level, and their players could be denied the opportunity to represent their national teams," UEFA said in a statement. Media reports on Sunday suggested that an announcement

on plans to create a Super League could be made later in the day. Sky Sports reported that Liverpool, Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea were among six Premier League teams set to be part of the plans. "If this were to happen, we wish to reiterate that we - UEFA, the English FA, RFEF, FIGC, the Premier League, La Liga, Lega Serie A, but also FIFA and all our member associations - will remain united in our efforts to stop this cynical project. - APP

Sociedad in the rescheduled 2020 showpiece, which was also played at an empty La Cartuja stadium in Seville. "This is a very tough moment for us." said Athletic left-back MikelBalenziaga. forward to the game but they were superior from the first half. We managed to survive that but then we lost focus and they were much better than us and

with the the club, including Barca were hurting from a Copa triumph in 1990. last week's 2-1 La Liga loss Koeman also won the Copa to title rivals Real Madrid in charge of Valencia in but took the initiative with 2008. There was a strong 79% of possession in the sense of deja vu for Athletic, first half and almost went ahead when De Jong struck who have now lost four Copa finals to Barca since 2009, the post, with Messi later with Messi scoring each smashing a shot just wide. time. The Basques have lost Athletic had beaten Barca 2-1 after extra time in Jantheir last six appearances in uary's Spanish Super Cup the final and only two weeks ago were beaten 1-0 by Real final but showed little ambition here and had only one attempt in the first half, when defender Inigo Martinez prodded just wide of the near post following a free kick. Athletic keeper Simon pulled off three im-"We were really looking pressive saves in quick succession early in the opening period, using his left leg to thwart Griezmann and then Sergio Busquets from point-blank range while also keeping out a driven shot from Pedri.

## Eu hints it might not order Astrazeneca jab again

### Foreign Desk

BRUSSELS: The EU's internal markets commissioner Thierry Breton hinted Sunday that the bloc might decide not to order AstraZeneca's coronavirus jab again following delays in delivering the first batches of the vaccine. "We're pragmatic. My priority, as far as the vaccines are concerned, is to ensure that the firms we have contracts with deliver them punctually," Breton told BFMTV television. Brussels had originally ordered 120 million doses of the Anglo-Swedish group's jab for the 27 member states in the first quarter and 180 million in the second quarter. But the drug maker "only delivered 30 million, thus creating the problems that everyone has seen," Breton said. And only another 70 million will be delivered in the second quarter, he continued, but added: "Nothing is decided. Talks are still ongoing".

The EU commissioner insisted that any such decision would "not be for epidemiological or medical reasons". "When looking at the data, the benefits of the AstraZeneca vaccine outweigh the disease," he said. French industry minister Agnes Pannier-Runacher had suggested on Friday that the EU might not renew its contract with AstraZeneca in 2022 after Denmark became the first European country to stop using the jab altogether over suspected rare but serious side effects. While other countries also suspended its use, at least temporarily, most have subsequently resumed after the European Medicines Agency (EMA), emphasised the benefits of the vaccine, judging it "safe and effective".

Pannier-Runacher said that the EU had "not started discussions with Johnson & Johnson and with AstraZeneca for a new contract, whereas we have already started discussions with Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna", the make ers of two other vaccines on the market in Europe.

### **US denies involvement in plot against Lukashenko**

The Public Relations Center of Russia's FSB reported earlier that FSB officers had detained two men, Yuri Zenkovich, who had Belarusian and US citizenship, Belarusian national Alexander Feduta, suspected of plotting a military coup in Belarus and an assassination attack on President Alexander Lukashenko

### DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States has nothing to do with any plots against Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko and any suggestion otherwise is "absolutely untrue," a US State Department official told media.

"We have seen reports in Russian state media of a supposed plot against Alexander Lukashenko, as well as his direct claims to media. Any suggestion that the U.S. Government was behind or involved in an assassination attempt on Lukashen-

ka is absolutely untrue," he said. Commenting on reports about detention of lawyer Yuri Zenkovich, a holder of Belarusian and US passports, on suspicion of his involvement in the assassination plot,

### **United States warns about Navalny prison**

### Foreign Desk

NEW YORK CITY: US national security adviser Jake Sullivan has warned Russia of possible consequences in case Alexey Navalny dies in custody. "We have communicated to the Russian government that what happens to Mr. Navalny in their custody is their responsibility and they will be held accountable by the international community," he said in an interview with US media on Sunday. i"In terms of the specific measures that we would take, we are looking at a variety of different costs that we would impose and I'm not going to telegraph that publicly a this point. But we have communicated that there will be consequences if Mr. Navalny dies. According to Sullivan, Washington has arrived at a conclusion that this matter should better by discussed directly with Moscow, via diplomatic channels. The Russian foreign ministry said earlier that ultimatum demands to Russia voiced by a number of countries and a media campaign around Navalny were geared solely towards destabilization of the political situation in Russia. Navalny, who received suspended sentences for embezzlement twice, was wanted in Russia for repeated violations of conditions of his conviction in the Yves Rocher case. Or January 17, 2021 he was detained at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport upon arrival from Berlin.

