



Islamabad POST

Saturday, April 24, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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My sincere gratitude to all friends for their caring and sympathies

Detailed News On Page-01

Baku hopes US will not make mistake

Detailed News On Page-06



Faisal Edhi offers help to India in tackling Covid-19

Detailed News On Page-08



Sehr & Iftar Timings
Ramadan Kareem

| CITY | SEHR | IFTAR |
|--------------|----------|----------|
| ISLAMABAD | 03:55 am | 06:47 pm |
| FAISALABAD | 04:01 am | 06:43 pm |
| LAHORE | 03:55 am | 06:38 pm |
| KARACHI | 04:40 am | 06:59 pm |
| SARGODHA | 04:01 am | 06:46 pm |
| FIQA JAFARIA | | |
| CITY | SEHR | IFTAR |
| ISLAMABAD | 03:44 am | 06:57 pm |
| FAISALABAD | 03:51 am | 06:53 pm |
| LAHORE | 03:44 am | 06:48 pm |
| KARACHI | 04:30 am | 07:09 pm |
| SARGODHA | 03:51 am | 06:56 pm |

Army to help implement Covid SOPs

Prime Minister Imran Khan warns people against lockdown if SOPs not followed; outdoor dining banned till Eid; schools to remain shut in high risk areas

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said he had asked the Pakistan Army to assist the police and law enforcement agencies in enforcing SOPs for curbing the spread of the coronavirus, warning that Pakistan may soon be facing a situation similar to India if the current trend continues.

Addressing the nation after a meeting of the National Coordination Committee, he said: "I am appealing to you to follow SOPs so that we don't have to take steps that India is taking which means imposing lockdowns. Half the problem is solved when you wear face masks." India marked a grim milestone in the Covid-19 pandemic on Thursday, reporting 314,835 new daily cases, the highest one-day tally anywhere, as its second wave and similar surges elsewhere have raised new fears about the ability of health services to cope.

"If our circumstances become the same as India, then we will have to close down cities. We can't do that because, as experience has shown, the poor suffer the most when lockdowns are imposed," the prime minister said. "People are telling me to impose a lockdown today, but we are not going to do so because, and I keep repeating this, daily wagers and labourers will suffer the most." That is why we have not taken action, he said, adding that however long this lasts will depend on the people. The premier called on the nation to start observing precautionary measures, in the same way which you did the previous year during Ramazan.

Govt developing new tourist destinations

KHAYAM ABBASI

MURREE: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday launched various development projects in Murree, including establishment of Kohsar University and up-gradation of TB Sanatorium Hospital. Addressing the launching ceremony, he said the government is focusing on developing new tourist destinations to promote tourism and to provide jobs to local people. He said tourism is future of Pakistan and Kohsar University will contribute a lot in this regard. Imran Khan said we can retire our debt by promoting tourism sector in all parts of the country. He said Switzerland earns around 80 billion dollars every year through tourism. He said Switzerland has developed tourism as a science and launched courses in hospitality management and we can also earn more by developing our northern areas and other tourist spot across Pakistan. He said tourism sector has been flourishing in Pakistan with double pace every year. The Prime Minister, on the occasion also planted a sapling under the Clean and Green campaign.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairing a meeting of National Coordination Committee for Covid-19. – DNA

Pakistani Company involved in illegal oil import from Iran

Byco Petroleum is reportedly bringing oil to Pakistani markets; authorities mull stern action

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Due to the US sanctions on Iran, Pakistan does not formally purchase petroleum products from the neighboring country. However the Iranian oil makes its way to the Pakistani markets through different channels including smuggling as well as mis-declaration wherein the Iranian origin oil is branded as that of other regional countries. According to the documents available with this correspondent, Byco Petroleum Company has been found involved in bringing the Iranian Crude Oil to the country through mis-declaration by changing Iranian origin shipments documents with that of other countries in the region.

The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance was informed by the officials concerned the other day that Byco Petroleum Pakistan Limited imported six consignments declared to be 726,564 barrels of 'Omani Blend Crude Oil' in a vessel last year through Gaddani port. The importer filed six goods declarations and paid the Customs Duty amounting to Rs 246.188 million. As fifty percent of the cargo was discharged from the vessels and the remaining was still on board, the Model Customs Collectorate (MCC) Gwadar received an information regarding likelihood of mis-declaration of actual description and/or import origin in respect of the cargo. Subsequently, samples were drawn from the cargo by Hydrocarbon

Development Institute of Pakistan (HDIP). The test samples of already discharged ship confirmed the origin of oil as that of Iranian.

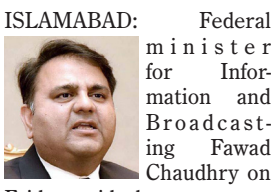
On this, a contravention case has been framed against Byco Petroleum under Customs Act 1969. Currently, the case is sub judice before the Customs Appellate Tribunal Karachi.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Energy has now revised the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) wherein crude oil is being cleared after receipt of analysis report confirming declared chemical composition and origin of the oil from the authorized laboratory of HDIP. According to the Customs Department's report, they have not cleared have not cleared any Iranian origin ship containing crude oil till date.

Briefs

Agreement between government, TLP in effect

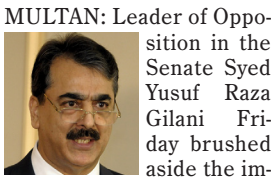
DNA



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Friday said that an agreement between the government and the recently proscribed Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has been fully implemented. In a tweet, the information minister added people who were arrested during the protest under Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) have also been released. On April 20, it was reported that the TLP called off its violent protests after the federal government tabled a resolution in the parliament to debate the French ambassador's expulsion.

No deal made for Senate elections

BUREAU REPORT



MULTAN: Leader of Opposition in the Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani Friday brushed aside the impression of any deal of PPP for Senate elections and leader of the opposition's slot in the Upper House of Parliament. Talking to the media here, he said being the single largest party in the Senate, it was the right of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to nominate the opposition leader. The PPP has 21 senators while the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has 16, so his party demanded this slot," he said.

Court orders auction of Nawaz properties

ZUBAIR AHMED

Shehbaz Sharif released

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: An accountability court in Islamabad has ordered the auction of properties of former prime minister and PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif in Toshakhana reference. Accepting the NAB's application for auction of the properties on Friday, the accountability court said wherever Nawaz Sharif's properties are located the concerned provincial government can carry out the auction. The accountability judge directed the authorities concerned to auction the former premier's moveable and immovable properties and deposit

LAHORE: A day after the Lahore High Court (LHC) approved his bail in a money laundering case, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif was released from Kot Lakhpat Jail on Friday. A large number of party leaders and workers including Hamza Shehbaz, Rana Sanaullah and Saad Rafique have gathered outside Kot Lakhpat Jail to welcome their leader. Shehbaz Sharif's personal vehicles have also reached outside the prison. He was driven to his Model Town residence where PML-N leaders, including vice president Maryam Nawaz, arrived to greet him on his release from the prison after nearly seven months. Earlier, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Lahore Chief Organizer Chaudhry Muhammad Nawaz and Malik Saiful Malook Khokhar appeared in the court as guarantors while counsel for Shehbaz Sharif submitted the surety bonds of Rs5 million each following which Robkar was issued.

Continued on Page 06

Positivity ratio at 10%

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Dr Faisal Sultan Friday said the COVID-19 case positivity ratio had become doubled in the past few days reaching 10% in the country. Dr Faisal, in a televised briefing after the meeting of National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), said the current situation showed the increasing trend of disease and its complications in its third wave, which had caused burden on the country's health system. He said the COVID cases were jumping up for the past few weeks and it was observed that the citizens were not following the corona Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) properly since the start of April. He urged the citizens to strictly follow the SOPs to prevent further surge in the infections.

Ruckus during NA session

Session adjourned without discussing resolution about the expulsion of French ambassador

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The lower house of Pakistan's parliament has been adjourned for an indefinite period without discussing or approving a resolution to expel the French ambassador. When the National Assembly session commenced under the chairmanship of Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri, members of the opposition wanted to discuss the resolution. However, the Speaker started the Question Hour. Opposition groups surrounded the speaker after Qasim Suri adjourned the session for an indefinite period after only 15 minutes of proceedings. Earlier on April 20, Amjad Ali Khan Niazi, a member

of the ruling party, moved a resolution in the House to expel the French ambassador over the issue of the blasphemous caricatures. Opposition parties, the PML-N and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), signalled their support for the resolution and demanded a joint resolution. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) did not participate in the process. The resolution regarding the French ambassador was not mentioned in the agenda of Friday's meeting and the Secretariat of the National Assembly had issued a nine-point agenda for the normal proceedings and agendas of the government. Opposition leaders, speaking to reporters outside

Continued on Page 06

NCOC announces fresh curbs

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Friday announced fresh restrictions, as the third wave of the virus intensifies in Pakistan and other parts of the world. The NCOC placed a ban on outdoor dining in restaurants and has said schools will be closed in cities where the coronavirus positivity ratio is above 5%. Office timings have been restricted to 2pm, with 50% work from home policy in place at both government and private offices. Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar, briefing the media about decisions taken by the National Coordination Committee (NCC) to curb the spread of coronavirus, said a comprehensive plan will be prepared in consultation with provinces in case lockdowns become necessary in certain cities. The federal minister said indoor dining was already banned in the country; however, now, outdoor dining is also being prohibited till Eid – and only takeaways will be permitted.

Zimbabwe humiliate Pakistan in 3rd T20

DNA

HARARE: Zimbabwe on Friday beat Pakistan by 19 runs in the second fixture of the three-match T20 series at the Harare Sports Club after the Men In Green failed to reach the 119-run target. Zimbabwe bowled Pakistan out for a meagre 99 runs, with one ball to spare – marking their first victory against the Men In Green in the T20Is. Pakistan's wickets started falling after opener Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed for 13. Fakhar Zaman was sent back to the pavilion after he scored 2 runs, Mohammad Hafeez made 5, Danish Aziz 22, Asif Ali 1. However, skipper Babar Azam tried to hold the fort by scoring 41 runs, but it was not enough to reach the lowest total that was scored at the Harare Sports Club. (Detailed News on Page 06)

Taliban urged to commit to Afghan peace

The foreign ministers of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan on Friday discussed the planned conference, aimed at fast-tracking an agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban following Washington's announcement that foreign troops will leave Afghanistan by September 11

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: The foreign ministers of Turkey, Pakistan and Afghanistan called on the Afghan Taliban on Friday to reaffirm its commitment to achieving a negotiated settlement for lasting peace in Afghanistan. In a joint statement issued after talks in Istanbul, the three ministers underlined "the urgent need for an immediate ceasefire" to end the violence and "provide a conducive atmosphere" for peace talks. A U.S.-backed Afghan peace conference to be hosted in Istanbul hosted by Turkey, Qatar and the United Nations on Saturday was postponed over the Taliban's non-participation. Ankara has said the talks will be held after the Islamic fasting month of Ramadan but no new date has been set. The foreign ministers of Turkey, Afghanistan and Pakistan on Friday discussed the planned conference, aimed at fast-tracking an agreement between the Afghan government and the Taliban fol-

lowing Washington's announcement that foreign troops will leave Afghanistan by Sept. 11. The ministers "called on all parties, in particular the Taliban to reaffirm their commitment for achieving an inclusive negotiat-

ed settlement leading to lasting peace in Afghanistan desired by the Afghan people, the region and the international community", according to the joint statement. They also "deplored the continuing high level of violence

in Afghanistan." Speaking at a joint news conference after the talks, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said as there was no military solution of the Afghan conflict, Pakistan had urged and would continue to

urge all the Afghan parties to sit together and find a way forward. "We as brothers can only facilitate," he remarked. He said that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was in the interest of Pakistan, which had suffered the most due to war in Afghanistan than any other country in the world. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Ankara's support for the Afghan peace process and efforts to organise the conference in Istanbul would continue. "As the co-organisers, we are continuing talks on this with all sides," he said, alongside Pakistani Foreign Minister Shan Mahmood Qureshi. Afghan Foreign Minister Hanif Atmar joined the meeting via video link for health reasons, Cavusoglu said. The Taliban had earlier refused to attend any summits until all foreign forces were pulled out of Afghanistan. The Taliban and the United States last year agreed that all foreign forces would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by May 1, a date that was pushed back last week by U.S. President Joe Biden.



ANKARA: Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Turkey addressing a joint press conference. – DNA

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. – Editor

Inside...

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PRCS distributes food packs among 500 deserving families – Page 04

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Zimbabwe thrash Pakistan by 19 runs in 2nd T20I – Page 06

CPEC offers profitable opportunities for entrepreneurs – Page 07

Quetta Serena Hotel people's preferred choice for iftars – Page 08

Briefs

2 suspects held during search operation

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: The police on Friday arrested two suspects and recovered weapons during a search operation in Bhagtanwala police limits. According to the police, the police with other law-enforcement agencies conducted bio-metric identification of more than 30 people and checked 20 houses of Chak 23 SB and arrested two accused for holding weapons. Three brick kilns sealed The Environment Protection Department (EPD) sealed three brick kilns for causing pollution here on Friday. According to an EPD spokesman, a team of the EPD conducted raids in the district and found three kilns were being run without zigzag technology. The team sealed the kilns and registered cases against owners - Muhammad Tanveer, Fazal Dawood and Muhammad Ashraf.

Two more coronavirus patients die in Faisalabad

DNA

FAISALABAD: Two more patients died of the COVID-19 in the district, while 215 persons tested positive during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the health department said on Friday the death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 766 in the district. He said that 1,339 tests for coronavirus were conducted in public and private sectors labs during the same period. He said that so far 10,994 patients had recovered from the disease while total active cases in Faisalabad reached 5,640. He said that 305 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 106 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for COVID-19 patients. At present, 279 patients, including 172 confirmed ones, were under treatment at the Allied Hospital, 115 including 27 confirmed, were admitted to DHQ Hospital and 67 including 37 confirmed patients were admitted to General Hospital. He further said that 3,581 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district.

