



Islamabad POST

Monday, April 26, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Pak urges Canadian govt to reconsider suspension of flights

Detailed News On Page-07

Azerbaijan to start direct flights with Pak

Detailed News On Page-01



Babar fastest to score 2,000 T20I runs

Detailed News On Page-01



Sehr & Iftar Timings

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:52 am	06:48 pm
FAISALABAD	03:58 am	06:45 pm
LAHORE	04:38 am	07:00 pm
KARACHI	03:53 am	06:40 pm
SARGODHA	03:58 am	06:47 pm

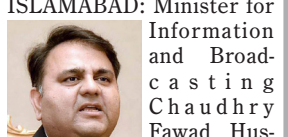
CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:42 am	06:58 pm
FAISALABAD	04:08 am	06:55 pm
LAHORE	04:28 am	07:10 pm
KARACHI	04:03 am	06:50 pm
SARGODHA	04:08 am	06:57 pm

Briefs

PTI a metaphor for politics of people

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Sunday that Prime Minister Imran Khan was striving for establishment of a modern Islamic welfare state as envisioned by Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In a video statement marking the foundation day anniversary of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, he said only PM Imran Khan could transform Pakistan following the vision of poet philosopher Allama Muhammad Iqbal and founding father Quaid-e-Azam M.A. Jinnah. He said that Imran Khan founded the PTI 25 years ago on this day, a time when Pakistan's political scene was dominated by two parties.



Shehbaz calls for joint work to save lives in India

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif said that the loss of innocent lives due to Covid-19 in India is deeply sad and he extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. In a tweet, the PML-N president said that coronavirus is a global pandemic that is killing humanity. Shehbaz Sharif said, "We as human beings must respect the lives of other helpless humans and work together to save them. May humanity be saved from this difficult situation." India continues to reel under the much severe second Covid wave as nearly 3.5 lakh new cases have been reported in the last 24 hours.



Continued on Page 06

NAWAZ SHARIF'S DEPORTATION

Pakistan, UK relations sour

Sources maintained that PM Imran has also shown his displeasure over UK's lack of cooperation in arranging former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's deportation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's bilateral relations with Britain have gone through a strain on the issue of deportation of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Diplomatic sources said that some of the recent tensions have been caused when Pakistan refused to hand over some of the criminals who were needed in UK for prosecution. "Pakistan has stopped any cooperation to hand over criminals to UK because British authorities are not cooperating to deport Nawaz Sharif" sources informed. These sources maintained that Prime Minister Imran Khan has also shown his displeasure over UK's lack of cooperation in arranging former Prime Minister and his arch political foe Nawaz Sharif's deportation. He has ordered stopping "any kind of cooperation with British authorities", when it comes to handing over criminals, the sources further confided to this scribe. These sources said that the Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid's visit to UK may also be in jeopardy owing to the approach adopted by the UK authorities regarding the Nawaz deportation issue. It is worth mentioning here that Pakistan's thrice elected Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was allowed to go to UK for "medical treatment" following court orders. He is living in London since November 2019. Record suggests and the Pakistan government claims that he has not undergone any major medical treatment and his Pakistani passport has also expired on Feb 18, 2021. His passport has not been renewed. Pakistan has approached authorities in the UK multiple times with the request that Nawaz Sharif be extradited to Pakistan. The sources said the British authorities have given no official statement so far on the request of Pakistan. In the meanwhile, Nawaz Sharif stay has been extended by British Home Department. Even in the past when Pakistan asked the British authorities to hand over MQM chief Altaf Hussain, the latter did not entertain Pakistan's request due to which both countries remained at the loggerheads for quite some time.

No defeat if you don't give up, says PM Imran Khan

Imran Khan says we named our party after justice. When there is justice, there cannot be any instance of corruption. Justice means the supremacy of law, meaning the weak and the mighty are equal before the law



ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Javed presenting bouquet to Prime Minister Imran Khan on the occasion of Foundation Day of the PTI. - DNA

Azerbaijan to start direct flight operation with Pakistan: envoy

Ambassador Alizada says defence and military cooperation was one of the main and leading components of the bilateral relations of two brotherly countries

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada has said that his country will start direct flights operation with Pakistan soon after the slowdown of Covid-19 which will yield positive impacts on economic and trade activities of both the countries. His country was always interested in developing regional connectivity, transportation linkages, he said in a media interview. Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada said in a media interview. At present the two countries have no direct air link. Their air link is established through Turkish Airlines, which was allowed to operate flights from Istanbul to Lahore/ Islamabad through Baku. They had signed the Draft Air Services Agreement (ASA) in 1993, and a memorandum of understanding on September 30, 2009, while a codeshare was agreement inked by their national air carriers in January 2020. According to reports, more than 40,000 Pakistani citizens visited Azerbaijan in 2019 and this number is likely to continue to grow once the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic subsided and international travel restrictions are lifted. Ambassador Alizada said defence and military cooperation was one of the main and leading components of the bilateral relations of two brotherly countries. He said keeping in view the regional political and geographical situation, Azerbaijan gave topmost priority to its security, and considered the military and defence cooperation (with the brotherly states) vital to ensure and protect its sovereignty. Pakistan and Azerbaijan, he said, had developed their strong defence cooperation in different spheres such as military training, military-technical and military-educational and others. The two countries still needed to intensify more efforts in the area, he stressed. "Our armed forces are working closely on mutually sharing experience on annual basis. The servicemen and officers from both sides take part in different courses and trainings organized in our respective countries. Every year we organize several high level exchanges of military leadership and officials mutually." As regards the trilateral military format, Ambassador Alizada said, "We have a very good understanding in the trilateral format, when it comes to the armed forces of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey." Besides conducting joint bilateral military exercises with Pakistan, the trilateral military exercises with the involvement of various types of troops of Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Turkey were under consideration, which would hopefully take place during the current year, he added. The defence and military cooperation among three countries, he said, was because of their high level strategic partnership. "I am sure it will be further strengthened in the years ahead."