he said that Washington would offer all necessary consular assistance to its national. "We have seen reports of a US citizen detained in Minsk. Whenever a U.S. citizen is detained overseas, we stand ready to provide all appropriate consular services," the official said.

The Public Relations Center of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) reported earlier that FSB officers had detained two men, Yuri Zenkovich, who had Belarusian and US citizenship, and Belarusian national Alexander Feduta, suspected of plotting a military coup in Belarus and an assassination attack on President Alexander Lukashenko. According to the FSB, the men plotted a military coup in Belarus under a 'color revolution' scenario involving Ukrainian nationalists, and assassination of the Belarusian leader.

### Business / World



Chinese

delegation to visit Pakistan

**DNA** 

ISLAMABAD: A Chinese

delegation

Guangxi province will soon

visit Pakistan to explore new investment venues in differ-

ent sectors like roads and

infrastructure, energy and

power, IT, agricultural and in-

dustrial sectors, machineries

and technology and construc-

tion sectors. This was stated

by COO of Shanghai Feiyun

Culture Development Com-

pany who visited FPCCI Cap-

ital Office Islamabad to meet

Qurban Ali, Head Of FPCCI

Islamabad and other officer

bearers. The meeting was

also attended by Muhammad

Ali Quaid, Ex-Vice President

FPCCI. He said that FPCCI

is playing an important role in

bringing the business commu-

nities and investors of Paki-

stan and China closer. He said

that Qurban Ali himself took

initiative to contact investors

of Guangxi province and their

government as well and drew

their attention towards invest-

ment potential in Pakistan.

The government of Guangxi

province also responded posi-

tively expressed their endeav-

or of full support and cooperation. The CEO of Shanghai

Feiyun Culture Development

The Federation of Pakistan

Chambers of Commerce

& Industry FPCCI Capital House, Aiwan-e-Sanat-o-Tija-rat Road, Islamabad, Pakistan

Tel: 051-2251891-93, 2289303

Email: islamabad.capital@ fpcci.org.pk URL: www.fpcci.

org.pkCompany expressed that their company is working

hard on various projects with

### **Briefs**

### Syria to hold presidential elections on **May 26**

Foreign Desk

DAMASCUS: Syria is set to hold a presidential election on May 26, the country's second in the shadow of civil war, seen as likely to keep President Bashar al-Assad

The announcement was made by the parliament speaker on Sunday.

Syrians abroad will be "able to vote at embassies" on May 20, Hammouda Sabbagh said in a statement, adding that prospective candidates could hand in their applications from Monday. Millions of people displaced by Syria's long-running war were not eligible to cast bal-

President Assad, who took power following the death of his father Hafez in 2000, has not yet officially announced he will stand for re-election. He won the previous election in 2014, three years after a bloody crackdown on anti-government protesters and amid the raging conflict. At the time, he was given nearly 90 percent of

#### Three killed in shooting at Wisconsin tavern

#### WEB DESK

NEW YORK: Three people have been killed and two wounded in a shooting at a tavern in Wisconsin.

The shooting took place early on Sunday at Somers House Tavern in the village of Somers, Kenosha County Sergant David Wright said. The suspected attacker is still on the run and Wright said the shooting appeared to be a "targeted and isolated incident".

Officials were still working to determine the identities of the people who were killed. The road leading up to the tavern was closed early Sunday while officials were investigating.

eight people were killed in a late-night shooting at a FedEx facility in the US city of Indianapolis by a gunman who is believed to have then killed himself.

Multiple others were injured when gunfire erupted at the facility near Indianapolis International Airport, police spokesperson Genae Cook said.

Last month, four people, including a child, were shot dead in an office building in southern California.

#### Chad: U.S. embassy to withdraw staff

### FOREIGN DESK

N'DJAMENA: The United States has ordered its non-essential staff in Chad to leave the African country as rebel fighters approached the capital on Sunday after early election results showed President Idriss Deby on course to extend his three-decade rule. Deby, who seized power in 1990 at the head of an armed rebellion, is a staunch ally of France and the United States in the fight against Islamist militants in the arid

Sahel region. "Due to their growing proximity to N'Djamena and the possibility for violence in the city, non-essential U.S. government employees have been ordered to leave Chad by commercial airline," the U.S. state department said in a statement.