Police officer held for getting bribe

DNA

FAISALABAD: An anti-corruption establishment (ACE) team held a police officer red-handed taking bribe from a citizen. Sources said here on Friday that in-charge investigation Unit Saddar police station Sub-Inspector (SI) Khawar Nasim has been arrested and sent behind the bars for taking Rs 15,000 bribe from one Naeem Shehzad for extending him favour in a case. The complainant, a resident of Mohalla Muhammad Nagar, stated in his application that the SI had already received Rs 25,000 from him in a case, which is under investigation, and now he was demanding Rs 70,000 more. ACE Assistant Director Syed Anwar-ul-Hassan Sherazi, along with Magistrate Rana Waheed Ahmed, arrested the SI and recovered marked notes of Rs 15,000 from his pocket.

7 cops booked over burning youth

Millat Town police booked seven policemen on charge of burning a youth who later died in a hospital. A police spokesman on Friday said Tahir Tanveer of Chak No 202-RB filed a complaint and said that in-charge police post Bhaiwala Ahad Hussain with his team had allegedly arrested his son Zeeshan Haider on February 6 and set him ablaze. As a result, Zeeshan received serious burns and he died in the hospital on March 21. On this complaint, the police registered a case against ASI Ahad Hussain, head constable Javid Bashir, constables Muhammad Yousaf, Muhammad Akbar (driver), Fazal Abbas, Muhammad Azhar Amir and Muhammad Sufyan while further investigation is underway.

'Punjab govt taking measures to provide relief to masses'

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Punjab Minister for Minorities and Human Rights Ejaz Aalam Augustine has said that Punjab govt. has focused its attention on provision of maximum economic relief to the masses and elaborated arrangements have been made for providing essential commodities on especially reduced prices during the holy month of Ramadan. He was inspecting Ramzan Bazars established at different areas of the city and appreciated district govt. for overall arrangements. The Minister visited Ramzan Bazar Chatra wali ground Jimnah Colony and other located in the city. He took a detailed round in these Bazars and checked the quality and prices of fruit, vegetables and other grocery items. He also inspected the counters of cheap sugar and flour and observed the sale process. He directed that the transparent sale of subsidized items should be ensured on proper record of sale be kept in order. The Minister also checked the stalls of meat & poultry. He interacted with the consumers and asked from them about the benefits and arrangements of the Ramzan



Bazars. He said that consumers' confidence was a success of these bazars. He said that CM Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar had given 5.5 billion of rupees on Ramzan Package and its benefits were being provided through the regular monitoring by the administrative and govt. machinery. He expressed his satisfaction over the arrangements of Ramzan Bazars and directed that best arrangements should be maintained throughout month. Ac Sadar

Umar Maqbool informed to the Minister that 19 Ramzan Bazars had been set up in the district and comprehensive mechanism was being followed for the supply of essential commodities, while fair price shops was also part of these bazars and considerable subsidy was being provided on different items on these stalls. Earlier Punjab Minister for Human Rights met with Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan in his office and discussed the matters

of law and order, development program and minorities issues. **32,070 senior citizens vaccinated** As many as 32070 senior citizens have been vaccinated with Corona Virus in district, in which 25534 have been given first while 6536 have been given second dose. 6 vaccination centres are fully functional in double shifts. This was informed to Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali during his visit to vaccination centre

SZABMU gets approval for Covid vaccine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University (SZABMU), Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) has got approval for becoming a part of a multi-centre phase III study for the COVID-19 vaccine ZF2001. According to an official of the Ministry of National Health Services, these trials have been approved by National Bioethics Committee (NBC) Pakistan and Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP). Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, medical researchers all over the world are rushing into the research and development of vaccines. ZF2001 vaccine is co-developed by the Institute of Microbiology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (IMCAS) and Anhui Zhifei Longcom Biopharmaceutical Co., Ltd. It is a protein subunit-based vaccine targeting different variants of COVID-19 as well. It is expected to prevent respiratory diseases caused by novel coronavirus with an efficacy of 92% to 97% when administered in three doses over a period of two months, the official added.

2237 bags of sugar seized

DNA

FAISALABAD: The district administration has taken grand action against the hoardings of sugar and seized 2237 bags of 50 kg of sugar. The sugar was stored in different godowns and during the last four days while the Assistant Commissioners raided various warehouses in 15 days and recovered a total of 9384 bags of sugar and sold them at official rates in the general market. During the raids 11 warehouses were sealed and 7 cases were registered besides 6 persons were arrested. The sugar bags were recovered from 437 GB, 67 JB, Siloni Jhal, chak 33 JB and other areas from hoarders. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali strongly directed the Assistant Commissioners to trace the sugar hoarders and take stock to them and send the illicit profiteers to jail.

DC visits 'Insaaf Sasti Shops'

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali himself came to the field to check the availability and prices of essential commodities and sealed 3 mega stores and arrested their managers on overcharging. He paid a surprise visit and checked superstores at susan road, madina town, d ground and adjacent areas and Insaaf Sasti Shops were not established at Bambino, E-Mart and Home Plus Mega Stores and essential items including sugar, gram pulse and other essential items were being sold at exorbitant prices on which action was taken. Apart from that SB store was given strict warning on the non-availability of sugar. The Deputy Commissioner clarified that no concession will be given to those who do not sell essential items at the fixed government rates. He said that counters should be set up at Mega Marts and standard items should be sold at the fixed rates. - DNA



MURREE: Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurates Kohsar University Murree. - DNA

PHP conducts coronavirus awareness sessions

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: In pursuance of vision of Addl: IG Punjab Highway Patrol Akram Naeem Bharoka, SSP Patrolling Mirza Anjum Kamal directed Incharge Mobile Education unit to conduct COVID-19 awareness session with Farmers. SP added that the workshops and seminars are important tool of inculcating road sense and education about traffic signs, right of way, maintaining of safe distance and hazards of over speeding and use of mobile phone during driving. Accordingly, one session with Farmers was done in order to sensitize the harvester about the obedience of Standard operating Procedure relating to preventive measures



to avoid contract of Corona virus. The farmers were educated about the washing of hands properly, wearing mask, avoid social gathering, keep social distance at least of 06 foot and drink lot of water in order to save from dehydration. Moreover, the farmers are advised to not

set fire the stubbles as it becomes smog in the long run and causes traffic accidents. The farmers appreciated the colossal efforts sensitization to public. While giving detail about lecture to students, he said that Incharge MEU Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti delivered lecture to students about road safety and Corona virus. The student are advised to wear Helmet, avoid using mobile phone and one wheeling is dangerous tantamount to suicide attempt. The audience was educated about safe distance, rule of overtaking, Land Marking, Road furniture, road signs and hazards of driving under depression, rage and drowsiness. Moreover, in case of emergency, happening of incident/accident, the road commuters can call on help line 1124 of Punjab Highway Patrol police. If the road user faces any kind of harassment on the road or he notices any unlawful activity on the road, he can call on PHP Helpline 1124. Polite, helpful and compassionate is the sole motto of Punjab highway patrol.

Monks visit Thakbhai Bhuddhist monastery



STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: A twelve members delegation from Sri Lanka Friday visited Buddhist monastery at Takhbai in Mardan district. Special Adviser to Prime Minister on Tourism, Zulfi Bukhari and Secretary Tourism Khyber Pakhtunkhwa accompanied the visiting delegation. The delegation comprised of

noted scholars, prominent personalities including Special Advisers to Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister. The members of the delegation paid a detailed visit to Thakbhai monastery and also offered their religious rituals. The visiting guests appreciated measures taken for the preservation of Bhamala Archaeological sites in Taxila where they were also taken on way to Thakbhai from Islamabad. The delegation members were of the opinion that Pakistan can become an attractive tourist's destination for Sri Lankan citizen where 72 percent of the population was follower of Buddhism. Speaking on the occasion, Director Archaeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dr. Abdul Samad briefed the guests about rich archaeological sites of Gandhara period in the province.

Secy JI women denounces curriculum change

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of Jamaate-Islami Pakistan Women's wing Durdana Siddiqui has said that Islamic ideology is basically the ideology of Pakistan - cultivating Islamic ideas in students, adorning the new generation and their lives with Islamic principles is the main purpose of Pakistan's ideology. For this purpose it is necessary to have a complete curriculum, a practical interpretation of the Islamic code of life. The removal of religious lessons and Islamic concepts from the curriculum is not at all acceptable, said in a Press Release issued here on Friday. She expressed these views in response to the statement instructing Punjab Textbook Board to stop publishing Islamic material in textbooks. She said that the Secular lobby and Minorities have been involved in conspiracies to deprive the curriculum of Islamic spirit.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Maintenance Division-II

TENDER NOTICE

Scaled tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis from the approved /enlisted contractors with PEC for the following works:-

| S.# | Name of work | NIT Cost | Earnest Money | Date & Time of closing Box | |
|-----|---|----------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Repair/Maintenance of H.No.385-C, Saddar Road, G-6/1-2, 123-D, St.55, G-6/4, 532-B, Gali-53, G-6/1-2 and 2/4-C, Sector G-8/1 Islamabad. | 829721 | 24892 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 2 | Repair/Maintenance of Block # 15/5-B, Block # 35/14-B, Block # 48/1-B, Block # 56/1-B, Block # 66/13-B & Block # 72/5-B in Sector G-9/2 Islamabad. | 803838 | 24115 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 3 | Repair /Maintenance of H.No.121-D, 53-D, St.22 & 14-D, Gali.18, Sector G-6/2 Islamabad. | 638285 | 19149 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 4 | Repair/Maintenance of H.No.11-G, St.6, G-6/3 & 238-E, St.18, G-6/2 Islamabad. | 720962 | 21629 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 5 | Repair/Maintenance of H.No.531-C, St.51, G-6/1-3, H#335-A, Gali.65, G-6/1-1 & H# 14-C, St.30 Sector G-6/2 Islamabad. | 570235 | 17107 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 6 | Repair/Maintenance of H.No.22A, St.42 in G-6/1-2 & 1/4-D, Gali.10 in 1/8/1 Islamabad. | 461800 | 13854 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 7 | Repair/Maintenance of Flat # 32/1-A & 36/6-A in Sector G-8/1, Islamabad. | 289798 | 63170 | 19-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 8 | Repair/Maintenance of H # 564-D, 568-D, 571-D & 572-D, St.25, G-6/2, Islamabad. | 115150 | 4 | 20-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 9 | Repair/Maintenance of H.No.13-F, St.04, G-6/3, H#323-E, St.78, G-6/4, Flat No.1/3-C Gali:47, G-8/1, 425-B, 36/10-B, G-9/2, 22-C, 9/1-C, 3/10-C, & 3/12-C in Sector G-8/1 Islamabad. | 174250 | 4 | 22-05-2021 11:30 AM | |
| 10 | Renovation of General Washrooms of (Masjid, Block-D, Block-C & Kitchens) at AGPR Office Sector G-8/4 Islamabad. | 311733 | 0 | 93520 | 20-05-2021 11:30 AM |
| 11 | Complete White wash of Block No.32-A & 33-A AGPR Colony, in Sector G-9/2 Islamabad. | 210568 | 2 | 63170 | 20-05-2021 11:30 AM |
| 12 | Repair/Maintenance of CD/AMCI Medical Centers (Rawal Town, Sector 1-8 & G-10) Islamabad. | 255939 | 4 | 76782 | 20-05-2021 11:30 AM |
| 13 | Repair/Maintenance of 03 Nos "B" type Blocks No. (76, 77, 78) in Sector G-9/2 Islamabad. | 414097 | 4 | 124229 | 20-05-2021 11:30 AM |

- CONDITIONS:-**
- The tenders can be purchased on Production of Pay order/CDR of appropriate amounts being generated from the firm A/C, in the name of Dy. Director (Maint-II) of Rs.500/- (S.No.06 & 07) Rs.1000/- (S.No.01 to 05, 08 & 09) Rs.2000/- (S.No.10 to 13) from the office of Dy. Director Maint-II, Bazar No.08 CDA office G-6/4, Islamabad during working day upto 11:30AM.
 - Application from the applicant/firms for issuance of tender documents will be received in the office of under signed on 12-05-2021 and tender documents shall be issued to successfully applicant on 18-05-2021. Applicants must apply application for every tender separately with supported documents.
 - Application on original letter pad, having signature of the contractor or Registered Attorney valid original PEC Registration, renewal of the firm, Income-tax/G.S.T certificate active must be submitted. In case of representative, copies of CNIC of the owner and Attorney if any along with original special power of attorney duly registered by the District Registrar for the specific purpose may also be attached with application.
 - Rule 33(i) the procuring agency may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to the acceptance of a bid or proposal. The procuring agency shall upon request communicate to any supplier or contractor who submitted or proposal, the grounds for its rejection of all bids or proposals, but is not required to justify those grounds.
 - The applicants/firms are also required to submit the Income tax returns being submitted to FBR for last (03) years along with the applications.
 - Rule 35 procuring agencies shall announce the results of bid evaluations in the form of report giving justification for acceptance or rejection of bids at least ten days prior to the award of procurement contract.
 - Tenders will be opened by Director Maintenance, CDA in his office located in Old Naval Head Quarter (S.No.09 to 13) and tender opened by Dy. Director Maint-II in his office located in the bazar No.08 G-6/4 (S.No.1 to 8), Islamabad, as per date & time mentioned against each work. Tenders will be received up to 12:00 Noon (sharp).
 - The bidders are required to provide the additional documents as per clause (16) of the CDA from W-6, while submitting the tender; otherwise, it will be liable for rejection.
 - In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount for tender Nos. at (1 to 13), the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. That is required performance security = NIT amount - total bid amount -10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. Bids not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of project.
 - PEC Certificate 2020-21, original special power of attorney duly registered through respective courts & Professional Tax Certificate in original will be seen before issuance of Tender.**
 - The contractor will provide the CDR, being generated only from firm account and open CDR will not be accepted and the lowest bidder will provide 6.5% security amount including CDR prior to execution of contractor payment.
 - The attorney holder may not be the employee of any Government/semi Government institute and only legitimate attorney holder shall be allowed to receive the tender documents.
 - The bid Security of all applicants would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
 - The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at least three number of maintenance nature works executed in CDA or Pak PWD in last two financial years may be observed/fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
 - This notice may also be seen CDA website (www.cda.gov.pk) and PPRA website (www.ppra.org.pk)

Deputy Director Maintenance Division-II Phone No.051-9244759

Briefs

Senate sectt to remain close till April 30

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: All offices of the Senate Secretariat will remain close for five days, from April 26 to 30, for disinfection of its precincts. The decision to this effect was taken in the wake of increasing cases of coronavirus pandemic in the country, said a notification issued by the Senate Secretariat here on Friday.