Continued on Page 06

Pakistan supports Turkey on Armenia issue

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Responding to media queries on the statements made by certain governments describing the events of 1915 related to Armenia, the Spokesperson said: We have taken note of statements made by some governments on the events of 1915. We believe that one-sided approaches and political categorisation of historical events could undermine trust and lead to polarisation between nations. We note with appreciation Turkey's constructive approach on the subject including its proposal for a Joint History Commission to ascertain the facts, allowing all to move forward.

Babar fastest to score 2,000 T20I runs

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan captain Babar Azam has become the fastest to score 2,000 runs in T20 Internationals. The right-hander overtaken his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli by achieving the feat in his 52nd innings. He achieved the feat during the third T20I against Zimbabwe in Harare on Sunday where he ended up scoring 52 of 46 balls with the help of five fours. Babar, who recently became the highest-ranked ODI batsman, is in sublime form these days as he struck his maiden T20I hundred in Pakistan's nine-wicket win over South Africa in the third T20I at the Super-Sport Park on April 14. He was also awarded with player-of-the-series award for his 210 runs at 52.50 in the recently concluded four-match series.

One million doses arrive from China



ISLAMABAD: One million doses of corona vaccine from China being unloaded. - DNA

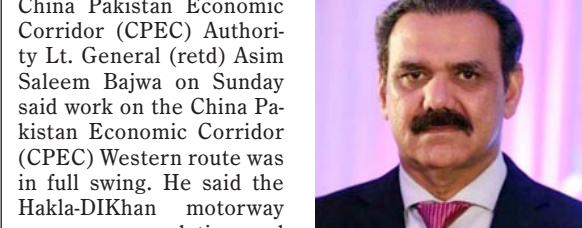
NEWS DESK

BEIJING: Three planes of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) carrying a consignment of one million doses of COVID-19 vaccine arrived Pakistan as the country sees sharp increase in new coronavirus cases. Another consignment of two million doses of Covid-19 vaccines will also be transported from China by the national flag carrier on April 29. It is pertinent to mention here that Pakistan has already begun vaccinating elderly people aged above 60-year-old and health professionals. The vaccination of people in

Continued on Page 06

Work on CPEC Western route in full swing: Bajwa

ISLAMABAD: Chairman China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. General (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Sunday said work on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Western route was in full swing. He said the Hakla-DIKhan motorway was near completion and would likely be opened for traffic in August/September this year. "Hakla-DI Khan Motorway construction work is in full swing, current progress is 86%. Will be commissioned by Aug/Sep," he said in his tweet. The Chairman informed that with priority on the Western route now, two other seg-



ments (Zhob-Quetta, Hoshab-Awaran) had already been started. According to an official in CPEC Authority, under the CPEC, some 1,100 kilometer roads had been completed while 850 kilometres were under construction.

Continued on Page 06

Inside...

- 8 deaths, 159 new Covid cases reported in Faisalabad - Page 02
- 150 prominent citizens urge withdrawal of HEC Ordinance - Page 03
- Regional forums urged for joint action plans to combat climate change - Page 04
- Fruits of CPEC would soon reach people - Page 05
- Pakistan edge out Zimbabwe by 24 runs to clinch T20I series - Page 06
- Pakistan urges Canadian govt to reconsider suspension of flights - Page 07
- Turkey rejects Biden calling events of 1915 'genocide' - Page 08

NOW IN PAKISTAN

Invisible Braces
Dental Implants

Dr. Abrar & Associates
Dental Surgeons

Dr. Abrar & Associates

DENTAL SURGEONS

House # 6-A, Ismail Zabeeh Road, (Service Road Parallel to Faisal Avenue) F-8/3, Islamabad.
e-mail: abrar_associates@yahoo.com | www.drabrarassociates.com
Ph: +92 51 228 7691 / +92 51 228 7692 | Fax: +92 51 228 7693

Briefs

India now monitoring social media accounts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the Peoples Democratic Party President, Mehbooba Mufti Sunday said that the India's paranoia about the Kashmiris has touched a new low with social media accounts of government employees now being monitored. According to Kashmir Media Service, Mehbooba Mufti was reacting to a news report she shared on Twitter. The report claimed that a new directive by the authorities require the social media history of government employees to be scanned for objectionable activity. "Even as India gasps for breath thanks to Govt of India inept handling of COVID-19, it's paranoia about Kashmiris has touched a new low with social media of government employees now being monitored. The vengeance with which J&K's special status was scrapped doesn't seem to have an end in sight," Mehbooba said in her tweet.

UNICEF established 33 EmONC in Sindh, Balochistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UNICEF has helped establishing 33 Basic Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care (EmONC) services in various areas of Sindh and Balochistan for providing round the clock medical aid to people of far flung areas. The main aim of establishing 24/7 Basic Emergency Obstetric and New-born Care (EmONC) services was to support the Health Departments in strengthening maternal, new-born and child health services to people. As many as 33 health facilities provided in Sindh and Balochistan, including Basic Health Units, Rural Health Centers and District Headquarters (DHQ) hospitals, said a document of UNICEF Pakistan. In Tharparkar, Government Dispensaries were strengthened and upgraded to be able to deliver 24/7 Basic EmONC services. Community based Maternal New-born Child Health (MNCH) interventions were implemented through community-based structures, including Lady Health Workers (LHWs) and social mobilizers, said UNICEF Pakistan. The 33 health facilities were also supported with supplies and equipment, the labour rooms were fully equipped, minor repairs and health workers. To address the frequent power failure issues, six health facilities in Thar parkar were equipped with solar systems, the document of UNICEF Pakistan added.