The British government on Saturday urged its citizens to leave because, it said, two armed convoys from the rebel Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT) were advancing towards the capital. One convoy was seen approaching the town of Mao, about 220 km (137 miles) to the north of N'Djamena, it said.

Large numbers of heavily armed Chad security forces were patrolling the streets of the capital on Sunday morning, a Reuters witness

Chad's army said it had destroyed a rebel convoy in the north of Kanem province on Saturday afternoon. "The column was totally decimated," army spokes-Azim Bermandoa Agouna said in a statement late on Saturday.

### US, China agree to tackle climate crisis with urgency

"The United States and China are committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency that it demands"

Foreign Desk

WASHINGTON: China and the United States, the world's two biggest carbon polluters, have agreed to cooperate with other countries to fight climate change.

The joint statement on Sunday followed two days of talks between Chinese climate envoy Xie Zhenhua and his US counterpart, John Kerry, in Shanghai.

"The United States and China are committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency that it demands," their statement said.

The two countries will also continue to discuss "con-

crete actions in the 2020s to reduce emissions aimed at keeping the Paris Agreement-aligned temperature limit within reach", it said. In the Paris accord, countries agreed in 2015 to keep rising global temperatures to below 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahren-

China and the US are the world's top carbon polluters, pumping out nearly half of the fossil fuel fumes that are warming the planet's atmosphere.

heit).

Their cooperation is key to the success of global efforts to curb climate change, but frayed ties over human rights, trade and China's territorial claims to Taiwan and the South China Sea have been threatening to undermine such efforts. Kerry's trip to Shanghai

marked the highest-level travel to China by a US official since President Joe Biden took office in Jan-

Biden, who has said fighting global warming is among his highest priorities, had the US rejoin the Paris climate accord in the first hours of his presidency, undoing the withdrawal ordered by his predecessor, Donald Trump.

The new US president has also invited 40 world leaders, including Chinese President Xi Jinping, to a virtual summit to discuss the issue on April 22 and 23. The US and other countries

are expected to announce more ambitious national targets for cutting carbon emissions before or during the meeting, along with pledging financial

for climate efforts by less wealthy nations.

When Kerry was still in Shanghai, Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng signalled on Friday that China is unlikely to make any new pledges at next week's summit.

"For a big country with 1.4 billion people, these goals are not easily delivered," Le said during an interview with The Associated Press news agency in Beijing. "Some countries are asking China to achieve the goals earlier. I am afraid this is not very realistic." On whether Xi would join

the summit, Le said, "The Chinese side is actively studying the matter." During a video meeting with German and French

the Paris accord. leaders on Friday, Xi said climate change "should not

become a geopolitical chip, a target for attacking other countries or an excuse for trade barriers", though he called for closer cooperation on the issue, according to the official Xinhua News

Xi pledged last year that China would achieve "carbon neutrality by 2060" and ensure its greenhouse gas emissions peak before

The top emitters of greenhouse gases are also preparing for the next United Nations climate summit taking place in Glasgow, United Kingdom, in November. The summit aims to relaunch global efforts to keep rising global temperatures to below 1.5C as agreed in

According to the US-China statement, both Washington and Beijing "intend to develop" their respective longterm strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by the Glasgow meeting.

Other moves in the near term include boosting "international investment and finance" to support the transition to green energy in developing countries, as well as phasing out production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, gases used in refrigeration, air conditioners and aerosols. Longer-term actions that need to be taken to keep the temperature goals of the Paris accord "within reach" include reducing emissions from industry and power generation while stepping up renewable energy, clean transportation and climate-resistant agriculture.

### **National** Army Day

TEHRAN: Iran has marked its

Iranian military units on Sunday held a motorcade parade in the capital Tehran where various types of unmanned aerial vehicles, tanks, anti-aircraft batteries, advanced missile systems and different kinds of electronic warfare systems were put on display. Army chief Major General Abdolrahim Mousavi, and commanders of the army's air force, navy and ground force as well as senior commanders of the IRGC were present to oversee the pa rade. - Foreign Desk

Pakistan and China tea's

blend can be a potential

product for int'l market

BEIJING: "Broken tea from China and Pakistan can be

blended and make new products for the international mar-

ket," said He Qingyuan, a senior official of Tea Research

According to a China Economic Net's report, Yunnan has

many advantages in developing the black tea industry.