"The Secretariat shall resume its function on 3rd May, 2021, with minimum strength as per rotation policy to carry out official business. Furthermore, it is also directed to wear face masks, avoid handshake and maintain social distancing as per SOPs for COVID-19 during office hours," read the notification.

"The Security as well as R&I branch shall remain functional as usual on the basis of approved roster," it added.

Covid-19 survivors face increased risk of death

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 survivors - including those not sick enough to be hospitalized - have an increased risk of death in the six months following diagnosis with the virus, according to the largest comprehensive study of long COVID-19 to date.

The research, published in the journal Nature reveals the massive burden this disease is likely to place on the world's population in the coming years, they said.

The researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in the US also have catalogued the numerous diseases associated with COVID-19, providing a big-picture overview of the long-term complications of COVID-19, Medical daily reported.

They confirmed that, despite being initially a respiratory virus, long COVID-19 can affect nearly every organ system in the body.

The study involved more than 87,000 COVID-19 patients and nearly five million control patients.

"Our study demonstrates that up to six months after diagnosis, the risk of death following even a mild case of COVID-19 is not trivial and increases with disease severity," said study senior author Ziyad Al-Aly, an assistant professor of medicine at Washington University School of Medicine.

"Physicians must be vigilant in evaluating people who have had COVID-19. These patients will need integrated, multidisciplinary care," Al-Aly said.

ED issues transfer orders of officers

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Secretariat Establishment Division has issued the notification directing transfers and postings of various high ranking officers of Secretariat Group.

According to a notification, Ms. Nabeela Umar, a BS-19 officer of Secretariat Group, presently serving as Director, National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), Regional Office, Karachi, under Wed Lock Policy, is promoted to BS-20 in that Group, on regular basis, with effect from 26-02-2021.

On promotion, Ms. Nabeela Umar, is posted as Director General, National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), Regional Office, Karachi on deputation basis for a period of three (03) years, on standard terms and conditions, until further orders. This Division notification of even number dated 26-02-2021 is hereby with drawn ab-initio, the notification said. - APP

CDA urged to regularize non-conforming businesses

He emphasized that CDA should consider the other options to regularize them on compounded payment of charges including payment of commercial charges

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with a delegation co-chaired a meeting with Ali Nawaz Awan, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on CDA Affairs to discuss the issue of non-conforming businesses and analyze its negative impact on the growth of business activities in the federal capital. Abdul Rauf Alam Convener ICCI CDA Committee, Ch. Nadeem ud Din Chairman Task Force, Nasir Chaudhry, Tehmas Butt and CDA representatives were also present during the meeting.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry briefed Ali Nawaz Awan about the adverse effect of sealing businesses due to non-conforming use, especially at a time when the economy was already facing great challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic. He said that many of these



businesses and industries have been doing business in the Capital for the past several years and many of them are also new which are contributing to the GDP and creating employment in the country, therefore issuing them notices or sealing them was not the right approach during the current prevailing circumstances. He emphasized that CDA should consider the other options to regularize them

on compounded payment of charges including payment of commercial charges for all those conducting commercial activities on roofs or terraces which would also generate significant revenue for the civic body.

He said that regularizing these businesses was the best option to settle this long outstanding issue, which was now creating hurdles in the growth of business activities.

He also discussed various options with Ali Nawaz Awan for the regularization of all such businesses including industries in the industrial estates which need to apply for change of trade. Facilitation of all types of industries is essential for the country which will also contribute significantly towards exports and help the country move towards economic revival, he added.

Abdul Rauf Alam, Convener ICCI CDA Committee, Ch. Nadeem ud Din Chairman Task Force and other members of delegation also presented various proposals to deal with the issue of non-conforming businesses in a manner that should not disturb the growth of business activities and avoid the closure of any type of business which would create unemployment and also have a

deleterious impact on the economy.

Speaking at the occasion, Ali Nawaz Awan, SAPM on CDA Affairs said that the government was focusing on promoting ease of doing business and urged upon the CDA Management to explore all possible options within the legal framework to regularize non-conforming businesses.

He said that CDA should prepare a sector-wise list and give timelines to all non-conforming businesses in liaison with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry for their regularization by fulfilling all legal requirements.

Ali Nawaz Awan also discussed various other key issues of the business community including the pace of development works in markets and industrial areas and assured that CDA would try to complete all developments within timelines to facilitate the growth of business activities and help make Islamabad the most beautiful Capital with a supporting infrastructure in place to complement its beauty.

Corruption case sent to NAB against KHS: NA told

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Interior Shaukat Ali Friday informed the National Assembly that billions of rupees corruption case was being sent to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for further action against the Jammu and Kashmir Housing Society (KHS).

To a query during the Question Hour, he said Deputy Commissioner Islamabad who is also the registrar of the housing society had directed to look into the matter.

In a written reply to a question raised by MNA Zille Huma, Ministry of Defense informed the house that the Defense Division and its attached departments had appointed total 2,335 employees in different grades since 2018. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Wife of Turkish Ambassador, Zlatomira Yurdakul, organized an event in Turkish embassy's garden, to mark Celebration of Sovereignty and Children's Day. Children of embassy employees participated. - DNA

Renewable energy resources vital for low carbon recovery

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has a huge potential in renewable energy sector. Tapping this potential could play a significant role in achieving environmental targets. The experts said this during webinar 'Low carbon recovery in Pakistan-green financing strategies in post-Covid scenario,' held by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) on Friday.

Energy Finance Analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA), Mr. Simon Nicholas, was of the opinion that green the recovery initiatives are not only about environmental concerns but also rescuing the power sector of

Pakistan which is under great strain. He added that being a partner of china, a global green recover leader, Pakistan is serious contender for green recovery and transition to renewable energy.

He added further that Pakistan can diversify its power sector by making sustainable investment commitment and attracting private investors in the fields of green energy. The financial and technical assistance from developed countries could be vital to develop renewable energy, he added.

Member of SAARC energy sector on renewable energy, Dr. Ahsan Javed, on the occasion said that the green recovery initiatives can prove a game changer in the countries having great potential

for renewable energy. He suggested that the shared regional hydro projects could prove a good initiative in ensuring green recovery in the region. Mr. Zeeshan Ashfaq, Country Representative-Pakistan, World Wind Energy Association, while covering environmental aspect of the issue, said that the ensuring green recovery can save the humanity from the pandemics and climate crisis. We need to make renewable energy projects a top priority in our power sector policies, especially in the post-covid-19 recover, he added.

Green energy expert, Ms. Nameera Hameed, was of view that to achieve post covid-19 economic recovery, the government needs to lead first in decarbonizing

the economy, especially the energy sector. She also emphasized that the green recovery should be inclusive by ensuring gender equality by including women leaders and experts in the green recovery.

Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, Research Fellow, SDPI, while covering a different aspect of the topic, said that the covid-19 has opened some opportunities windows as well and the green recovery is one of such emerging opportunities.

However, he said, it would be a huge task in the countries like Pakistan, to fully carter It is achievable resources with better macro-economic policies and prioritizing financial investment in this renewable energy sector.

NAVTTTC launches 17000 trained youth in market under 'HMPP'

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: As many as 17,000 students have been launched in the market after completing their training in the demand driven high tech trades under the "Hunar Mand Pakistan Programme" (HMPP) initiated by the incumbent government.

The officials from National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) stated this while giving briefing to the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mahmood on Friday during a meeting held here to review the development on "Hunar Mand Pakistan Programme". The officials said that a total of 30,000 students were being given training in the most demanding sectors of high tech trades.

Shafiqat Mahmood commended the achievement of NAVTTTC for completing the training of 17,000 students despite severe difficulties due to COVID-19.

"We have not only made these students eligible for respectable employment but they will also play their vital role in the development of country" the minister said.

Moreover, NAVTTTC officials said that 50,000 students had registered themselves in the second badge for training that had been started from April 12, 2021.

Islamabad police nab 454 drug pushers

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested 454 drug pushers during the ongoing year and recovered cache of narcotics from them, a police spokesman said.

Following directions and guidance of IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman, police spokesperson said that renewed efforts were made to curb bootlegging and drug peddling activities in the city. DIG (Operations) Afzaal Ahmed Kausar and SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer conducted special meetings with heads of police stations to brief them about accelerating efforts against such anti-social elements.

In perspective of these directions, he said Islamabad police launched special crackdown against drug pushers and bootleggers. Police arrested 454 persons and recovered a total of 247.366 kilogram hashish, 37.292 kilogram heroin, 9.971 kilogram opium, 2.281 gram ice, 41 gram cocaine and 2559 wine bottles from them.

While reviewing this performance, SSP (Operations) has appreciated it and said it is the prime responsibility of police to provide relief to citizens and every possible effort would be made to ensure it.

The DIG (Operations) has also urged all police officials to adopt decent attitude for success in policing affairs and said sluggish attitude towards resolving public affairs would not be tolerated.

Continuing testing after jabs may curb outbreaks

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: As the SARS-CoV2 - the virus behind the Covid-19 infections - is evolving rapidly and producing new variants, continuing testing of immunized individuals will be important to help mitigate future outbreaks, said researchers.

"The idea that we could be entirely done with testing in the post-vaccine world is probably not a good one right now; for example, even fully vaccinated people who develop respiratory symptoms should consider getting tested for Covid-19," said lead researcher Robert B. Darnell, Professor at the Rockefeller University in New York, US.

The study, published in the New England Journal of Medicine, reports results from an ongoing monitoring at the varsity where two fully vaccinated individuals tested positive for the coronavirus, Medical daily reported.

Both had received two doses of vaccine, with the second dose occurring more than two weeks before the positive test. One person was initially asymptomatic and then developed typical Covid-19 symptoms; the other developed symptoms prior to testing. Both individuals recovered at home, an outcome consistent with evidence suggesting vaccination is effective in preventing severe disease.

Hot, dry weather likely to persist in most parts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department PMD Friday forecast hot and dry weather in most parts of the country during next 24 hours. A continental air is likely to prevail over most parts of the country, the Met office reported.

Rainfall(mm) recorded in Punjab: Narowal 27, Lahore (Airport, City 16), Rawalpindi (Chaklala 12, Shamsabad 04), Hafizabad 11, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin 09, Islamabad (Airport 08, City 02), Chakwal, Faisalabad 08, Kasur, Noorpur Thal 07, Sialkot (Airport 07, City 06), Joharabad 06, Jhelum, Jhang, Mangla 04, Sargodha 03, Murree 02, Bhakkar, Gujrat, Toba Tek Singh 01, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Kakul 13, D I Khan 07, Malam Jabba 02, Balakot (City 10, Airport 02), Kotli 06, Rawalakot 04 and Garhi Dupatta 03. - APP

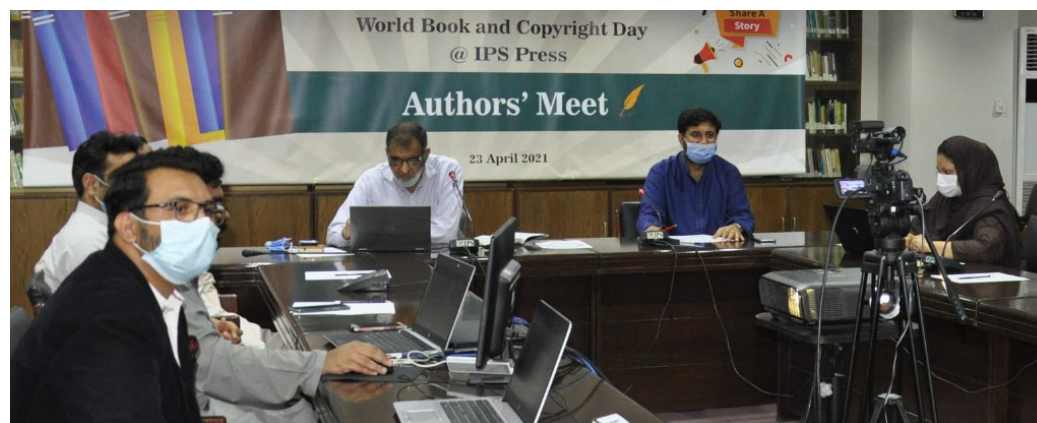
IPS celebrates 'World Book and Copyright Day'

The speakers were of the view that since antiquity humans have been fond of storytelling and story reading, which is not going to die down even in the digital age. Rather, they added, digital and online platforms have provided opportunities of self-publishing to new writers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Celebrating World Book and Copyright Day 2021, Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) organized "Live Authors' Meet" - an online gathering of authors and writers to discuss challenges and prospects faced by the publishing world in the continuously evolving digital age.