Punjab govt notifies schools closure

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab government has notified closure of schools in 25 districts of the province witnessing over five percent COVID positivity rate, following a decision by the NCOC provincial Schools Education Minister Murad Raas. Sharing a notification on his Twitter account, Murad Raas said that all public and private schools will be closed immediately in the districts stated in the notification till further notice. He further clarified that classes 9,10,11,12 will also be closed in these districts starting Monday 26, 2021. The districts mentioned in the notification included Lahore, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Bhakkar, Chakwal, Dera Ghazi Khan, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Jhang, Kasur, Khanewal, Khushab, Lodhran, Mandi Bahauddin, Multan, Okara, Pakpattan, Rahimyar Khan, Rawalpindi, Sahiwal, Sargodha, Sheikhupura, Sialkot, Toba Tek Singh.

8 deaths, 159 new Covid cases reported in Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: 8 more deaths recorded from corona and 159 new cases were reported in the last 24 hours due to corona in the district. The third wave of Corona has infected 7855 people since March 1, out of which 223 have died and 5097 have recovered. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali appealed to the citizens to implement Corona SOPs and said make sure to use a face mask when going out of the house. Meanwhile Deputy Commissioner checked the implementation on corona SOPs in public transports at various busiest road. He went inside the buses and checked

wearing face masks and 50 percent cspacify sitting arrangements and take out the passengers from buses those were without face mask. Deputy Commissioner also informed that Primary and Secondary Health care department Punjab has extended the lock down till 17th May. According to the notification markets and bazars would close at 6 Pm and complete lock down on Friday and Saturday. Schools, Cienmas, Parks would remain close. Medical Stores, Tandoor, fruits and vegetable shops would remain open 24 hours 7 days of week.

Magistrates for enforcing official prices Price control magistrates were working to enforce



official prices of essential commodities across the district. In this regard, action has been taken against 1336 profiteers for overcharging in general markets and bazars in the last two weeks and cases have been registered against 197 vendors for serious violation of Price Control Act. Apart from registering and arresting, illegal profiteers were fined more than Rs 235000 for selling fruits, vegetables, meat and groceries at exorbitant prices. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali directed the price control magistrates that action should be taken against the vendors of essential commodities to provide relief to the consumers.

1200 kg rotten chicken liver seized

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority and the district administrations have intensified crackdown against food adulteration across the province and seized over 1200 kg rotten chicken liver from a vehicle near motorway toll check post on Sunday. The action was taken on the directives of Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety Authority Shah Rukh Ali Khan. In another operation, 2000 liters counterfeit beverages were recovered from a distribution company in Chamkani area of Peshawar. The distribution company was sealed and legal proceedings were started against the owner for selling fake beverages of branded names. The Food Safety Authority, during Ramadan has intensified its operations against factories, general stores, hotels and fast food points and vendors were sensitised on the SOPs of Food Safety Authority and directed them to comply with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) of the Authority for their concerned businesses. According to the Food Safety Authority, general stores and fast food points were also inspected across the province. The rotten liver was discarded while following proper standard operating procedures.

Cement export dips 0.01pc, reaches \$210.042 mln

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The exports of cement from the country witnessed decrease of 0.01 percent during the nine months of financial year 2020-21, against the exports of the corresponding period of last year. The cement exports from the country were recorded at \$210.042 million during July-March (2020-21) against the exports of \$210.073 million during July-March (2019-20), according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the exports of cement however increased by 11.70 percent by going up from 5,592,788 metric tons to 6,247,086 metric tons, according to the data. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the exports of cement also increased by 66.25 percent during the month of March 2021 as compared to the same month of last year. The exports of cement from the country during March 2021 were recorded at \$26.847 million against the exports of \$16.149 million in March 2020.



LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi called on Punjab Governor Chaudhary Muhammad Sarwar at his residence. - DNA

Punjab governor, PA speaker discuss Tareen group issue

Sarwar and Parvez appealed to the people to follow the SOPs as the situation in Corona is critical

DNA

LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Chaudhary Pervaiz Elahi on Sunday called on Punjab Governor Chaudhary Muhammad Sarwar at his DHA residence in Lahore. Both the leaders discussed important political issues including the matter relating to Jahangir Tareen group. On the occasion, Ch Pervaiz Elahi expressed reservations of PML-Q regarding the current political situation in the province besides other important issues. Both leaders expressed concern over the recommendations of Shoaib Sidal's one-member minority commission on curriculum, discussed

the political situation in the country, including Corona, and other issues of mutual interest. Ch Sarwar and Ch Parvez Elahi appealed to the people to follow the SOPs as the situation in Corona is critical. Ch Pervaiz Elahi said that in view of Corona, it has become necessary for the people to limit their activities. At present, more and more steps are needed to tackle the challenge of Corona. Every segment of society should cooperate in this situation. Governor Ch Muhammad Sarwar said that with the increasing positive cases of corona, the pressure on hospitals is growing and the situation in the region is also becoming very dangerous due to corona.