"One is that the ecological environment is very good and

Second, the variety of Yunnan black tea is very unique,

which is rich in nutrients and contains very high levels of

In Pakistan, the demand for broken black tea is high. "The

tea polyphenols and theaflavins."He Qingyuan said.

Institute, Yunnan Academy of Agricultural Sciences.

### Iran marks

virus pandemic.

National Army Day by parading the latest military achievements, including home-grown air defense systems, inside selected military bases across the country due to the corona

#### Pakistani brothers. Germany mourns 80,000 Covid dead

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Germany is holding a national memorial day on Sunday for its nearly 80,000 victims of the coronavirus pandemic.

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Angela Merkel attended memorial events, just as the country battles a renewed surge in COVID-19 cases.

The two leaders first took part ın a mornıng service at Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church a memorial in Berlin against war and destruction

"Sickness, dying and death cannot be just pushed away in this long year, they have cut deeply into the lives of many people," said Georg Baetzing. the chairman of the German Bishops' Conference, at the

service. Later Sunday, Steinmeier and Merkel attended a ceremony at the capital's Konzerthaus. where the president gave a speech.

With pandemic curbs still in force restricting the number of people who could attend, the ceremonies were broadcast live on television.

Steinmeier called on the audience to remember the people behind the statistics and figures, asking them "to consider the human tragedy of the

pandemic." The president said it was "understandable" that "we have been obsessing over infection rates and the number of deaths each day."

### Cuba's Raul Castro leaves the political stage

WEB DESK

HAVANA: Raul Castro, who is retiring from high public office, for most of his life toiled in the shadow of his older brother, Fidel Castro. Yet he also played a key role in Cuba's 1959 leftist revolution and the preservation of Cuban socialism. While Fidel was the charis-

matic leader who rallied Cubans to defend the revolution and defy the United States, Raul, 89, built the military into a formidable fighting force that saw off enemies including a U.S.-backed invasion at the Bay of Pigs.

Later, after the fall of former benefactor the Soviet Union sent Cuba into an economic tailspin and left it politically isolated, he launched market-style reforms to its centralized economy and sought to normalize relations with Western powers.

an economic crisis that has caused shortages of even basic goods and is threatening the universal access to quality healthcare and education hailed by supporters of Cuban socialism as among the most important achievements of the revolution.

But he leaves office amid

### 'Republic of N.Cyprus going to Geneva'

Foreign Desk

Foreign Desk

TOKYO: US climate envoy

John Kerry has reaffirmed

Washington's confidence in

Japan's decision to release

contaminated water from its

crippled Fukushima nuclear

plant into the sea despite

concerns raised by South

Kerry arrived in Seoul on

Saturday to discuss interna-

tional efforts to tackle global

warming, on a trip that in-

cluded a stop in China ahead

of President Joe Biden's vir-

tual summit with world lead-

ers on climate change this

South Korean Foreign Min-

Korea.

LEFKOSA: The president of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on Sunday attended an online meeting on the "Strategic Vision of the TRNC" organized by Eurasia Economic Relations Association.

Hikmet Eren, the chairman of the association's board of directors, moderated the meeting, while Ahmet Hamdi, the adviser to the TRNC's Presidency on agriculture, animal husbandry and entrepreneurship, was also present at the meeting, according to a written statement by the

At the meeting, innovative and developmental strategies and the new vision of the TRNC under the country's political, economic, social,

and cultural transformation were discussed. Northern Cyprus will go to Geneva with a new vision, including cooperation based on sovereign equality of the two states, and this is a significant step, said Tatar regarding the informal, Cyprus-themed

conference. The conference is held under the leadership of the UN with the participation of the guarantor countries on April 17-19 in Geneva, Switzerland "With Turkey's growing power in the region and its support for the TRNC.

will provide information in a more transparent and speedy manner," the ministry said in a statement. But Kerry, at a media roundtable on Sunday, said Tokyo had made the decision in a

Japan's decision, and asked

the US side to take interest

and cooperate so that Japan

KABUL: Secretary of State Antony Blinken met with U.S. troops during his trip to Kabul. - DNA

US backs Japan's Fukushima

plans despite S Korea's concerns

ister Chung Eui-yong sought

to rally support behind the

country's protest against the

Fukushima plan at a dinner

Under the plan, more than

one million tonnes of water

will be discharged from the

plant wrecked by an earth-

quake and tsunami in 2011

into the nearby sea off Ja-

Seoul strongly rebuked the

decision, with the foreign

ministry summoning the Jap-

anese ambassador and Presi-

dent Moon Jae-in ordering of-

ficials to explore petitioning

"Minister Chung conveyed

our government and peo-

ple's serious concerns about

an international court.

meeting with Kerry.

pan's east coast.

transparent manner and will continue following due pro-"The US is confident that

the government of Japan is in very full consultations with the IAEA," he said, referring to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

"The IAEA has set up a very rigorous process and I know that Japan has weighed all the options and the effects and they've been very transparent about the decision and the process."