Chaired by IPS' Vice Chairman Ambassador (r) Syed Abrar Hussain - who is also the author of a recent IPS Press publication 'Afghanistan: Mullah Umar Say Ashraf Ghani Tak' - the session was participated by book authors and editors such as Syed Irtiga Ahmed Zaidi, author of 'Negotiating the Power Corridors: Forty Challenging Years of Civil Service', Former Federal Secretary Syed Abu Ahmad Akif and Rehan Ali,



authors of 'Rallying for Rules: Parents Versus Private Schools', Shazia Gilani, Aneela Shehzad, Syed Nadeem Farhat, and Naufil Shahrugh, all of whom shared their thoughts regarding World Book and Copyright

Day. The speakers were of the view that since antiquity humans have been fond of storytelling and story reading, which is not going to die down even in the digital age. Rather, they added, digital and online plat-

forms have provided opportunities of self-publishing to new writers. Highlighting the role of editor in any publication, the participants opined that without putting oneself in an author's shoes, the editor cannot

do justice with the script. They also appreciated people still finding time for reading books as holding books for reading in hands builds association between a book and a reader. They hoped the book reading habit would continue to remain in the future as an online copy of a book cannot be a replacement of a hardcopy. Commenting on his upcoming book 'Breaking the Breakers', Akif said the book has been written in a storytelling method to engage the minds of readers who will find it interesting. He also stressed the need for spreading the message of book reading to people around.

Concluding the session, Amb. (r) Abrar Hussain remarked that holding such a session on World Book and Copyright Day underlines love and affection the participants of the session possess for books.

Briefs

**PAL to
organize
online
"Mushairas"**

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) would organize online international Naatia and Hamdia 'Mushairas' in different languages including Pashtu, Saraiki, Balochi, Sindhi and Punjabi. According to details, International online Saraiki Hamdia and Naatia Mushaira will be held on April 26. The Mushaira will be presided by Dr. Qazi Abid. Eminent scholar Amir Bakhs Danish and Kausar Samreen will be chief guest on the occasion. While Shakir Shujah Abadi will be guest of honour on the occasion.

International online Balochi Hamdia & Naatia Mushaira will be held on May 3 at 2:30 p.m. Renowned Scholar Hasan Ali and Fazal Hayat will be chief guest while Ali Bakhs Dashtyari and Mir Umar Mir and Ishaq Khamosh will preside the Mushaira. Similarly international Punjabi Hamdia & Naatia Mushaira will be held on April 25, Pashtu international Hamdia & Naatia Mushaira will be held on April 30 and international Sindhi Hamdia & Naatia Mushaira on April 27.

Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL will present the keynote addresses during Mushairas.

Prominent scholars and poets of Pashtu, Sindhi, Balochi, Punjabi and Saraiki from all over the country and abroad will present Hamdia & Naatia poetry in Mushairas.

**Osma Satti's
father moves
to IHC**

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: A petition had been moved to Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging the decision of an anti-terrorism court (ATC) for removing the clauses of Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) in Osma Satti murder case. Osma's father Nadeem Satti had prayed the court to turn down the decision of ATC dated April 12, adding that the trial court had ignored various facts in its decision. He further said that the ATC also ignored the contents of judicial inquiry report which had stated that the murder had created fear among the public. The petitioner prayed the court to direct ATC to conduct the trial under ATA sections against the accused persons. It may be mentioned here that Osma Satti had been killed during a firing of police personnel in federal capital and a first information report was registered against five police personnel.

**7-member
vehicle theft
gang busted**

IBRAR KHAN

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police has busted a seven-member active vehicle theft gang and recovered 11 stolen vehicles, laptops, one toolkit, 12 mobile phones, fake number plates, cash Rs 75,000 and other tampering devices from their possession. Police spokesman on Friday said that the activist gang arrested was involved in stealing vehicles and selling them online.

The arrested were identified as Abdul Basir, Ali Haider, Amir Nawaz, Mohammad Ayaz, Qaim Hassan, Sajjad Ahmed, Mohammad Arsalan and a cop Razi Abbas.

After stealing vehicles from different cities of Rawalpindi and Punjab, the accused used to take vehicles to KP where they used to tamper with vehicles and prepare fake documents, SHO Cantt police said.

After preparing fake documents, the tampered vehicles were brought back to Rawalpindi and Islamabad and sold online to native citizens at high prices, he added. The action against the gang was taken by SDPO Cantt Circle, SHO Cantt Aizaz Azeem and his team led by SP Pothohar. City Police Officer CPO Muhammad Ahsan Younas commended police team for arresting anti-social elements adding that those involved in crime as well as the policemen who support them cannot escape from the law, the CPO added.

**PRCS distributes food packs
among 500 deserving families**

Abrar ul Haq emphasizes need to work for betterment of vulnerable communities with greater commitment and dedication -Turkish Ambassador says Turkey has always stood with people of Pakistan in time of need

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) on Friday distributed food packs among deserving families at a ceremony held here at the National Headquarters. The food packs were distributed among 500 families as part of an initiative launched in collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) under which a total of 5,000 families will be provided with ration packs in 13 districts of the country during the holy month of Ramadan. Ambassador of Turkey Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq, Secretary General Dr. Adeel Nawaz, Head of Turkish Red Crescent in Pakistan Ibraheem Carlos, PRCS and TRC officials and volunteers attended the ceremony.

In his address on the occasion, Chairman Abrar ul Haq said the PRCS has been serving the suffering humanity across country to the best of its capabilities and without any discrimination. He said the PRCS officers and trained volunteers have the unique honor of being the first to reach and last to



leave the troubled spots in the wake of any disaster or emergency situation in any part of the country. Abrar ul Haq said the holy month of Ramadan affords an opportunity to the faithful to win Allah Almighty's boundless blessings by serving the

deserving people. He said every year, the PRCS distributes food packs among the deserving families in collaboration with the Turkish Red Crescent. He said the TRC has supported several development and humanitarian interventions in

Pakistan for decades. He wished a stronger partnership between PRCS and TRC in future to ensure a better future to the vulnerable segments of the society. "Together, we have to work for the betterment of our communities with greater com-

mitment and dedication," he added. In his speech, Turkish Ambassador Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul said the humanity is facing several challenges at this point of time. "We are facing the challenge of Covid-19, the challenge of need and the scarcity of livelihoods," he said, adding that this ceremony is the expression of solidarity with the deserving people of Pakistan amid these challenging times. "The quantity of food packs being distributed may not be that huge, but what matters is the demonstration of close relations and brotherhood between the people of Pakistan and Turkey," he said, adding that the TRC has reached out to thousands of people in Pakistan in the time of need in the recent years. The ambassador hailed the PRCS for its services towards the suffering humanity. He also appreciated PRCS and the TRC for organizing such a blessed ceremony in the holy month of Ramadan. Later, Ambassador Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul, Chairman Abrar ul Haq, Secretary General Dr. Adeel Nawaz and Head of Turkish Red Crescent Ibraheem Carlos distributed ration packs among the deserving families.

**Operation
against
traffic rules
violators**

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: The police have launched an operation against those involved in violation of traffic rules and so for 103 challans have been issued. SDPO Attock Sattar Circle ASP Muhammad Jawad Ishaque said this while talking to media.

While giving details of the challans, he said that 31 challans were issued to motorcyclists, 35 to those with tinted glasses vehicles, 27 to vehicles without number plate and ten challans were issued to under age drivers. He said this operation would remain continue to control traffic rules violations, control accidents and ensure smooth flow of traffic.

Meanwhile, the police have arrested a drug peddler Shabir Ahmad r/o Faqeerabad and recovered 1.66 kg chargs from his possession.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Peace & culture organization Mushaal Mullick leading protest rally at Faisal mosque against India of its violation of human rights in occupied Kashmir. - DNA

**FBISE scholarships for
Madrasa announced**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) on the directions of Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mahmood, has announced scholarships programme for Madrasa students.

According to Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on Friday, Federal Education Minister Shafiqat Mahmood has directed the Federal Board to award as many as 20 scholarships to those male and female Madrasa stu-

dents who get higher marks in the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC) examinations. On the directions of Shafiqat Mahmood, Federal Board would provide an amount of Rs 25000 as a scholarships to the students who showed outstanding performance in SSC exams. While the students who performed outstanding in the intermediate exam and wanted to take admission in medical field, would be provided amount in cash as a scholarship for next five years. - APP

**Pak mountaineering outfit
return home from Nepal**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's four-member mountaineering outfit arrived back in the country on Friday after successfully ascending the 8,091-metre Annapurna peak in Nepal, recently.

The team included renowned mountaineers Sirbaz Khan, Abdul Joshi, Saad Munawar and Kamran Ali. On arrival at Islamabad Airport they were accorded a warm welcome by top officials of Alpine Club of

Pakistan (ACP) including Abu Zafar Sadiq, the ACP president and Karrar Haidri, secretary ACP. A large number of mountaineering enthusiasts from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan were also present on the occasion.

The team members became the first Pakistanis to summit Annapurna peak. They have dedicated their feat to Muhammad Ali Sadpara, who was declared dead in February, this year after he went missing on the world's

second-highest mountain, K2, during a winter expedition. "It's a great accomplishment. They've hoisted Pakistan and ACP's flags on Annapurna for the first time. The club acknowledges their contributions," Secretary ACP, Karrar Haidri told media.

Sirbaz, who hails from Alibad, Hunza, began his climbing career in 2016. He is on a mission to summit the world's 14 highest peaks and has already climbed five peaks including K2, Nanga Parbat, Broad Peak, Lhotse,

and Manaslu. Abdul Joshi, 36, who is a native of Shimshal valley of Gilgit-Baltistan is another seasoned mountaineer. He started his climbing journey as a guide on various 8000m expeditions but this was his first successful 8,000m peak summit. Joshi is passionate about summiting the unclimbed peaks. "These mountaineers are a source of inspiration for the young generation. We hope our youngsters will emulate their accomplishments," Haidri said.



ISLAMABAD: A view of construction work of expansion of Expressway during development work in the city. - DNA

**TCF, IDEAS signs
MoU to expand research
in education delivery**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Citizens Foundation (TCF) and the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate to expand research in education delivery and service in Pakistan.

Under the agreement, IDEAS will offer its expertise for multi-disciplinary empirical research and evidence-based programme design and an international network of re-

search fellows, to help TCF achieve goals of improving the quality of and access to education in over 1600 schools across Pakistan, with a particular focus on early childhood development, teacher pedagogy and mother-tongue based multilingual education, said a press release.

While speaking on the occasion, TCF's President and CEO, Syed Asaad Ayub Ahmad said that "we constantly strive to improve the quality of education imparted at TCF Schools across the country.

Resolution submitted against HEC ordinances

"We cannot let Tabahi Sarkar compromise HEC' autonomy. Bringing this ordinance overnight to change the term of the HEC chairman from four years to two years is surprising"

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Submitting a resolution in the Senate for the disapproval of The Higher Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 (No. IX of 2021) and the Higher Commission (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 (No. X of 2021), PPP Parliamentary Leader in the Senate, Senator Sherry Rehman said, "I have moved a resolution under

sub rule (2) of rule 145 of the Rules of Procedure & Conduct of Business in the Senate 2021, read with sub paragraph (iii) of paragraph (a) of clause (2) of the Article 89 of the Constitution for the disapproval of these ordinances".

"We cannot let Tabahi Sarkar compromise Higher Education Commission (HEC)' autonomy. Bringing this ordinance overnight to change the term of the Higher Education Commission



chairman from four years to two years is surprising," she added.

Rehman said, "Instead of investing in education to ensure the future of our country, this government has in fact reduced Higher Education Commission' budget. Their priorities are so skewed that they have not been able to even allocate a fixed percentage of GDP to higher education".

"It is shocking that budget allocations for Higher Education Commission have not kept up pace with the growing needs of the sector. Instead, this govern-

ment is after our reputable state institution and destroying it," she added.

Vice President PPP Senator Sherry Rehman concluded by saying that, "The government needs to realize that this is not a decision that they can take on their own. Why were these Ordinances not laid in the Parliament for discussion? We will not let them bypass the Parliament and attack Higher Education Commission's autonomy".

**Tribute paid
to martyred
cop**

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

RAWALPINDI: A ceremony was held here on Thursday to pay tribute to martyred Inspector Mian Muhammad Imran Abbas at Police Lines Headquarters, informed police spokesman. Among others, Regional Police Officer RPO Rawalpindi Imran Ahmar, Chief Traffic Officer Rai Mazhar Iqbal, SP Pothohar Syed Ali, SDPO Cantt Azhar Hassan Shah, family members of martyred cop and other police officers attended the ceremony.

Inspector Mian Muhammad Imran Abbas was martyred in a firing incident in the area of Civil Line Police Station on March 07, 2021.

RPO Imran Ahmar also met the children and family of the martyred inspector.

RPO while paying homage to the services of martyred inspector said that his services are unforgettable adding that he was a capable and courageous police officer.

**IESCO issues
2-day power
suspension
programme**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Saturday and Sunday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday from 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM New PTN, Fazal Rubber, Pothohar Steel, MG Steel, Mohammad Hussain Steel, I-10/4, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Amin Town, Mohammedi Chowk, Jamalwal, Megan, PAF Murid, CM Pak, Rahara, Bharia Enclave, PHA, ISI, Park Enclave, Chatha, Comsat University Feeders from 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM Rama, Syed Kasran, Abbaspur, Forward Kahuta, Bthingo, Hajira Mandol, New Mandol, Sarali, Feeders.

On Sunday from 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM Chakral, Sarkal feeders and surrounding areas. - APP

**Daily Covid
Jabs; 73,583
people
inoculated**

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Since Rawalpindi Health Authority has launched its COVID-19 vaccination campaign on March 10, around 73,583 people have been vaccinated in the district, District Health Coordinator for Coronavirus vaccination Dr. Jawad Zahid said here Friday.

Talking to meeting, he informed that 14,311 health workers including 59,272 people with senior citizens have received free of cost shots at 24 government vaccination centers of the district. Dr. Jawad said that the district health authority has registered a total of 22,871 positive cases to date out of which 21,092 belonged to Rawalpindi and 1779 to others district.