It's time to curb Covid, not for political point scoring: Dr Firdous

All necessary goods would be sent to India on humanitarian basis as a goodwill gesture

DNA

SIALKOT: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Punjab Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that it is not time for political point scoring but to save the country and the nation from the corona. All politicians including Bilawal Bhutto should put politics aside for some time and play their role to combat corona, so that human lives could be saved, she said this while talking to the media at a corona vaccination centre on Sunday. The SACM said that the government had decided to close those districts which had above 5% corona positivity rate. She said that at present hospitals in Punjab were being provided with oxygen and venti-

lators. She said that we have to take all possible precautions to avoid corona as its spread had wreaked havoc on India. She said that the cooperation of people was essential to deal with such an emergency and corona could only be defeated with the cooperation of people. The SACM said that all necessary goods would be sent to India on humanitarian basis as a goodwill gesture. She said that the Punjab government is using all available resources for maximum corona vaccination and working day and night to prevent the spread of the deadly disease. Dr Firdous said that Punjab government had so far vaccinated more than 934,000 people against corona. On an average, more



than 25,000 people are being vaccinated against corona daily basis, she added. There are 7.4 million people over the age of 60, out of which more than 4,70,000 have been vaccinated against coronavirus, she said. She said that the number of people between the ages of 50 and 59 is 8 million, out of which 34,742 have been vaccinated against coronavirus. She added that the number of registered health care

workers is 2,32,299 out of which 1,86,965 health care workers have been vaccinated against corona. Dr Firdous said that 1,600 elderly people who could not come to vaccination centers have been vaccinated. She said that 43,000 people have been vaccinated against corona in Sialkot. The SACM said that Punjab government would complete the process of vaccination of all front line health care workers within a week. She said that the Punjab government is taking all possible steps to prevent Corona and protect the people. Dr Firdous said that the Punjab government is buying 1.5 billion Corona vaccinations and our mission is to provide vaccinations to the media, front line workers and the people.

Construction sector has huge prospects for foreign investors

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front (PIAF) Chairman Mian Nauman Kabir said on Sunday that construction sector has huge prospects for foreign investors, as the country has been lacking at least 10 million houses units for its more than 220 million population. Mian Nauman Kabir, in a joint statement with vice

chairman Javed Siddiqi, said that Pakistan has been unable to attract any sizeable foreign investment for the last several years despite providing incentives on taxes and assurances for one-window facility to the investors. Quoting the statistics, he stated that the country received \$1.3 billion in FDI during July-Feb 2020-21 compared to \$1.85 billion in

the same period of last year, a decline of 29.9%, indicating that the government has failed to win the confidence of foreign investors in the national economy due to multiple reasons. Moreover, the inflow of FDI in February has registered a steep fall of 44% to \$155 million against inflow of \$277.5 million in Feb 2020. It is fact that the entire world has been witnessing

falling inflows of FDI due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Mian Nauman said that the pandemic has eroded the trust of investors in investment, which has an adverse impact on every step of FDI, including input supplies, increasing uncertainties and liquidity constraints for the multinational firms, he said and added there are also other external factors out of the government's control. - APP

Olive cultivation to make Pakistan self-sufficient in edible oil

DNA

PESHAWAR: Blessed with diverse ecological zones, fertile soil and suitable climate conditions, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is going to emerge as a home of olive trees where over 70 million wild olive plants have been discovered out of which 40 million would be planted jointly by the Agriculture and Forest departments in next five years. Talking to APP, Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Project Director, 10 BTAP said olive, bees-flora and fruits plants were included for the first time in the mega project in KP where 40 million olive trees would be planted and grafting in another 40 million wild olives would be achieved having preference to Spanish and Italian varieties due to its high production and climate resistance. He said that 362 million plants including 180 million through forests enclosures including olive trees were planted by March 15 last in the province and ef-



orts is on to achieve half of the target of 500 million saplings by June this year. Syed Ishfaq Umar, Provincial Minister for Environment, Forests and Wildlife told APP that about 70 million wild olive plants have been unearthed in KP including about 35 million in erst-while Fata. Approximately, 15 million were discovered in South Waziristan, six million in Kurram, four million in Orakzai, 3.45 million in Bajaur, 1.5 million each in North Waziristan, Kohat, 1.2 million in Mohmand, one million in Khyber, six lakh each in Dera Ismail Khan and Tank, eight lakh in ex FR Peshawar and two lakh each in Bannu and Lakki Marwat. The Minister said in first phase, grafting would be made in healthy olive plants in accessible areas and in second phase this technique would be used in remote hilly areas with assistance of Agriculture Department.

TENDER NOTICE

NO: TN/PRCC/2021/0020_002060025

1. Sealed Tender(s) are invited from registered reputed manufacturers/suppliers/authorized agents for supply of the following items:

Tender	S.	IT ref No.	Tender	Tender	Submission
0020/ ISB	1.	ISB/LIT/Crop Yield & Production Forecast	TABLET PC	FOR	300 10-05-21
	2.	ISB/LIT/22111411/2021/574	LED TV	FOR	300 10-05-21
	3.	ISB/LIT/22111511/2021/587	PISTON SET, RING SET, HEAD	FOR	300 10-05-21
	4.	ISB/LIT/22111411/2021/588	BLU-RAY DISCS, BLU-RAY DISCS	FOR	500 10-05-21
0020/ LHR	1.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2021/576	FIXTURE	FOR	300 10-05-21
	2.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2021/577	ADAPTER	FOR	300 10-05-21
	3.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2021/578	LABELLING MACHINE TAPES,	FOR	300 10-05-21
	4.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2021/585	SCREW, BOLT	FOR	300 10-05-21
	5.	LHR/LIT/20151011/2021/586	SCREW, BOLT, FLAT WASHER,	FOR	300 10-05-21
0025/ Khi	1.	HQ/LIT/251412/2021/575	MILLING CUTTER	FOR	300 10-05-21
	2.	HQ/LIT/251412/2021/579	GRINDING & POLISHING MACHINE	FOR	500 10-05-21
	3.	HQ/LIT/251412/2021/580	MILLING CUTTER	FOR	500 10-05-21
	4.	HQ/LIT/251412/2021/581	INSERT	FOR	500 10-05-21
	5.	HQ/LIT/24151311/2021/582	CPU, LED MONITOR	FOR	300 10-05-21
	6.	HQ/LIT/21111212/2021/583	WRENCH SET	FOR	300 10-05-21
	7.	HQ/LIT/21111013/2021/584	CONNECTOR-A	FOR	300 10-05-21
	8.	HQ/RIT/2021/18	Hi-Speed Diesel	FOR	2,000 10-05-21

2. Tender documents can be downloaded by registered suppliers/firms from our website www.eproc402.com and offers can be submitted in the light of guidelines provided therein. Technical & Financial Offers may please be submitted at the addresses given/mentioned at page no. 1 of the IT. Please fill the Tender document duly signed & stamped along with covering letter on your firm Letter-Head. Please note that Buyer does not sell hard copies of the Tender documents, unless specified so.