The former US secretary of state added that Washington would closely monitor Japan's implementation "like every country, to make certain there is no public health threat".

"We think we have confidence in the ability of IAEA and Japan and our relationship with the agency. We need to see how it progresses, and how they do, but we don't think it is appropriate for the US to jump into a process that's already underway and where there are very clear rules and expectations." Kerry said.

#### main producing areas of broken black tea in Yunnan are Lincang, Baoshan, and Dehong. Broken black tea is mainly used to make teabags. Its price is not high in China. Yunnan is also searching for ways to increase its export." According to He Qingyuan, broken black tea has the highest level of mechanization among black tea products. "Tea trees are perennials and can only be planted artificially. Trimming and picking machines are used in tea garden management. - DNA

the quality of tea is very high.



DUBAI: Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Quraishi visits Expo2020 in Dubai today. While visiting Pakistan Pavilion at the Expo, FM appreciated the role of Pakistani community in United Arab Emirates. - DNA

### 'India should restore special status of J&K'

Pakistan has long been committed to resolving all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir dispute, with India through peaceful and meaningful negotiations

**DNA** 

BEIJING: India should restore original special status of Jammu and Kashmir, withdraw its military and security forces from Jammu and Kashmir to pave way for peaceful and meaningful negotiations for settlement of Kashmir issue.

These views were expressed by Cheng Xizhong, Visiting Professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law and former Defense Attach © in South Asian countries said on

Pakistan has long been committed to resolving all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir dispute, with India through peaceful and meaningful negotiations.

However, despite the strong opposition of the international community and regional countries. India unilaterally scrapped Article 370 of the Constitution in 2019, stripped Jammu and Kashmir of special status, and downgraded Jammu and Kashmir from statehood to union territory status.

As a result, the peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue has lost its basis, which has worsened the relations between India and Pakistan, and seriously damaged peace and stability in South Asia, he said in a statement issued here. In his opinion, whether India and Pakistan can resume dialogue and normalize relations depends on the following three conditions: First, India deeply reflects on what it has done in recent years,

quickly corrects its mistakes, and

restores original special status of

Jammu and Kashmir by legal pro-

cedures. Second, India withdraws

all the military and security forces from Jammu and Kashmir that are being deployed to suppress Kashmiri people, immediately stops serious violations of human rights and gives the Kashmiri people the right to self-determination. Third, India completely abandons regional hegemonism and

deals with its relations with its South Asian neighbors, including Pakistan, in an equal manner. Cheng Xizhong welcomed the statement of Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson in which he said that Pakistan had always underscored the need for a mean-

issue of Jammu and Kashmir. "We are fully agree with what the Pakistani Foreign Office spokesperson said. Moreover, I think Pakistan's position of normalizing relations with India

ingful dialogue on all outstand-

ing issues including the core

is sincere, reasonable and very

constructive," he added. He said that India and Pakistan are the two major powers in the South Asian subcontinent, because of the long-standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute, they have been hostile to each other for decades.



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### Briefs

### **NASA's mini** helicopter set to create history

Foreign Desk

WASHINGTON: The National Aeronautics Space Administration (NASA) has launched its first helicopter Ingenuity to fly over Mars.

The mini helicopter Ingenuity by NASA is set to be the first to fly on another planet other than Mars.

It is a 1.8kg helicopter that travelled to Mars inside Nasa's Perseverance rover, which landed in February

NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory had tweeted, "MarsHelicopter touchdown confirmed!

"Its 293 million miles (471 million kilometers) journey aboard @NASAPersevere ended with the final drop of 4 inches (10 centimeters) from the rover's belly to the surface of Mars today. Next milestone? Survive the night."

NASA says the space centre now aims to test the helicopter on April 19 (Monday). If the flight wouldn't be successful, they'll try again later in the week.

Earlier, Bob Balaram, Mars Helicopter Project chief engineer had written in an update, "This heater keeps the interior at about 45 degrees F (7 degrees Celsius) through the bitter cold of the Martian night, where temperatures can drop to as low as -130F (-90 degrees Celsius)."

### GDP growth must be at least 6 to 7%: Shaukat Tarin

#### KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The newly-appointed Federal Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin had met Prime Minister Imran Khan recently and discussed the economic situation in the country. Economist and financial experts had also attended the meeting. Federal Minister for Energy Hamad Azhar and social media members of the ruling party were also present in the meeting.