He added that 19,937 patients having positive results were discharged after recovery while 4256 including 2365 were quarantined at homes and 1891 in isolation.

The health officer told that 197 more confirmed cases were reported during the last 24 hours including 178 of Rawalpindi and 19 from outside the district.

"Presently 198 established patients were admitted to various facilities of the city including 29 were admitted in Holy Family Hospital, 20 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 118 in Institute of Urology, 28 in Fauji Foundation Hospital and 3 in Hearts International hospital.

He updated that patients reported during the last 24 hours, 65 belonged to Rawal Town, 43 Pothohar town, 44 Rawalpindi cantt, 9 Gujjar khan, 12 Taxila, 2 Kahuta, 2 Kalarsyeda, 10 Islamabad, 3 Chakwal, 2 AJK and one each from Attock, Gujrat, Jehlum, Quetta, and Murree.

The price of tourism

It would be an understatement to say that Pakistan has been blessed with the most beautiful scenery and magnificent mountains, which grant the country enormous potential for a thriving tourism industry. Pakistan's boundaries include the three greatest mountain ranges of the world, lush valleys, one of the world's highest cold deserts and the highest border in the world.

As the government has encouraged tourism and social media has shed light on the beauty of the northern areas, domestic and international tourism to the north has increased tenfold. However, any increase not managed well can turn disastrous and irresponsible tourism can devastate the very scenery which attracts such tourists.

A study released by the World Bank has warned that tourism in the mountainous regions of Pakistan is placing increasing stress on the local environment, leading to increased pollution, natural habitat loss and pressure on endangered species.

A greater number of tourists resulted in more waste disposal and pollution. Successful tourism has also led to a growth in population, all of which warrants better management by the government of the facilities and infrastructure. Inadequate infrastructure leads to poor waste and water management, which, if exacerbated, can devastate the environment of the region.

Poor waste management and increase in pollution is a problem in every part of the country, but it has a very apparent and swift impact in mountainous areas, considering the fragile ecosystem and difficulty of accessing the landscape.

There is an opportunity for the government. If it invests in the northern areas to bring about better institutional and financial management, not only will it protect the environment but also the economy. This will not just promote tourism in the long-term but also provides other employment avenues if more solid waste management infrastructure is constructed and more green initiatives are introduced. Time is of the essence here.

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We are saving ourselves, not the Earth.

Internet access

PAKISTAN ranks the lowest among South Asian countries in terms of access to the internet, as measured by the Economist's Intelligence Unit. The report on internet usage among 120 countries puts Pakistan at 90th place, well behind India which occupies the 49th position followed by Sri Lanka at 77th.

Pakistan has consistently finished low on the global internet ranking scale since the report first came out four years ago. Sweden and the US occupy the top place, followed as we would expect by other developed countries.

While Pakistan ranks well on the affordability category, with many able to manage enough funds to access the internet, it stands low in terms of relevance and accessibility. This is partly because only a limited number of households have broadband or other means to access the internet.

The continued use of 2G phones also makes it difficult for people to acquire smart phones, which would allow them entry into the world of the internet at the tap of a button.

The problem is one that Pakistan will need to address in the coming years as dependence on the internet increases more and more. At present, information is widely available over the internet, but Pakistan's low ranking in the world is a matter that needs to be considered in a time that is changing rapidly.

The readings do not augur well for the future. Pakistan has a large number of people using mobile phones amongst its large population, made up mainly of people under 50 years of age, who are more likely to turn to new technologies, to gain information and to communicate with others.

In this respect, it needs to widen the scope of the internet by setting up more towers and means to broadcast internet across the country, notably to remote areas from where people have complained that they are cut off from education, news and communication with others because of the limitations placed on the internet.

Peace can still be achieved in Afghanistan

Sultan Barakat



Disaster can still be averted if the Taliban opts for a reasonable response to this announcement, the Afghan government manages to come up with a unified position on a peace settlement and the international community extends the necessary political guarantees to both sides

UNITED States President Joe Biden announced the complete withdrawal of all American troops from Afghanistan by September 11, the twentieth anniversary of the attacks on New York and Washington that resulted in the US-led military invasion. The announcement has proven controversial in US policy circles. Some have argued for a condi-

tions-based withdrawal, contingent on securing adequate counterterrorism guarantees and a peace settlement between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the Taliban. Assessments from US intelligence agencies in recent months found that a withdrawal in the absence of an intra-Afghan peace deal would likely lead to the collapse of the government in Kabul within a couple of years and the potential resurgence of al-Qaeda in the country.

However, Biden's long opposition to "forever wars" has seen him unwilling to extend the exit timeline, as his administration shifts its focus towards emerging security challenges in East Asia. He has limited space for manoeuvre given the ceasefire agreement signed with the Taliban under President Donald Trump last year that committed the US to complete withdrawal by May 1, 2021. The Taliban has repeatedly asserted that a failure to pull out by this deadline would lead to war.

Disaster can still be averted if the Taliban opts for a reasonable response to this announcement, the Afghan government manages to come up with a unified position on a peace settlement and the international community extends the necessary political guarantees to both sides.

Biden's announcement of a new withdrawal date intends to undo the damage the Afghanistan strategy of his predecessor had caused. While it has been seen as an attempt to buy more time to counteract the poor sequencing of the 2020 peace deal, first and foremost, the objective of this delay is to repair relations with NATO, which had been damaged under Trump.

The transatlantic relationship suffered from Trump's accusations that NATO members were not paying their dues to the alliance and his threats to sanction Germany, the top contributing nation in Afghanistan after the US. The negotiation of the troop withdrawal agreement with the Taliban last year also took place without sufficient consideration of the needs of NATO members, who are dependent on the US military for airlift support.

The choice of September 11 as a withdrawal date, therefore, is as logistical as it is symbolic. It is designed to give enough time for NATO members to coordinate with the US their departure from Afghanistan. The day after Biden made the announcement, NATO issued a statement saying its troops will also leave on the same date.

This move by the Biden administration should be seen within the context of its efforts to steer US foreign policy back towards multilateralism. Rebuilding relations with NATO and other partners is perceived as necessary so that the US is better equipped to

face various global challenges, such as China's rise and climate change.

The timeline of the withdrawal announcements seems to indicate that the Biden administration aimed for the US and NATO to speak in one voice at the UN-facilitated intra-Afghan conference in Istanbul, originally scheduled for April 14.

The Istanbul Conference is the centrepiece of the fast-track diplomatic push launched by the Biden administration last month in an attempt to get to a solution before May 1. It was set up to involve regional powers and make headway on an intra-Afghan peace settlement ahead of the US withdrawal. After the Taliban failed to respond to the proposed date of April 14, it was pushed back to April 24. Now with the postponement, it may become irrelevant, particularly since there is still no guarantee that the Taliban will attend. The group's spokesperson released a statement saying the unilateral withdrawal extension constitutes a violation of the agreement and permits the Taliban to take "necessary counter-measures".

The value of the Istanbul conference will have to be clarified to the Taliban leaders to secure their participation. Some of their demands – the release of Taliban prisoners, removal of UN Security Council sanctions, and a specific demand from Turkey for a reduction of military support to former Afghan Vice President Abdul Rashid Dostum – will have to be addressed.

In light of this uncertainty, the fact that the Afghan sides and many international stakeholders have seemingly leaped towards Istanbul and abandoned the negotiations under the Doha process is dangerous for this delicate stage of the peace process. Switching between mediation channels without the commitment to a clear end will only consume time at the expense of a peace deal, particularly as the key problem remains the absence of a mandate for a formal mediator role.

The divisions within the Afghan government and competing peace proposals from President Ashraf Ghani and the US have complicated matters further. This further convinces the Taliban of the inability of the government negotiators to make sound, unified decisions.

Regardless of what happens with Istanbul, the Afghan government, led by the High Council for National Reconciliation, must come up with a unified position and both sides should aim to announce a formal declaration of guiding principles as a benchmark for further talks.

With the US and the world signalling their interest in Afghanistan is waning, it is time for Afghans to

take the lead in the negotiations and to agree on a permanent ceasefire and a peace settlement. The coming months will be critical in determining whether the Taliban and Afghan government can show the necessary leadership for governing the Afghan people weary of war.

This is the moment for Taliban leaders to demonstrate to the Afghans and the world their political prudence. For them, at least, there is a silver lining to the withdrawal announcement in that it represents a marked difference from earlier reports that NATO troops would remain without the US on a longer condition-based schedule.

It is critical for the Taliban leaders to carefully examine the context of the US and NATO withdrawal commitment in order to avoid falling into the trap of launching a retaliation because of a narrow preoccupation with dates.

The lack of credible assurances from the Taliban that its return to Kabul will not erode women's and minorities' rights and its failure to reduce violence to an acceptable level has raised insecurity and led other political factions to start arming. It is clear that the high level of polarisation and anti-Taliban sentiment across Afghanistan as well as opposition in the region to an Islamic Emirate or similar regime risks sparking a conflict if the group tries to walk into the capital in September.

It is important to note that the Taliban has consistently stated that it does not seek a repeat of the 1992 civil war, and they do not wish a collapse of the Afghan state. These longstanding positions could be cited to set new parameters for what must happen between May and September, instead of confronting the US announcement.

This would allow Afghanistan with the support of the US and its allies to offset the destabilising influence of regional states, including Pakistan. Cooperation on ensuring an orderly and peaceful withdrawal can come in exchange for regional and international political and security guarantees for Afghanistan.

The good news is that many of the major obstacles that have delayed the negotiations in the past have been removed. President Ghani has accepted the withdrawal and a possible early end of his term, the leaders of the various Afghan political factions have shown a willingness to engage, and a strong level of trust has been built between members of the Afghan negotiating teams in Doha which paved the way for a set of agreed principles. Now that the way forward has been cleared for Afghan leadership, Afghans must take on responsibility for the success or failure of future proceedings.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

US must ensure Jerusalemites are able to vote

DAOUD KUTTAB



Despite the presence of such detailed articles in a signed agreement and the historic precedents of two previous elections, the Israelis have yet to make their position known as to whether this right will be respected this time around

AMERICAN legislators and leaders in the Democratic Party are correctly carrying out strong protests against the recent slew of Republican-led state-level laws that attempt to suppress the right of Americans to vote. However, the recent voter restriction law in Georgia, for example, pales when one compares it to what the Israelis are doing to Palestinians in Jerusalem. What is worse is that the Biden administration is seemingly encouraging the postponement of the May 22 Palestinian elections because of such Israeli actions, rather than pressuring its ally to respect signed agreements.

Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization signed, in 1993 and 1995, a set of US-backed agreements that are often referred to as the Oslo Accords. Article II Section 3 states: "Palestinians of Jerusalem who live there may participate in the election process." The agreement later details these arrangements in Article VI of Annex II, specifying the procedures for campaigning in East Jerusalem, the location of polling stations, and giving permission for international observers.

The accords allowed for voting through five Israeli-run post office locations in East Jerusalem. In 2006, the number of post offices increased to six and Israel allowed Palestinians to use all these locations to vote.

Now there are 16 post offices in East Jerusalem. In 1996, 5,327 Palestinians voted using these post offices. In 2006, the number of Jeru-

salemites casting their votes rose to 6,300. All other qualified voters (estimated to be 150,000) used regular Palestinian polling stations just outside the borders of East Jerusalem, which were under the administrative control of the Palestinian government.

Despite the presence of such detailed articles in a signed agreement and the historic precedents of two previous elections, the Israelis have yet to make their position known as to whether this right will be respected this time around.

Official requests by the Palestinian government and members of the international community have not been answered by the Israelis.

The absence of a decision might be explained by the fact that no government has yet emerged following last month's fourth indecisive election in the past two years.

But even though an official response has yet to emerge, the Israeli police appear to have signalled a rejection by banning meetings and election-related press conferences, along with the arrest of nominees.

While Israel is sending these negative signals, Washington has been officially silent and unofficially appears to be sending mixed signals. A "source" in Washington, speaking to the leading Palestinian daily Al-Quds, was on Saturday reported as saying that the Biden administration would "understand" if the Palestinian government chose to postpone the elections because of "political complexities." No one in Washington has come out to confirm or deny this.

While Palestinians, especially Jerusalemites, are insisting on holding the long-delayed elec-

tions on time, there are hangers-on to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas who are using the American hesitation and Israeli opposition to try and get out of the commitments that Palestinians have been eager to practice.

The Palestinian Central Elections Commission has stated that 94 percent of those eligible have already registered to vote.

The commission has also said that, of the 2.3 million potential voters, almost 1 million have never voted before and are fervently looking forward to making their voices heard.

No external party, including the occupiers and their US allies, should interfere and stop the long-awaited right that all Palestinians want to exercise.

When commenting on the attempts by Republicans in Georgia to suppress African-American votes, President Joe Biden compared the move to the racist policies of the 20th-century US South and called it an "atrocious."

Meanwhile, the Palestinians, who are struggling to be free of the yoke of Israel's military occupation and colonial settlement enterprise, are not asking for the moon. They are simply asking for the implementation of signed agreements, to which former US President Bill Clinton (also a Democrat) was a witness.

Washington cannot wash its hands of its commitments and must instead insist on the right of Palestinians, including those living in East Jerusalem, to be able to participate in the most sacred of democratic rights – that of choosing their representatives in free and fair elections.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

SpaceX launches 4-astronaut team on ISS

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: NASA and Elon Musk's commercial rocket company SpaceX have launched a new four-astronaut team on a flight to the International Space Station (ISS), the first crew ever propelled towards orbit by a rocket booster recycled from a previous spaceflight.

The three men and one woman crew from the United States, Japan and France should reach the ISS early on Saturday morning after a 23-hour ride in the same Dragon capsule used by SpaceX's debut crew last May.

It was the first time SpaceX reused a capsule and rocket to launch astronauts for NASA after years of proving the capability on station supply runs.

The rocket was used last November on the company's second astronaut flight.