3. Proposals/Bids/Others must be submitted on the given submission date against tender latest by 1100 hours. The opening of bid(s) will be carried out at 1130 hours on the respective submission date.

4. Tender Notice is also available at PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk.

5. The organization reserves the right to reject all bids under proviso provided under rule No. 33 of PPP Rules, 2004.

6. Incomplete, conditional, ambiguous or doubtful Proposals/Bids/Others will not be considered.

7. All bidders shall abide by the Terms & Conditions attached with the tender form.

8. For any queries please contact on Phone No: 92-21-99241765-79 Ext: 2802, 2803, 2805, 2809

Note: Please submit the Tender fee through our MCB online account ((Account details are available on our website) from any online MCB branch in Pakistan and attach its original receipt with Technical Quotation.

Sd/-

Director General Logistics

P.O. Box 8402, Karachi-75270

Briefs

AIUO admits 150,000 students in matric, F.Sc

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIUO) has finalized admission process for matriculation and intermediate programs offered in spring 2021 semester. Approximately 150,000 students have been admitted in these programs.

According to the admission department, finalized lists of students enrolled in these programs are being forwarded to the mailing department to initiate and complete the process of mailing of books before the commencement of educational activities from May 1 to August 31 in accordance to the academic calendar of the current semester.

UN announces short film competition for youth

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations has announced a short film competition for youth on multiple topics and the deadline for the entries was June 18.

"The United Nations video competition is open worldwide for the filmmakers ages 25 and younger," said a news release.

The competition titled 'Plural + Youth Video Festival' is a competition which is sponsored by the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in collaboration with the International Organization for Migration, it added.

The interested youth were invited to submit films on migration, diversity, social inclusion and prevention of xenophobia.

It said videos must be less than five minutes, including English subtitles and produced after December 31, 2018.

There are three age categories as well as the Special Awards for the prevention of Xenophobia, Safe Worship and Solidarity amid COVID-19. Winners will receive an All-expenses-paid trip to attend the Plural+ 2021 Festival and awards ceremony late in 2021 in a location to be announced later.

110 bottles of liquor recovered

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested a liquor supplier and recovered 110 bottles of liquor from his possession in the jurisdiction of Gujjar Khan police station here on Sunday.

The police spokesman informed that, Gujjar Khan Police have intercepted a suspected vehicle during checking police recovered 110 bottles while the dealer identified as Dawood Ahmed run away from the scene.

Police have registered a case against the accused and started investigation. SP Sadder Division appreciated the police team adding that other facilitators of liquor suppliers must be arrested. He directed the officials to take strict action against anti-social elements without any discrimination.

150 prominent citizens urge withdrawal of HEC Ordinance

The signatories expressed serious concerns that major decisions that affect the lives of millions of students were taken hastily and secretly by the Federal Govt without consulting the parliament, the CCI, or the Higher Education Commission

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: 150 prominent academics and civil society leaders have written a strongly worded open letter to Prime Minister Imran Khan demanding the withdrawal of the HEC amendment ordinance and restoration of the HEC as an independent national regulatory body.

The government promulgated the HEC (Amendment) Ordinance 2021 on 25 March 2021, through which the tenure of the Chairperson was reduced from 4 to 2 years, the current Chair, Dr.

Tariq Banuri, was removed from his position, and HEC was placed under the Federal Ministry of Education.

The signatories of the letter include senior educationists, Vice Chancellors, journalists, former ambassadors, generals and other government officials, parliamentarians, and human rights activists. They include such names as LUMS founder Syed Babar Ali, human rights activists Ms. Hina Jilani, Mr. Harris Khalique and Mr. Karamat Ali, Council of Islamic Ideology Chair Dr. Qibla Ayaz, former VCs Prof. Qasim Jan and Prof. Adil

Najam, NCSW Chair Ms. Khawar Mumtaz, journalists Mr Hussain Naqi and Mr. M. Ziauddin, educationists Mr. Shams Kassim Lakha, Ms. Shahnaz Wazir Ali and Dr. Ayesha Razaque, business leader Mr. Farooq Sumar, and former Senators Javed Jabbar and Farhat Ullah Barar, among many others.

The signatories expressed serious concerns that major decisions that affect the lives of millions of students were taken hastily and secretly by the Federal Government without consulting the parliament, the Council of Common Interests (CCI),

or the Higher Education Commission. These are statutory bodies with a real stake in the issue.

The relegation of the status of the HEC from an independent national body, with representation from all provinces, to a subordinate entity of the federal government, will have implications for inter-provincial relations as well as the autonomy of higher education institutions. The signatories questioned the logic behind reducing the term of the Chairperson to two years, stating that there is no evidence that shorter tenures

will improve the quality of higher education. They also said that dismantling the statutory protection accorded to Chairperson's tenure will render similar government's commitments worthless, and that this will create severe problems of governance.