According to sources, the meeting took place at the Prime Minister's House two days ago in which the country's economic situation was discussed. Expressing full confidence in Shaukat Tarinn's abilities, PM Imran Khan said that he has known Shaukat Tareen for 35 years and he has also been a part of the Board of Governors of Shaukat Khanum Hospital.

"I am confident that Shaukat Tarin will come up with better planning for the further stability of the country's economy", said PM Khan.

#### Saudi Airlines to operate all int'l flights by May 17

### **DNA**

JEDDAH: Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) will be ready to operate international flights fully by May 17, 2021 (Shawwal 5, 1442H), Saudia's Assistant Director General for Communications Khaled Bin Abdulgader Tash disclosed to Okaz /Saudi Gazette.

It was announced earlier by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) that international flights could resume fully by May 17, 2021.

In an answer to a question by Okaz on a tweet published by Saudia on its Twitter account. the Saudia official said that this indicates that the lifting of all restrictions on international travel will specifically be on Shawwal 5.

In a tweet on its Twitter account, Saudia said: "Have you packed your bags?" accompanied with pictures of suitcases, in a clear indication that the date is approaching for allowing Saudis to travel abroad without any restrictions, after a suspension of over a whole year, since the spread of the coronavirus pandemic globally in March 2020. GACA had amended the date for allowing Saudi citizens to travel abroad, for fully lifting the suspension of flights for international airlines and opening the Kingdom's airports, to May 17, 2021 corresponding to Shawwal 5, 1442H.

### Pakistan reaches deal for China's CoronaVac vaccine

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has already issued emergency use permission for CoronaVac vaccine to a private firm of Lahore

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reached to an agreement for procurement of China's CoronaVac vac-

Coronavac vaccine has been prepared by the Sinovac Life Sciences of China. The firm has assured providing the vaccine according to the needs of Pakistan, sources said.

Sinovac will initially provide the Coronavac vaccine to Pakistan on a limited scale, sources disclosed.

The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP)

Govt to

provide

items at

fixed price

**DNA** 

LAHORE: Special Assis-

tant to Chief Minister Pun-

jab for Information Fird-

ous Ashiq Awan on Sunday said that Punjab govern-

ment is working to provide

essential commodities to

public at government fixed

Firdous Ashiq Awan, in a

series of tweets, said that CM Usman Buzdar is re-

viewing price and availabil-

ity of all basic items includ-

ing flour and sugar at daily

basis and he has directed

concerned administration

to make price control

mechanism more effective.

Usman Buzdar has also in-

structed officials to ensure

availability of all essential

products at Ramadan Ba-

zars as well as open mar-

ket and ordered strict in-

discriminate action against

all profiteers, Firdous

The CM's aide further said

that government will soon

control inflation with the

Ashiq Awan said.

help of public.

has already issued emer- ca, Europe and Asia. gency use permission for CoronaVac vaccine to a private firm of Lahore. The company had also submitted the data of clinical trials of the vaccine to the DRAP.

CoronaVac, inactivated vaccine, comprises of two doses and stored at minus-two to eight degree temperature, Celsius sources said.

China had allowed emergency use of the CoronaVac in July 2020. Phase-I and Phase-II clinical trials of the vaccine were held in China, while phase-III trials were conducted in countries in Latin Ameri-

Phase-III trials of CoronaVac vaccine were held in Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia and Philippines. The vaccine found 83.5 percent effective in Turkey, while in Indonesia the effectivity was 65.3 pct.

It is to be mentioned here that scores of countries including Mexico, Tunisia, Zimbabwe. Azerbaijan. Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Philippines and Thailand have approved CoronaVac for use.

A spokesperson of health already weak healthcare ministry told media that Pakistan has received one million purchased jabs of CanSino and Sinopharm vaccine from China. He said the vaccine is being provided to federating units in compliance with all health guidelines.

the dozes are transported by airplanes to Sindh, Balochistan and Gilgit-Baltistan to maintain the temperatures and save time. Government and health

The Spokesperson said

system is near saturation. In several district hospitals, nearly 90% of ventilators and oxygen beds are already occupied, while some hospitals are turning away new patients as 100% of beds allocated for coronavirus patients are already taken, according

to ministry officials. Pakistan is set to receive millions of COVID-19 vaccine doses from various countries in the coming weeks to speed up its slow

people above 50 years old, have been inoculated.

By May Pakistan will receive 15 million doses of the vaccine from Germany under the World Health Organization-led COVAX facility - meant to deliver vaccines to low- and middle-income countries - apart from procuring 7 million doses from China.