It was also the third crewed flight launched into orbit under NASA's fledgling public-private partnership with SpaceX, the rocket company founded and owned by Musk, the billionaire entrepreneur who is also the CEO of electric carmaker Tesla Inc.

Astronauts Thomas Pesquet, Shane Kimbrough, Megan McArthur and Akihiko Hoshide strode out in their suits to say goodbye to their families.

They then boarded three white Teslas for the launchpad, a new tradition established by SpaceX, with Musk also making an appearance.

Flying on reused vehicles has been a key cost-saving goal of NASA's partnerships with private industry. After launch, the Falcon 9 rocket will return to Earth for an upright vertical landing on a drone ship, and the Crew Dragon capsule is scheduled to dock with the ISS at 5:10am (09:10 GMT) on Saturday, with hatch opening two hours later.

Court orders auction of Nawaz...

From Page 01

the money to be earned through the auction into the national exchequer.

The bureau through its Deputy Prosecutor General Sardar Muzaffar Khan Abbasi filed the application. Abbasi stated that the accountability court had declared Sharif a proclaimed offender in the Toshakhana reference. Despite a lapse of six months, the former premier did not surrender himself before the court, he added.

He recalled that the court had declared Nawaz Sharif a proclaimed offender on August 17 and ordered attaching his property on Oct 1. He pleaded with the court to allow auction of the properties of Sharif in accordance with the law.

The properties worth billions of rupees include Ittefaq Foundry, Hudaibia Paper Mills, Baksh Textile and Hudaibia Engineering. Furthermore, the assets of Sharif in Upper Mall Road area, the fish farm built on 110 acres of land, 20 acres of land in Lahore, a bungalow located in Murree, Shangla's house, five luxurious cars registered against the name of the former prime minister will be auctioned.

The amount of three foreign and five Pakistani bank accounts will also be moved to the national kitty after the court's approval.

Ruckus during NA...

From Page 01

Parliament House after the session was adjourned without discussing the resolution, described the move as a setback in government policy.

On the other hand, the Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser has sent letters to the parliamentary leaders of all parties in the House asking them to propose the names of the members to join the proposed special committee to consider the resolution to expel the French ambassador.

Zimbabwe thrash Pakistan by 19 runs in 2nd T20I

SPORTS DESK

HARARE: Zimbabwe has created history as they just thrashed Pakistan by 20 runs in the second T20I of the three-match series at Harare Sports Club. It is for the first time Zimbabwe has defeated Pakistan in this format. The series is now level at 1-1 with the last match to be played on April 25.

Earlier, Zimbabwe didn't get the momentum going after Green Shirts' skipper Babar Azam opted to field first. They only managed to score 25 runs in the powerplay and lost captain Brendon Taylor for just 5. Tinash Kamunhukamwe and Tadiwanashe Marumani partnered for second wicket and added 28 runs. After that, the hosts lost wickets in regular intervals.

Kamunhukamwe scored 34 off 40 balls while Wesley Madhevere scored 16. Tari-sai Musakanda (13), Regis



HARARE: A view of 2nd T20I match between Pakistan and Zimbabwe. — DNA

Chakabva (18) were the other notable scorers. For Pakistan, Mohammad Hasnain and Danish Aziz bagged two wickets each while Faheem Ashraf, Arshad Iqbal, Usman Qadir and Haris Rauf claimed a wicket each. Similar to Zimbabwe, Pakistan couldn't had the best of the start in powerplay with losing their star performer Mohammad Rizwan (13) in the sixth over. Following Rizwan's dismissal,

al, Fakhar Zaman (2) was the next one to depart as he tried to loft one but it went straight into the hands of fielder. Veteran Mohammad Hafeez once again failed as his poor run on continues as he scored five off 10 balls. Green shirts had the expectations from skipper Babar who batted throughout and stabilized one end but he lost his wicket while going for a big shot as run-rate kept creeping.

He scored 41 off 45 balls with the help of five boundaries. Pakistan pinned their hopes on emerging middle-order batter Danish Aziz do hand them win but it was too much for him till the last. The 25-year-old 22 off 24 balls. The wickets went crumbling till the end with no other batter dominating Zimbabwe bowler. Green Shirts were bowled out for 99 in 19.5 overs. For Zimbabwe, Luke Jognwe bagged four wickets for 18 runs with Ryan Burl took 2/21 in four overs.



KARACHI: President Dr Arif Alvi, in a group photo with a delegation of Sindh Bodybuilding Association, at Governor's House. — DNA

Covid reaches Mt Everest as Norway climber tests positive

KATMANDU: A Norwegian climber hoping to summit Mount Everest has confirmed he tested positive for COVID-19, in a blow to Nepal's hopes for a bumper mountaineering season on the world's highest peak.

The pandemic wiped out last year's season but Nepal has eased quarantine rules in an effort to attract more climbers despite the difficulties of treating them if they contract the virus.

"My diagnosis is COVID-19," Erlend Ness told the AFP news agency in a Facebook message. "I am doing ok now ... The hospital is taking care (of me)."

Ness was evacuated from the slopes by helicopter and taken to a hospital in the Nepali capital Kathmandu after spending time at Everest base camp.

Norwegian broadcaster NRK, which interviewed him, reported that a Sherpa in his party had also tested positive.

"I really hope that none of the others get infected with corona high up in the mountains. It is impossible to evacuate people with



a helicopter when they are above 8,000 metres [26,246 feet]," Ness told NRK.

Breathing is already difficult at high altitudes so any outbreak of disease among climbers presents huge health risks.

"The plan was to get fast high up in the mountains to make sure that we wouldn't get infected ... I've been unlucky and I could have done more by myself when it comes to sanitary precautions," Ness added.

One hospital in Kathmandu confirmed it had taken in patients from Everest who had contracted coronavirus but could not give a number. — Agencies

Japan issues third COVID emergency ahead of Olympics

FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Japan has declared a third state of emergency for Tokyo and three western prefectures as the country struggles to contain a resurgent coronavirus pandemic just three months before the Olympics.

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga announced the emergency on Friday for Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto and Hyogo from April 25 through May 11.

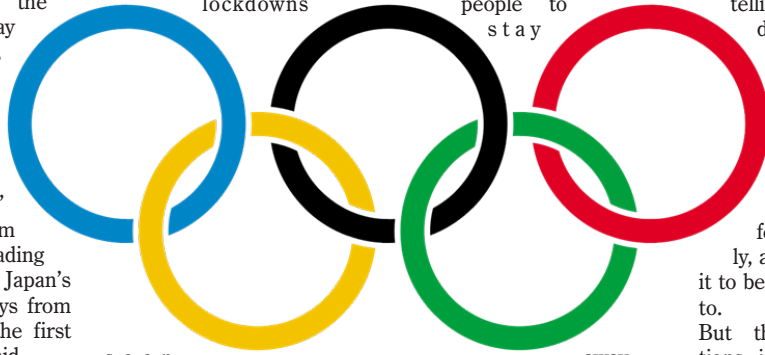
The step is largely intended to be "short and intensive" to stop people from travelling and spreading the virus during Japan's Golden Week holidays from late April through the first week of May, Suga said.

Japan has reported more than 550,000 coronavirus cases, including 9,805 deaths, as of Friday, since the start of the pandemic. But a recent uptick in cases has worried officials and medical professionals as the government and Olympic organisers insist the Games will go ahead in July and Au-

gust this year. Earlier, Japan's minister for virus response, Yasutoshi Nishimura, warned of a "strong sense of crisis", saying current restrictions were not sufficient.

The measures will be tougher than Japan's last state of emergency, imposed in parts of the country from January, but still far short of the lockdowns people to stay working will be encouraged. Although the measures start from Sunday, Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike urged residents to start taking precautions immediately, including avoiding drinking in the street after bars and restaurants close early.

She urged businesses to turn their lights off in the evenings to encourage people to stay working will be encouraged.



ly down on record numbers earlier in the week. Authorities in Osaka have said health facilities there are already overwhelmed and beds for seriously ill patients are running short.

Officials insist the situation will not affect preparations for the Games, with Tokyo 2020 chief Seiko Hashimoto telling reporters on Friday that "we're not thinking about cancellation".

"We're thinking about how we can prepare in a way that prioritises safety and makes people feel it can be held safely, and makes them want it to be held," said Hashimoto.

But the spike in infections is already disrupting everything from the Olympic Torch Relay — which has been forced off public roads in several regions — to test events and qualifiers. Australia's diving team on Friday withdrew from the Diving World Cup scheduled for May in Tokyo, saying it was "not safe" to travel to Japan.

Japan, US, France to hold military drills

FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: The exercise will start in the south of Japan from May 11, marking the first time the three nations will have held a drill with ground troops, as tensions simmer with Beijing over activity in the East and South China Seas.

The announcement of the joint exercise was made by the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) and the defense minister on Friday, as the nation aims to strengthen its military cooperation with allies in the region.

"By strengthening cooperation between Japan, the United States and France, we'd like to further improve the tactics and skills of the Self-Defense Forces in defending remote island territories," Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi said, in an apparent jab at China's claim over islands in the East and South China Seas.

Putin invites Ukrainian president to Moscow

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that he is ready to receive his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky in Moscow "any time."

Speaking at a meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, Putin said if Zelensky wants to discuss the problems of Donbas, he had to meet with the leaders of the separatists in the region, and if he wants to discuss Russian-Ukrainian relations, then he is welcome to Moscow.

Putin said "the acting leadership of Ukraine has taken a lot of steps aiming to destroy Russian-Ukrainian relations," however, if Zelensky wants to start restoring them, Russia would welcome this.

"The question arises: What do we want to discuss at this meeting? If we're talking about discussing the problems of Donbas, then, first of all, the Ukrainian leadership should meet with the leaders of the republics — the LPR [Luhansk People's Republic] and the DPR [Donetsk People's Republic], and only then discuss these problems with representatives of third countries, which in this case is Russia. This is the first, "And secondly, if we are talking about the development of bilateral relations, then please, we will receive the president of Ukraine in Moscow at any time convenient for him," he said.

Missile blast exposes Iron Dome weakness

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: A prominent political commentator says the missile that hit near Israel's secretive Dimona nuclear facility laid bare the inefficiency of the regime's much-publicized "Iron Dome" missile shield, predicting that the strike will change all the "old equations" and rules of engagement in the region.

On Thursday, Abdel Bari Atwan, the editor of the online Rai alYom daily, posted a video of himself on Twitter, in which he offers his analysis of the missile fire around 20 miles short of Dimona in the Negev desert earlier in the day.

Tel Aviv claimed the missile had landed in the Israeli-occupied territories as a result of "errant" Syrian anti-aircraft fire; however, the path the projectile flew triggered speculation that Dimona had been the target.

In the video, Atwan casts down on Tel Aviv's account of the incident, suggesting that the anti-Israel resistance movement in the region — which includes Iran and Syria besides resistance groups in Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq — had been behind the missile fire.

In the aftermath of the incident, many media outlets tried to link the incident to Iran, where a key nuclear facility was recently targeted by a suspected Israeli sabotage operation.

Venues for EURO matches changed

WEB DESK

ANKARA: UEFA on Friday announced a change in the venues to host EURO 2020, with Seville replacing Bilbao, and Dublin matches moved to Saint Petersburg and London.

"We have been working diligently with the host associations and local authorities to ensure a safe and festive environment at the games and I am really pleased that we are able to welcome spectators at all matches for a celebration of national team football across the continent," said UEFA President Aleksander Ceferin.

The UEFA Executive Committee met via videoconference and was informed of the confirmation given by local authorities that all four UEFA EURO 2020 matches in Munich will be able to host a minimum of 14,500 spectators.

Therefore, Munich was confirmed as a host venue for the championship. The four matches initially scheduled to take place in Bilbao were moved to the Estadio La Cartuja in Seville.

Baku hopes U.S will not make historic mistake

If such a step is taken by the new U.S. administration, it will be a historic mistake. Azerbaijan has always opposed attempts to recognize the so-called Armenian genocide. The recognition of the so-called Armenian genocide is a falsification of history

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Presidential Aide Hikmat Hajiyev has said that hopefully, the US administration will not make a historic mistake by recognizing the 1915 events as "genocide".

He made the remarks in an interview with the Azeri state news agency on April 23 in reaction to international media reports that US President Joe Biden is preparing to recognize the so-called genocide of Armenians on the 106th anniversary of the 1915 events on April 24.

"Everyone knows Azerbaijan's firm and unequivocal position on the so-called and false Armenian genocide. If such a step is taken by the new

US. administration, it will be a historic mistake. Azerbaijan has always opposed attempts to recognize the so-called Armenian genocide. The recognition of the so-called Armenian genocide is a falsification of history. History must be studied by historians.

If this happens, Azerbaijan will strongly condemn it," Hajiyev said. He reminded that President Ilham Aliyev had repeatedly stated that a step against Turkey is a step against Azerbaijan, and any step against Azerbaijan is against Turkey. "We would like to hope that the U.S. administration will not make a historic mistake," the presidential aide said. Turkey is against presenting the 1915 incidents as "genocide", rather calling them a tragedy in



which both Turks and Armenians suffered casualties in the heat of World War I. Earlier Turkey has warned the United States that recognising the mass

representatives in Washington. Turkish officials believe the US move would be counterproductive and diminish already ties already damaged by a set of disagreements, including Ankara's purchase of Russian S-400 missile systems.

One senior Turkish official said that after the end of hostilities in Nagorno-Karabakh last year, there was a real chance of a reconciliation between Turkey and Armenia in the coming months.

Before the war, Azerbaijan had been blocking any Turkish attempts to open the border with Armenia, saying that Yerevan must first withdraw from the occupied territories. However, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev said last year that their stance on this issue has changed.

Briefs

Rockets target Baghdad airport base

BAGHDAD: At least three rockets landed in the perimeter of Baghdad International Airport late on Thursday in the latest attack coinciding with tensions between Baghdad's allies Tehran and Washington.