The letter points out that the incumbent Chairperson of HEC, Dr. Tariq Banuri is a Harvard trained Economist who was appointed on the recommendation of an independent selection board, composed solely of professionals with no participation along partisan

political lines. Since his appointment he had initiated a series of reforms to bring greater transparency, accountability, and commitment to quality in the system of higher education. Removal of the Chairperson mid-way in his tenure will derail this agenda.

The letter demands that the HEC (Amendment) Ordinance must be rescinded, the Chairman be restored to his position, and the university funding restored to the levels required to bring the requisite improvements in the quality of education and research in the country.

IES only saviour of ideology of Pakistan

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Secretary General Jamaat-e-Islami Women Wing Durdana Sideeqi said that Islamic educational system (IES) in our educational institutions was actually and the only savior of the Ideology of Pakistan which was the real objective behind creation of Pakistan.

She said the attempt by the secular lobby to exclude Islamic chapters and lessons from the educational curriculum in Punjab is unacceptable at all. In her statement issued here on Saturday, Durdana Sideeqi called upon the federal Education Ministry to protect the rights of the children of 98 percent Muslim majority as enshrined in Article 31 of the Constitution of Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Staff of the Malaysian High Commission posing for a picture after Iftar. – DNA

OWA shows serious concerns on politicizing HEC

ISLAMABAD: The Officers Welfare Association (OWA) of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) has showed serious concerns over ex-Chairman Dr Tariq Banuri for politicizing the reputed institution and higher education sector. In a statement, the HEC officers and staff have strongly condemned Dr Tariq Banuri ex-chairman HEC and his allies for politicizing the issue of his removal. "It is quite misfortune that some vested interested groups are diverting the attention from real cause of his removal" OWA in a statement said.

The Officers Welfare Association HEC has also condemned his confrontational attitude with federal government. Being Controlling Authority of HEC, Prime Minister of Pakistan has all the rights to remove an incompetent person in order to save the organisation and sector from further destruction. HEC employees and higher education sector do not need such leadership that create conflict instead of resolving it. Learning from the flaws in past appointments of HEC chairman, the employees of HEC demanded the Prime Minister and the Federal Minister of Education to appoint a person of academic eminence with proven track record of serving the higher education sector in Pakistan per the eligibility criteria laid down in HEC Act/Ordinance. – DNA

Two injured in separate incidents

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Two persons sustained injuries in two different incidents in Attock during last 24 hours.

Police said in the first incident a laborer Noaman fell in a ditch while working in a private housing who was shifted to hospital. After examination it was informed that his leg was fractured due to the mishap.

In the second incident a 39 year old woman fell from a moving train and lost her both legs near Attock City Railway station.

Meanwhile Attock police have arrested Jamil r/o Mohala Bijli Ghar and recovered 420 kites from his possession and Muhammad Fayyaz r/o village Hameed and recovered 2,040 kg chargs from his possession.

IRSA releases 132,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 132,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 102,200 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1405.67 feet, which was 21.67 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 23,900 and 35,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1111.60 feet, which was 71.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 44,100 and 63,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 40,100, 45,900 and 12,400 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 13,000 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 12,800 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. – APP

CPEC boosts prospects of higher education for Pakistani students

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: After work initiated on China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as cornerstone of economic growth for the partner countries under the flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has opened up new avenue of 'Pak-China Knowledge Corridor' in the field of higher education for Pakistani students in leading Chinese universities. The exemplary Pak-China bilateral relations spanning over seven decades have further strengthened after the CPEC project was launched. The smooth construction of the project has connected the two friendly countries more than ever before. With mutual understanding, the large scale connectivity through the corridor is not only shaping shared destiny of the two countries but it is also creating "win win situation" to reap the yield of the project. Therefore, this year, both the countries have decided to celebrate the establishment of the deep-rooted historic ties throughout the year through more than 100 events consisted of cultural activities, photography exhibitions, fashion shows, publication of books and people-to-people exchange programs.

In the field of higher education, the friendly neighbouring country has been producing a large number of research scholars and professionals in almost all disciplines from medical to engineering, social sciences to humanities, management sciences to applied sciences and technology to Chinese language courses. Sharing their experiences, a large number of Pakistani students have said that the world ranking universities of China facilitate students to harness their skills and learning. Talking to media, Director Pakistan Institute of China Studies, University of Sargodha, Dr. Fazlur Rahman said that after initiating work on CPEC, the two countries have expanded the canvas of bilateral relations from economic to political, strategic to cultural and trade to education that urged the two sides to strengthen people-to-people connectivity through cultural exchange programs and education corridor.

NAVTTTC for establishing 75 High-Tech skill centres

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) is striving hard to uplift the quality of TVET sector institutes of Pakistan and in this context NAVTTTC is establishing 75 High-Tech skill centres across Pakistan to equip the Pakistani youth with latest technical skills. These skill centres will comprise state of the art technological facilities for imparting skill training to the youth.

The state of the art facilities include smart labs, facilitation centres, job placement centres, business incubation centres and training of 2000 teachers which will provide youth high-tech environment as well as the employment and entrepreneurship counselling. National Vocational and Technical Training Commission will host today online National Conference on establishing 75 High-Tech skill centres across Pakistan. The one day event is expected to obtain valuable suggestions from all TVET stakeholders.

No more cash stimulus to unbank FEB

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The beneficiaries of Federal Employees Benevolent and Group Insurance Fund (FEB & GIF) have been asked to open their accounts in near-by National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) by May 31, 2021 as the cash payments would be stopped from July 1, 2021. From July 1 onwards the monthly benevolent grants to FEB & GIF beneficiaries would be directly repatriated into the personal NBP accounts of the beneficiaries, an official told media.