Beijing has provided over 1 million doses to Pakistan as a "gift," and promised to provide another batch of 500,000 doses by the end of April.

using China's Sinopharm and CanSino vaccines in government hospitals.

Registration of health workers started for vaccine

**Z**UBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The government has announced the re-registration of health workers for coronavirus vaccination, media reported on Sunday.

PM Imran Khan's aide on health Dr Faisal Sultan said four weeks had been given earlier for health worker's registration for the coronavirus vaccine. However, he said health workers did not take interest and most of them did not show up for the regis-

He maintained that the government cannot ignore the safety of the frontline workers, therefore, re-registration for the vaccination would begin soon.

On March 17, the government abruptly stopped the registration of health workers across the country.

On the other hand, a government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, told that health workers had shown no interest in registering for the vaccine despite earlier appeals, threats, and even announcements of benefits.

### Syrian presidential elections in May

**DNA** 

DAMASCUS: The Syrian presidential elections will be held in May, the Syrian parliament announced on Sunday.

Running for the elections will start as of April 19, said parliament speaker, Hamoudeh Sabbagh. He added that those wanting to run for the elections can submit their applications within the next

He said that the Election Day for the Syrians abroad is set on May 20, while for the Syrians inside the country, it will be held on May 26.

"I call upon Syrians to practice their right in choosing the president of the Syrian Arab Republic," he said.

#### DRAP stops doctors from mentioning brand names

### **DNA**

ISLAMABAD: The Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) has on Sunday prohibited the doctors from mentioning brand names of medicines in prescriptions.

The DRAP in an official circular to medical practitioners stated, "The doctors in their prescriptions should write the generic formula of the medicines." 'The DRAP has made it un-

lawful for doctors to write the medicine's manufacturer's name in their prescriptions," the circular read. "It is a common practice

that the private, as well as government hospitals' doctors, write the 'brand name of a medicine in their prescriptions with expensive price." "The patients become overburdened to purchase expensive medicines of a specific brand," the DRAP circular read. The letter further read,

"Now the medical practitioners will write generic formula instead of the brand name of a medicine."

"Prime Minister's Performance Delivery Unit has received several complaints with regard to the doctor's habit to suggest brand names of medicines in their prescriptions," the DRAP circular concludes.

Earlier, the DRAP had approved the Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine for people above 60 years of age. The National Command and

Control Centre (NCOC) said that the Sinopharm vaccine was being administered to people up to the age of 60 vears, however, it would now be used to inoculate citizens above 60 years of age too. The body had approved China's Sinopharm coronavirus vaccine for inoculations to registered health workers over 60 years.



KABUL: US Secretary of Defence Antony Blinken also in a meeting with Chairperson of the High Council for National Reconciliation Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, where the Secretary underscored that Afghanistan and the United States were starting a new chapter, one that they would write together. – DNA

### PML-N concerned over delay in Shahbaz' release

### ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The PML-N has expressed concern over a delay in the release on bail of party president and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif, despite court orders released four days ago permitting

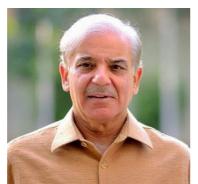
A statement issued by the party, quot-

ing spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb, stated that it is shocking to see a dissenting note emerge after four days, despite the court initially approving bail and a proper announcement of the same run on television. Aurangzeb said that it was for the "first

time in history" that bail was approved by the court but the written order was not signed. "This is very painful to see,"

"We were going to the court to collect the written order for the past four days but were told each time that the written order is still being prepared," she said. Aurangzeb said the bail was announced and the matter was reported on media for two to three days, besides having been posted on the Lahore High Court website.

"It is mind boggling that the entire nation saw his bail being announced on television and yet, the written order is yet to be issued.



The PML-N spokesperson questioned how "despite the chief justice having been informed of the decision, no notification was issued by the court these

past four days". "We respect the court and will continue to do so, as is the duty of every citizen. But we are aggrieved after facing this situation," she said.

Aurangzeb hoped the party will be served "complete justice". "It is our faith that those who serve the people will be provided justice and Shahbaz Sharif will be exonerated as always," she added.

Reacting to the statement, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill said that the PML-N had "itself lied" about the court's verdict on ShahHe said the PML-N "tried to give the impression that the decision was later amended".

"PML-N's lawvers and representatives present in court know full well that the verdict was announced by the Naib Qasid and not the judge," Gill said.

The premier's aide said that the court's decisions must not be misinterpreted. He added that PTI has always respected the judiciary and its decisions and it has no influence over it.