Iraqi security officials said on Friday that the rockets landed near the area of the airport housing United States forces. An Iraqi military statement said there were no casualties.

The security forces defused unfired rockets placed on the rooftop of an empty house that was used to launch the attack, the statement said.

It is the second attack on US interests in Iraq in less than a week. On Sunday, five rockets targeted another airbase north of the capital, wounding three Iraqi soldiers and two foreign contractors.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, but Washington routinely blames Iran-linked Iraqi factions for such attacks on its troops and diplomats.

According to the AFP news agency, the attack was the 23rd bomb or rocket attack against US interests in Iraq - including troops, US embassy in Baghdad or Iraqi supply convoys to Baghdad - since US President Joe Biden took office in January. - Agencies

Indonesia bans entry from India

JAKARTA: The Indonesian government has suspended the issuance of visas for foreigners who have visited India in the previous 14 days to prevent the spread of COVID-19, an official said on Friday.

"This policy will take effect from April 25 and is temporary," said Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto. Meanwhile, Indonesians who have visited India are allowed to return to their homeland through certain points with strict health protocols.

They will undergo a 14-day quarantine at a designated hotel and be able to return home after two polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests showing negative results. India is facing a severe second wave of COVID-19 outbreak with more than 300,000 daily cases overwhelming the medical services.

A number of countries and regions have closed borders to those who have recently visited India. - APP

Borisov's party fails to form Bulgaria government

SOFIA: The conservative party of Bulgaria's long-time premier said Friday it had failed to form a government, with fresh elections in the EU's poorest member becoming increasingly likely.

Boyko Borisov's centre-right GERB party came first in April 4's general election, but with less than 27 percent of the vote and without enough backing to ensure parliament approves any new government they propose.

The three-time premier last week put forward former foreign minister Daniel Mitov to try to form a new administration. But Mitov said he had failed to find partners, accusing the other parties of having behaved "arrogantly and irresponsibly". President Rumen Radev will now hand the mandate to form a government to the surprise second-placed anti-establishment party There is Such a Nation (TSN), which won 17.7 percent of the vote.

TSN official Toshko Yordanov was tightlipped Friday about his party's plans, saying they would only speak once they get the mandate from Radev, which is expected to happen next week.

TSN leader Slavi Trifonov, a 54-year-old showman and TV presenter, has been in isolation since the vote after contracting the coronavirus. If TSN fails to form a cabinet or win parliamentary approval, the mandate will go to a third and last party of Radev's choice. - APP

CPEC offers profitable opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors

The Embassy of Pakistan in Jakarta, in collaboration with the Embassy of People's Republic of China in Jakarta, held a webinar titled: 'Investment Opportunities in China Pakistan Economic Corridor'

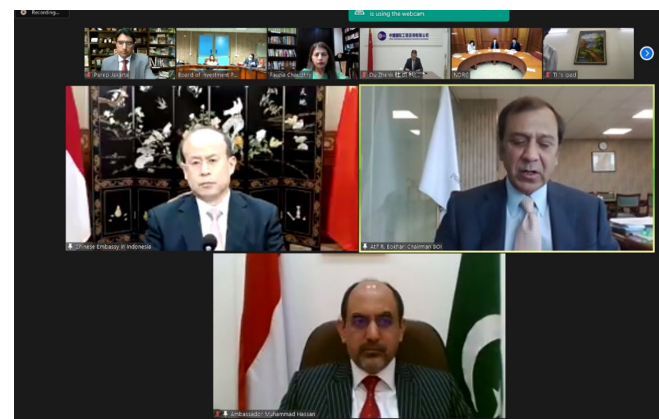
DNA

JAKARTA: The Embassy of Pakistan in Jakarta, in collaboration with the Embassy of People's Republic of China in Jakarta, held a webinar titled: 'Investment Opportunities in China Pakistan Economic Corridor'.

The webinar aimed at highlighting achievements of CPEC as the flagship project of BRI and highlight the concept of its inclusiveness and openness to the third parties. The focus of the event was to underscore that CPEC, after successfully completing its initial phase, has now entered its 2nd phase, establishing a number of special economic zones (SEZs) along its routes, and that these SEZs provide ample investment opportunities for investors from third countries including Indonesia. The webinar was attended by prominent investors, businessmen, scholars, experts and media houses from Indonesia and China. The Webinar was addressed by speakers from Pakistan, China and Indonesia. Keynote speakers included Mr. Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State/Chairman, Board of Investment, Pakistan, Mr. Septian Hario Seto, Deputy Minister for Investment Coordination & Mining, Indonesia, and Mr. Ying Xiong Director General, NDRC, China. Muhammad Bawazeer, Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KADIN), and Mr. Ikmal Lukman, Deputy Chairman Board of Investment (BKPM), Indonesia also spoke on the occasion, while experts from BOI of Pakistan, NDRC of China and KADIN of Indonesia made presentations. In his opening remarks, Ambassador of Pakistan Muhammad



Hassan welcomed the participants and stated that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) - an important pilot project of the Belt and Road Initiative - was an unparalleled venture for regional connectivity and infrastructure development that links three regions, South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia with China/Southeast Asia through Pakistan. He mentioned that government of Pakistan was providing special incentives for investment in various CPEC projects and invited Indonesian companies to take advantage of these



incentives. Referring to the all-weather China-Pakistan friendship and strategic partnership, Ambassador Xiao Qian of China stated that CPEC had created abundant and profitable opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors, including

from Indonesia. He pointed out that there were good opportunities to explore possible trilateral cooperation in areas such as regional connectivity, industrial parks, fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and public health and join the allocation of resources

in East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia. He also proposed to integrate the supply chains from across the regions for the ultimate goal of common development and benefits for the peoples of the three countries.

Mr. Atif R Bokhari, MOS/Chairman Board of Investment, Pakistan highlighted that CPEC Industrial Cooperation (IC) was a long-term endeavor which was picking up pace.

He mentioned that the Industrial Cooperation was not limited to Pakistan and China as other countries, particularly Indonesia, would be welcomed to participate. He underscored that the first phase of the CPEC had been successfully completed with the development of infrastructure, rail and power projects, providing Pakistan with a backbone for industrial development.

He outlined briefly conducive policies of the government to attract foreign investment in Pakistan and stated that many foreign enterprises were already enjoying the incentives and benefits being offered. He invited Indonesian businesses to benefit from the investment regime of Pakistan especially the opportunities under CPEC.

While quoting the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Indonesia, Mr. Septian Hario Seto, Deputy Minister for Investment Coordination & Mining, Indonesia stated that out of the total bilateral trade of USD \$2.3 billion in 2020, Indonesian palm oil (CPO products) contributed USD \$1.7 billion. He expressed hope that Indonesian investors could explore investment in CPO production and processing in Pakistan to build downstream industry along the CPEC corridor.



ISTANBUL: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a meeting with Kemal Inan, Deputy Governor. - DNA

UiPath reaches USD 35 bln capitalization

DNA

BUCHAREST: UiPath, the biggest robotic processing automation (RPA) company in the world, launched by two Romanian entrepreneurs in Bucharest in 2005, reached a market capitalization of over USD 35 bln on its debut on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). The company's co-founder and CEO, Daniel Dines, thus officially became the richest Romanian, as his stake is currently worth over USD 7.4 bln. UiPath's shares started trading on NYSE at USD 65.5, some 17% above the IPO price announced one day earlier (USD 56) and climbed as high as USD 70

shortly after debut. "Today is a big day for UiPath: we begin life as a public company on the New York Stock Exchange," Dines said in a public announcement. "We started UiPath because we realized we could help humans reduce the time and stress that comes from menial, administrative business tasks. This work has made them robotic. With our technology, people have time to focus on the work they actually enjoy, the work they set out to do. We made robots so people didn't have to be robots," he added. He also said he was extremely proud that UiPath became the first Romanian-born company listed on the New York Stock Exchange.

Kazakhstan to apply homegrown vaccine

DNA

NUR SULTAN: Kazakhstan will begin to administer its homegrown coronavirus vaccine to residents next week, according to a statement by its Prime Minister. The first 50,000 doses of the QazVac vaccine were produced by the Scientific Research Institute for Biological Safety Problems in Kazakhstan's southern Jambyl province, said the statement.

"Kazakhstan became one of the top five countries in the world that developed its own vaccine against the pandemic," said Deputy Prime Minister Yerali Tuganov.

The vaccine was included in the record of the World Health Organization, Tuganov said, who added that the complete safety of the vaccine has been proven. The biggest advantage of the inactivated vaccine is that it does not cause vaccine-related diseases.

The next step is to verify the international standard certificate. Kazakhstan will cooperate with Atabay, a Turkish company, to have it verified, he added.

Bottling and packaging of the vaccine will be conducted in a factory in Turkey. The QazVac vaccine is administered in two stages with an interval of 21 days between shots.

Indonesia orders executions online

JAKARTA: Indonesia has sentenced scores of prisoners to death over Zoom and other video apps during the pandemic in what critics say is an "inhumane" insult to those facing the firing squad.

The Southeast Asian nation turned to virtual court hearings as Covid-19 restrictions shut down most in-person trials, including murder and drug trafficking cases, which can carry the death penalty. Since early last year, almost 100 inmates have been condemned to die in Indonesia by judges they could only see on a television monitor, according to Amnesty International. The Muslim-majority nation has some of the world's toughest drug laws and both Indonesian and foreign traffickers have been executed, including the masterminds of Australia's Bali Nine heroin gang. - APP

Israeli settlers assault Palestinians in occupied Jerusalem

JERUSALEM: More than 100 Palestinians and 20 Israeli police have been wounded in overnight violent clashes that ensued after far-right Israelis marched in the occupied East Jerusalem chanting "death to Arabs".

The Palestinian Red Crescent said it had treated at least 105 people, with some 20 of them hospitalised. Israeli police said 20 officers were wounded, three of whom were taken to hospital.

The violence broke out outside one of the entrances to the walled Old City where far-right Israelis had completed a march, during which participants harassed Palestinians and chanted "death to Arabs" and waved banners reading: "Death to terrorists".

As Palestinians heard reports of the Israeli march organised by a far-right group, Lehava, they gathered in thousands near the Damascus Gate with ambulances racing up and down the crowded backstreets with their sirens blaring. Hundreds of Israeli police in riot gear sealed off the area to prevent the Israeli and Palestinian crowds from potentially meeting, creating a 50-metre (164 feet) no man's land between themselves and the group of Palestinian youths. - Foreign Desk

Russia expels five Polish diplomats in retaliatory move

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: The Russian Foreign Ministry said on Friday it declared five employees of the Polish Embassy in Russia "persona non grata."

In a statement published on its website, the ministry said the move is a retaliation for the expulsion of three Russian diplomats from Poland on April 23 "in solidarity with the US."

Last week Moscow and Washington exchanged a new round of sanctions, both expelling 10 of the other's diplomats and blacklisting more officials.

Washington tightened economic sanctions against



Russia, while Moscow toughened the rules of work for the US embassy and banned activities of state-funded US non-governmental organizations in Russia. The Russian Foreign Ministry qualified demonstration of Poland's support to the US as a "deliberate pursuit of a

course of further degradation and destruction of bilateral relations" with Russia. "Through the efforts of the Polish authorities in recent years, contacts with Russia have been virtually frozen, a shameful war with Soviet monuments has been launched, attempts are being

made to torpedo Russian energy projects, a large-scale anti-Russian information campaign is being conducted, history is being falsified, and the anti-Russian sanctions of the West are being indefinitely extended.

"As a response to Poland's provocative actions to expel Russian diplomats, based on the principle of reciprocity, the ministry declared five employees of the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in the Russian Federation 'persona non grata,'" the ministry said.

The expelled diplomats must leave the territory of the Russian Federation before the end of the day on May 15, it added.

Shoukat Tarin lauds WB role during Covid-19 pandemic

The Finance Minister lauded the pivotal role being played by the WB in strengthening governance and service delivery through institutional reforms & human capital development in Pakistan over the years

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Najib Benhasine, Country Director of the World Bank Group made a courtesy call on the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin, at the Finance Division today.

While extending a warm welcome, the Finance Minister lauded the pivotal role being played by the World Bank in strengthening governance and service delivery through institutional reforms & human capital development in Pakistan over the years. He appreciated the swift and timely assistance extended by the World Bank Group for stimulating economic recovery during COVID-19 pandemic.



While speaking on the occasion, the Finance Minister reiterated the firm resolve of the Government in achieving macro-economic stability and sustained economic growth by following a consultative process. He apprised the Country Director that the

first Economic Advisory Council (EAC) meeting had decided to work towards reinvigorating the productive sectors of the econ-

omy. The EAC will facilitate sound economic planning by chalking out short, medium and long term plans (with firm timelines) to set the course for an inclusive and sustained economic growth, he added.

The Country Director, WBG felicitated the Finance Minister on assuming his new responsibility and thanked the Government of Pakistan for continuous support and facilitation in completion of on-going projects and programs.

In his concluding remarks, the Finance Minister stated that the continued support of the World Bank, as a major development partner, is critical to attaining fiscal consolidation, improved service delivery and good governance in Pakistan.

Briefs

Pro-Tareen lawmakers meet Sarwar

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Several Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) lawmakers who are standing in solidarity with the party's estranged leader Jahangir Tareen called on Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar on Friday. The lawmakers who met the governor included MNA Raja Riaz, Punjab Ministers Ajmal Cheema and Khayal Ahmed Castro. They apprised Sarwar of their reservations during the meeting, sources said. The governor assured them of a meeting with Prime Minister Imran Khan to have their reservations redressed. "I will play a role in ensuring a meeting with the prime minister at the earliest," the sources quoted him as telling the PTI lawmakers. Sarwar said every member of the party has trust in Prime Minister Khan's leadership. The PTI government is taking practical steps for the progress and stability of the country, he added. "Resolving the issues of the poor and weak segments of society is the government's top priority," the governor pointed out. Separately, PTI MNAs Mehboob Sultan and Ameer Sultan met with Jahangir Tareen. Mehboob Sultan said Tareen had rendered valuable services for the party.