The beneficiaries must open their accounts in their nearest branch of NBP by May 31, 2021. After opening the account the same may be communicated to FEB & GIF through bank on prescribed format, including details of benevolent grant case no. (Computerized National Identity Cards) CNIC of employee, beneficiary; account no. of beneficiary; name of NBP branch with code, amount of monthly grant date & amount of last payment made by the NBP duly recommended by the

bank branch manager. The said information should be duly verified and recommended by the respective NBP branch manager.

According to its website, more than 649,000 Federal Government Employees are being covered under its welfare schemes. Over 40 pc families have so far received benefits from the funds.

It covers all Federal Government employees and the employees of those autonomous bodies to whom coverage of the FEBF & GI Act 1969 has been extended. Nine different benefits namely cash awards on essay writing competition; fee reimbursement; lump sum grant; burial charges; monthly benevolent grant; sum assured; farewell grant; marriage grant and education stipend are being paid under its welfare schemes. After Tarbela Dam, Mohmand Dam is the first mega dam which is started after over five decades. Mohmand Dam is being constructed on River Swat about 5 kilometre upstream of Munda Head Works in tribal Mohmand district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

The approved PCI of the project stands at Rs309.56 billion. An innovative financial plan has been devised for Mohmand Dam Project. Under the plan, WAPDA equity will be Rs79 billion and share of local and foreign commercial loans will be Rs44 billion and Rs72 billion. As many as Rs114 billion (Rs17 Billion annually) will be provided through annual Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

Currently, construction work on multipurpose Mohmand Dam Hydropower Project has been carrying out day and night. Resultantly, the project is moving ahead with a good pace and WAPDA is confident to complete the project during high flow season in 2025 as per the timelines.

Mohmand Dam is the 5th highest concrete-face-rock-fill Dam (CFRD) in the world. The total priority land has already been acquired with the unprecedented support of the locals, District Administration of Tribal Mohmand district and the provincial KP government and with concerted efforts by WAPDA Land Acquisition and Resettlement officers.

Footpaths, markets encroached by beggars during Ramazan

"Beggars of all aged group including women, children, young girls and elderly people are seen frequently on city's footpaths, markets, shops, seeking alms and charity from every customer and pedestrian"

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The people belonging to twin cities of Islamabad/Rawalpindi have demanded of the authorities concerned to take effective steps to discourage the practice of beggary and its related mafia from the society.

According to PTV news report aired, it was said that: "Beggars of all aged group including women, children, young girls and elderly people are seen frequently on city's footpaths, markets, shops, seeking alms and charity from every customer and pedestrian during the holy month of Ramazan".

While talking to citizens, this scribe told that the influx of beggars arriving to

cities on temporary basis in the holy month of Ramazan and it has become a routine matter over the years, however authority concerned keep checking this social evil with iron hands thus the public should also co-operate with the authorities to crush this evil practice. "These beggars halting the



smooth flow of traffic and causing hardships for commuters in Ramazan. Most of these beggar mafias use children and women for begging", said a commuter while talking to this scribe. "Beggars have made the lives of citizens miserable especially in Ramazan as they chase them and force them

into giving them money," moans a citizen. The number of these professional beggars get increased near Iftar time when people throng to bazaars for buying fruits and other foodstuffs, said another citizen. "Female beggars have become a nuisance that is unbearable while shopping in bazaars and markets", said a female citizen.

These beggars can frequently be seen in city markets and busy roads and even in the residential areas for 'timely' collection of alms and other Ramazan related charities from the general public, said a shopkeeper. Another citizen advised that we should give priority to our poor relatives first while giving charity instead of giving preference to these organized mafias.

BECOME A RESPONSIBLE CITIZEN

It is our legal and social responsibility to inquire/acquire necessary information about the person, group or organization that we are considering for our donations.

We can give our money to the deserving in cash or send it through online transfer or deposit in a bank account. In addition, we can also donate sacrificial hides or do voluntary service to help the deserving.

However, it is our responsibility to ensure that our money should only reach those who deserve it. Always remember that no person or organization can force you to donate money. A case of terrorism can be lodged against anyone who forcibly tries to extort money from you.

Government of Pakistan's organization NACTA has compiled a list of such persons and organizations that are banned to receive any kind of donations.

If you know about any dubious person or organization then you can report to 1717.

Briefs

CDA to install digital informative map boards

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) had decided to install digital informative, historical, and guide map boards across the city to enhance the beauty of the city and information of the citizens. In the first phase, digital boards have been displayed in F-7, F-8, F-10, I-08, G-06, and F-06. These boards will be displayed throughout the city later on. According to detail, the administration of CDA is committed for enhancing the beauty of the city side by side providing latest facilities to the masses. In this regard, the administration is displaying historical, informative, guiding boards at main roads and avenues across the city. These boards will help the citizens that where they are standing and they will also be able to get the complete information about the sectors. Digital boards have been displayed in F-7, F-8, F-10, I-08, G-06, and F-06. These boards will also be displayed at other places in the city.

Husan-e-Qirat organized at PUCAR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: In connection with the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak, Punjab Council of the Arts arranged an online Mehfil Husan-e-Qirat here on Sunday. The Mehfil Husan-e-Qirat was anchored by Hafiz Mohsin Ali Bhatti while International fame Qari Muhammad Farooq and Qari Muhammad Zeeshan Haider recited from Holy Quran. The Council has started its online activities owing to closure of all cultural activities due to prevailing situation of COVID-19. Director Punjab Council of the Arts, Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed said at the occasion that the Council will arrange series of activities to observe Holy Month of Ramzan till Eid.