Gill went on to detail the findings in the ongoing probe against Shahbaz in which he has been accused of money laundering and owning assets beyond known sources of income.

He said Shahbaz's total assets were Rs2.1 million in 1990 which were increased to Rs25 million in 1998 and further increased to Rs7 billion from 2008 to 2018. Similarly, he said that the total assets of Hamza Shahbaz amounted to Rs10 million in 2001 which had since gone up to Rs530 million and instead of the father, all the amounts were transferred to the son's accounts through Telegraphic Transfer (TTs).

He said that heavy amounts were transferred to Hamza's account through 23 TTs and an amount of Rs1.5 billion was transferred to Salman Shahbaz's account in the same way.

### 40,000 to 50,000 Pakistanis likely to perform Hajj

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affair and Interfaith Harmony Sahibzada Noor-ur-Haq Qadri said 40,000 to 50,000 Pakistanis might be allowed to perform the sacred religious ceremony of Hajj this year. In an interview he said that the hajj 2021 would take place under special circumstances with special norms, rules and regulations, eligibility, criteria and age re-



strictions The intending pilgrims would be required to strictly follow SOPs (standard operating procedures) during hajj.Only people who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 would be allowed to attend Hajj this year and his ministry was ready to comply with this condition. He said the pilgrims of less than 20 or over 50 years of age may not be permitted to perform hajj this year. Saudi Arabia may allow hajj aspirants having sound health without serious illness.

However, Minister for Religious Affair and Interfaith Harmony Sahibzada Noor-ur-Haq Qadri said that the Saudi government has not yet given green signal for going ahead with the hajj arrangements as various Saudi departments hajj, umrah ministry, tourism, health, interior were still weighing options to make hajj safe and secure. To a question, he said efforts were underway to cele-

brate Eid-ul-Fitr across the country on same day. Legal cover will be given to Ruet-e-Hilal committee. After legislation violation of Ruet-e-Hilal committee would be a punishable offence, he said. - APP

### **APRIL 17: The Palestinian Prisoner's Day**

PNC indicated that since 1967, the Israeli occupation has arrested about one million Palestinians, which is the highest in the world, and about 4,500 Palestinians are still being held in its prisons

### Foreign Desk

RAMALLA: The Palestinian people and freedom advocates around the world celebrate the "Palestinian Prisoner's Day", which is April 17 of each year, after it was approved by Palestine National Council (PNC) in 1974 in fulfillment of the prisoners' struggle and sacrifices, in support of their right to freedom, and ensuring a decent standard of life for them and their families.

Since that date, the "Palestinian Prisoner Day" has been a national occasion to remember the prisoners' issue, highlight their social and human suffering, and the grave violations they are subjected to inside the prisons of the Israeli occupation. PNC indicated that since 1967,

the Israeli occupation has arrested about one million Palestinians, which is the highest in the world, and about 4,500 Palestinians are still being held in its prisons, including (140) children, (41) girls and women, and more than (700) Prisoners suffer from various diseases, including (440) administrative detainees without charge or trial, divided over about (22) prisons and detention centers.

The prisoners are subjected to grave violations, most notably physical and psychological torture, solitary isolation, deliberate medical neglect and visits

international and humanitarian conventions and covenants, PNC clarified.

The spread of CORONA-19 pandemic caused the prisoners' infections rose to (368), as a result of poor health care and protection measures, and a scarcity of protective tools, which led to the death of 4 prisoners inside the Israeli occupation prisons during the year 2020, PNC added. The occupying power is targeting

the legitimacy of the prisoners 'struggle, in an attempt to mark their just struggle as "terrorism". PNC continued, Israel targeted the Palestinian families' funds that guarantee them the minimum living requirements.

rejections, in violation of relevant The states parties contracting to Geneva Conventions in 1949 must bear their responsibilities and pressure the occupation to release prisoners, especially the sick and the elderly, women, minors, and old prisoners, PNC said. PNC called on the international community to intervene urgently and take measures to ensure that the Israeli occupation implements its obligations in accordance with the rules of international law and the Third and Fourth Geneva Conventions, including the best practices for the treatment of prisoners.

PNC urged the International Committee of the Red Cross and the World Health Organization to visit Israeli prisons, and closely

health conditions of Palestinian prisoners and detainees. PNC also called for unifying the efforts of Palestinian and Arab human rights organizations regarding documenting violations and

examine the reality of the difficult

crimes committed against prisoners, and employing international mechanisms by referring to international institutions and courts. PNC concluded its statement by directing a proud salute to the souls of the martyrs of the captive national movement, to all male and female prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons and their families, and to everyone who passed through those prisons from among the Palestinians, Arabs and free people of the world.