Sindh Assembly passes Child Protection Act

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The Sindh Assembly has passed the Child Protection Authority Amendment Act, 2021, on Friday, April 23. According to Sindh Government's Spokesperson Senator Murtaza Wahab, who confirmed the development via a tweet, the new law will help the government address issues pertaining to child protection. "Proud to have been part of this initiative," Murtaza Wahab wrote, adding that he is grateful to the PPP for giving him such an opportunity. Prior to the enactment of the new act, the province had the Sindh Child Protection Authority Act, 2011, in place. Back in January, PPP's Shamim Muntaz, who is also a member of the Provincial Assembly, was appointed as the new chairperson of the Sindh Child Protection Authority. According to the website of the Sindh Child Protection Authority, the Sindh Child Protection Act, 2021, was passed to "facilitate the cases of abuse and violence against children."

Amb. Haque meets President Xinhua News

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin Ul Haque met President and Editor-in-Chief of Xinhua News Agency, He Ping at the Xinhua Headquarters. The two sides discussed to strengthen cooperation between the news agencies of Pakistan and China. They appreciated that Pakistan-China All Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership spanned all areas of bilateral cooperation including the important field of media and exchanges, and resolved to consolidate this partnership further. Both sides cherished the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and China, which have been nurtured through successive generations of leadership and the people in the two countries. Pakistan and China are celebrating the 70th anniversary of establishment of their diplomatic ties, and have planned more than hundred activities to rejoice this important milestone. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the media exchanges planned in this regard. Xinhua is China's premier, official, state-run news agency. It is the largest news agency in the world in terms of worldwide correspondents.

Quetta Serena Hotel people's preferred choice for iftars

At Serena Quetta we can see merging the best of the local culture and cuisine with culinary influences from around the globe, each of the restaurants and bars at Quetta Serena Hotel offers its own distinctive style and setting

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: The Serena Hotel Quetta is attracting interest of all and sundry because of its mouth-watering cuisines and lucrative iftar packages. Being the only Five Star Hotel in the provincial capital of Balochistan, Serena Quetta caters to culinary needs of those who believe in quality food stuff. Like past practice, this year too, Serena Quetta made elaborate arrangements especially for Iftar. "Serena Quetta offers cost-effective and exquisite dining facilities therefore we are thankful to the management of the Hotel", said Zarmeen Gul, who came to have iftar at the Serena Quetta with her family, on Thursday. At Serena Quetta we can see merging the best of the local culture and cuisine with culinary influences from around the globe, each of the restaurants and bars at Quetta Serena Hotel offers its own distinctive style and setting. Every one boasts sophisticated ambience, gracious service and fresh, flavourful ingredients - whether you're seeking an exploration of traditional Pakistani delights, savouring the delicacies of China and Thailand or gathering for authentic local snacks amidst the opulent décor of the Gidan Tea Lounge.

In addition, the perfect stop any time of day, the warm, casual Ziarat Coffee Shop serves Pakistani and International cuisine both buffet-style and a la carte. In addition to create theme nights, Ziarat



features live music. Indoor and outdoor seating are available. With a wonderfully open dining area and an outdoor terrace overlooking the gardens, Xuelian Restaurant is known for serving

the best Chinese and Thai food in Quetta. Showcasing a rich design and décor with colourful Balochi tapestries, carpets, rugs and antiques, the Gidan Tea Lounge features coffee, tea and

authentic local snacks. And last but not the least, those who really want to enjoy traditional Balochi, Pakistani and continental delicacies including live BBQ prefer relaxing garden setting.

In addition to that, the Quetta Serena Hotel is also playing a key role in community development and corporate social responsibility. It offers huge employment opportunities to the local community.

Battle of Jerusalem a response to Israeli crimes

PNC praised the steadfastness of the people of Jerusalem and its youth who adhered to their Arab Palestinian identity

DNA

RAMALLAH: National Council (PNC) said that the battle of Jerusalem, which was sparked by the heroes of this Holy City, came in response to the daily racist crimes committed by the occupation and its terrorist groups of settlers against the citizens of Jerusalem, and these crimes have escalated, especially since the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan. In a press statement issued Friday, PNC indicated that the Israeli occupation authorities have transformed the city of Jerusalem, the

capital of our eternal state, as well as the neighborhoods of Jerusalem into military barracks, chased their sons, erected iron barriers in squares and yards, and attacked worshippers and prevented them from reaching the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. PNC called for the unification of all Palestinian energy and capabilities, and to reject and abandon all that leads to weakening the front of confrontation and facing the Israeli occupation and its crimes, and to engage in this honorable national battle that the people of Jerusalem are waging with courage and valor on behalf of the Arab and Islamic nations.

History will not show mercy to the delinquents in defending the first Qibla and the third of the two Holy Mosques, PNC said, and called for a practical Arab and Islamic position to support and back the defenders of the city of Jerusalem, to keep its Arabic and Islamic identity, in the face of the machine of Israeli terrorism, Judaization and aggression of terrorist organizations protected and supported by the government of the extreme right-wing Israeli occupation. PNC also called on the international community to provide urgent protection to the Palestinian people

from the crimes of the occupation and settler terror, especially in the city of Jerusalem, which is subjected to organized aggression, incursions and continuous attacks on Christian and Islamic holy sites, foremost of which is the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, in addition to ethnic cleansing and forced displacement of Jerusalem citizens from their city. PNC praised the steadfastness of the people of Jerusalem and its youth who adhered to their Arab Palestinian identity, and refused to submit to the policies of the Israeli occupation, or surrender to the imbalance of power with it and its criminal gangs.

Canada bans flights from India, Pakistan

DNA

TORONTO: Canada has banned all passenger flights from India and Pakistan for 30 days due to the growing wave of COVID-19 cases in that region, Transport Minister Omar Alghabra said. "Given the higher number of cases of COVID-19 detected in air passengers arriving in Canada from India and Pakistan... I am suspending all commercial and private passenger flights arriving in Canada from Indian and

Pakistan for 30 days," Alghabra told a news conference on Thursday. The measure went into effect at 11:30pm Eastern Time on Thursday (03:30 GMT on Friday). It will not apply to cargo flights, Alghabra said, particularly to ensure the continued shipment of vaccines, personal protective equipment and other essential goods. More than a million people living in Canada are of Indian descent while there are 100,000 Canadians who

have Pakistani ancestry. India, which is undergoing an alarming surge being blamed on a "double mutant" variant and super-spreader events, recorded the world's highest daily tally of coronavirus cases for a second day in a row on Friday, while daily deaths from COVID-19 also jumped by a record. With 332,730 new cases, India's total caseload has now passed 16 million. Deaths rose by 2,263 to reach a total of 186,920, according to health ministry data.

Serena Isa writes letter to President Arif Alvi

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Serena Isa, wife of Supreme Court (SC) Judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa, has written a letter to President Dr Arif Alvi, in which she has regretted non-implementation on the Quetta Inquiry Commission report. In the letter, she says that the suicide attack at the car parking of Serena Hotel in Quetta was unfortunate, and so were terrorist attacks on people belonging to the Hazara community.

India records highest single day cases tally

NEW DELHI: India registered the world's highest single-day spike with 3,32,730 fresh Covid-19 new cases, pushing the overall caseload to 1,62,63,695, according to the data provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Friday morning. Meanwhile, 2,263 more people succumbed to the infection, taking the nationwide toll to 1,86,920. According to Thursday evening's tally, the maximum number of deaths were reported from Maharashtra at 568, followed by Delhi with 306 daily deaths. With fresh Covid-19 cases, the country's active caseload stands at 24,28,616, while total recoveries has increased to 1,36,48,159, the Union health ministry said on Friday. India had crossed the 2-lakh mark in daily cases on April 15 and the 3-lakh mark on Thursday (April 22). The trend shows that the Covid-19 cases in India tripled in just 17 days. India's daily jump in cases of 3,14,835 on Thursday had surpassed the previous highest one-day rise in the world of 2,97,430 cases posted by the United States in January, a Reuters report said. Top five states which have registered maximum cases are Maharashtra with 67,013 cases, followed by Uttar Pradesh with 34,254 cases, Kerala with 26,995 cases, Delhi with 26,169 cases and Karnataka with 25,795 cases. 54.15 per cent of the new cases are reported from these five states, with Maharashtra alone responsible for 20.14 per cent of the new cases. The surge in Covid-19 cases in Maharashtra continues unabated at a time when several hospitals in the state are running out of beds and medical oxygen to treat Covid-19 patients. On Thursday, Maharashtra recorded 67,013 new cases of Covid-19 and 568 deaths. - DNA

NAB launches probe into petroleum crisis

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has launched a probe into the petroleum crisis in the country and the recently concluded LNG deal with Qatar, media reported. Tightening noose around the characters allegedly part of the last year's fuel crisis in the country, NAB Rawalpindi has summoned secretary petroleum on April 26 along with the attested copy of the petrol inquiry commission. According to sources, the petroleum crisis last year caused a loss of Rs 25 billion to the national exchequer and the accountability watchdog has directed the secretary petroleum to bring inquiry report along with concerned documents. The accountability watchdog, sources said would examine the role of secretary petroleum, director general Ogra and oil companies in the entire episode. On April 20, the federal government made public the inquiry commission's report on the petrol crisis-2020 that held oil marketing companies, Petroleum Division and Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) responsible for the acute fuel crisis in the country last year. - DNA

Faisal Edhi offers help to India against Covid

Faisal personally offered to lead and manage the humanitarian team from his organisation, said the letter. It added that the Edhi Foundation understood the gravity of the situation and we wish to lend you our full support, without any inconvenience to you

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Faisal Edhi, son of renowned philanthropist Abdul Sattar Edhi and chairman of the Edhi Foundation, penned a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday in which he expressed his concern on the Covid-19 crisis underway in India and offered his help in confronting the epidemic. "We, at the Edhi Foundation, have been closely following the current impact that the Covid-19 crisis has had on the people of India. "We are very sorry to hear about the exceptionally heavy impact

that the pandemic has had on your country, where a tremendous number of people are suffering immensely," said Faisal in his letter. He said the Edhi Foundation sympathised with India during this difficult time and offered help in the form of "a fleet of 50 ambulances along with our services to assist you in addressing, and further circumventing, the current health conditions". Faisal personally offered to lead and manage the humanitarian team from his organisation, said the letter. It added that the Edhi Foundation understood the gravity of the situation and "we wish to lend you our



full support, without any inconvenience to you, which is why we will arrange all the necessary supplies that our team needs to assist the people of India." "Importantly,

we are not requesting any other assistance from you, as we are providing the fuel, food, and other necessary amenities that our team will require. "Our team consists of emergency medical technicians, office staff, drivers, and supporting staff," he explained. Faisal said that in order to implement the proposed service, permission to enter India was requested as well as any necessary guidance from local administration and the police department. "We are willing and ready to deploy our team into any critical areas of concern at your direction without hesitation," he said.

"We look forward to assisting you in managing the current humanitarian crises, and hope only to provide our help in whatever way that we can, for the benefit of the people of India." A press release from the organisation added that Faisal would depart with his team of volunteers as soon as he received permission. India marked a grim milestone in the Covid-19 pandemic on Thursday, reporting 314,835 new daily cases, the highest one-day tally anywhere, as its second wave and similar surges elsewhere have raised new fears about the ability of health services to cope.

Paris: Police employee stabbed to death

DNA

PARIS: A female police employee was stabbed to death by a Tunisian man at a police station southwest of Paris on Friday, the local prosecutor's office and a police source told media. The attacker was fatally wounded when an officer opened fire on him at the station in Rambouillet, a wealthy commuter town about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from Paris, a police source told on condition of anonymity. The attack took place in the secure entrance area of the station at around 2:20pm (12:20 GMT), the police source added. The woman, 48, was stabbed in the throat twice, the source said. Prime Minister Jean Castex and Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin both announced they were heading to the scene. The assailant was aged 36 and was unknown to security services, sources close to the investigation told. France has faced a series of attacks blamed on Islamist radicals in recent years that have cost the lives of hundreds of people.

'Composite development prime agenda of government'

SHUJAAT HAMZA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Friday said that composite development was the prime agenda of the incumbent government and it was working to extend the development process to all the areas of the province. Addressing a press conference flanked by Provincial Minister for Finance Mahkdoom Hashim Jawan Bakht, Dr Firdous said the government was giving rights to the people of South Punjab at their doorstep. The government was continuing the composite development process and every district would benefit from the fruits of composite development policy, she said. The Special Assistant said the South Punjab Secretariat was an important development towards South Punjab province as it would usher in a new era of development. Dr Firdous said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was formed to ensure and promote justice and accountability in the country. The SACM said that the bail did not mean that Shehbaz Sharif was innocent, adding that 'S' would do its own politics whereas 'N' would become a thing of the past. Responding to a question, she said as Pakistan was facing multiple challenges, every institution was duty-bound to perform its role. She said, "Government has sought Pak Army's support to strengthen and supplement the civil administration efforts to ensure the implementation of coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs) to control the spread of the deadly virus."

Pak reports 5870 new corona cases

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recorded another day of high fatalities due to Covid-19 with at least 144 deaths recorded during the last 24-hour period and as many as 5,870 new cases. At least 57 patients who were on ventilator support were among the fatalities and 133 of the deaths were of patients who were hospitalised. Most deaths occurred in Punjab, followed by Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa. Highest ventilator occupancy was recorded in Gujranwala with 88 per cent, 85 per cent in Multan, 82 per cent in Lahore, 65 per cent in Mardan. The number of active cases across the country stands at 84,976. Around 53,818 tests conducted during the said time span. At least 682,290 people have recovered from COVID-19 across Pakistan.