165,523 PSVs fined during current year

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has fined 165,523 public service vehicles (PSVs) for violating the rules and designated routes on the federal capital's roads and avenues during the current year, said its senior officer. Talking to media, he said a total of 55,718 trucks, 21,386 buses, 28,589 Suzuki pick-ups, 23,191 passenger vans, 2524 cabs and 34115 other public transporters were fined during the first four months of this year. He said strict action was being taken against those transporters who were violating traffic routes. "The main objective of those actions is to provide better traffic facilities to the citizen," he added.

No shortage of Oxygen in BBH

RAWALPINDI: Medical Superintendent Benazir Bhutto Hospital Rawalpindi Dr. Nawaz Khokhar said that lack of oxygen in hospitals has been a major problem but BBH has an abundance of oxygen, and will continue to play its full role in serving humanity. He was talking to the media here in Rawalpindi yesterday. He said the situation was deteriorating again, with the third wave of corona increasing the number of patients innumerable, which has increased the responsibilities on hospitals and medical staff. The departments that were closed due to corona last year now have reopened and treatment of various other diseases, he added. He however said despite the lack of staff in the hospital. "Every effort is being made to ensure that the treatment of every patient is as good as possible". — APP

Regional forums urged for joint action plans to combat climate change

Unfortunately the region faces both political and technical obstacles in developing a sustainable approach to meet the ever enhancing crisis and emergencies

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at a regional webinar, the experts urged the neighbouring countries in the region to develop a common regional cooperation framework for sustainable development and to combat the challenges of climate changes. Unfortunately the region faces both political and technical obstacles in developing a sustainable approach to meet the ever enhancing crisis and emergencies. This is exacerbated by non-availability of reliable data, geo-information as well as reluctance to acknowledge and effectively address the problem by key actors. Today environment and climate change issues have become so significant in the world that governments,

regional bodies and international organizations are agonizing over ways to control the continuously deteriorating situation. Environmental problems know no political boundaries and ethnic hatred; these transcend states and regions and thus need to be managed through inter-regional engagements among governments and institutions. Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN organized the regional webinar on "Regional Cooperation for Sustainable Development and to combat Climate Change" on Saturday to mark the World Earth Day that falls on April 22. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam was the chief guest. The panel of experts included seasoned politician and



former senator Farhatullah Babar, Country Head IUCN-Pakistan Mahmood Akhtar Cheema, Senior Research Fellow Dr. Dan Ge (China), Chief Executive Officer Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KPBIT) Hassan Daud Butt, World Resources Institute Director Climate Change Ulka Kelkar, Tehran International Study and Research Institute (TISR) Senior Research Fellow Dr. Yahya Jahangiri (Iran), Environment and Climate Advo-

percent. Pakistan is striving to be a part of the solution, through nature based initiatives, and is committed to not add to the problem of climate change. The SAARC and other forums shall be revived for vigorous collaboration and joint action plans to protect the vulnerable communities, economies and diminishing livelihood resources. Seasoned politician and former senator Farhatullah Babar asked to have a parliamentary caucus of the regional countries for integrated solutions and legal frameworks for the region. He also urged meaning dialogue and communities among the countries beyond their political and ethnic divides. Mahmood Akhtar Cheema said the sharing of experiences on the mitigating strategies. India, Nepal and Bangladesh benefited from

the Global Climate Fund financing and it would be very useful if they share their experience with the other countries of the region. We also need to adopt smart climate change approaches to managing landscapes—cropland, livestock, forests and fisheries that addresses the interlinked challenges of food security and accelerating climate change. The Asia Protected Areas Partnership has been established which is a leading network to promote regional collaboration, best practices and innovative solutions for Asia protected areas. Dr. Dan Ge said it is unrealistic and unfair for developing countries to have sustainable development without taking into account its endeavour to improve social and economic development.



ISLAMABAD: President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, meeting with President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran, Ajmal Baloch, President of Punjab, Malik Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, President of Anjuman Tajiran Pindi Cantt, Sheikh Hafeez, General Secretary Zafar Qadri, Former President of ICCI Ejaz Abbasi, Former Senior Vice President of ICCI Khalid Chaudhry and Anjuman Tajiran Markaz G-9 President Raja Javed Iqbal, in connection with lockdown. — DNA

IG urges officials to adopt public-friendly attitude

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Inspector-General Islamabad police Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman has asked the officials to adopt a public-friendly attitude at the police stations so as to resolve the public issues in an amicable manner and at the earliest. He gave a surprise visit to Noon police station falling in the Industrial-Area zone on Sunday where SSP (Operations) briefed him about the functioning of the station. The IGP inspected the building, record, and barracks of the police station. He also interacted with the officials at the front-desk and inquired about complaint registration process and follow-up procedure. He also

met with the investigation officers and asked about progress in the investigation of the cases. Speaking on the occasion, Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman directed the staff to promote a public-friendly attitude when it comes to redressal of public complaints. He said social interaction was vital to combat the menace of drugs and crime as he urged for activating the conciliatory committees. The IGP said that security of life and property of the residents and redressal of their issues should be taken as the top priority by the police. He also directed the officials to ensure security of the mosques and imambargahs in the holy month and also asked them to adopt measures in view of the increasing Covid threats.

Speakers at special webinar pay rich homage to I. A. Rehman

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The speakers during a special webinar paid a rich homage to I. A. Rehman, Pakistan's iconic human rights activist and journalist, while terming his death as a huge loss for the country. The webinar "Remembering the work and life of I. A. Rehman" was held by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI). Secretary General, Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Harris Khalique, while highlighting the diverse aspects of the life of late I. A. Rehman, said that Mr. Rehman had the quality of

conveying his stance without offending the person's self-esteem and was polite enough in taking exception from his views. "He was the shield of Pakistan's Human Rights Commission," Mr. Khalique said and added further that Mr. Rehman will be remembered for a strong voice against the forced disappearance cases, voicing for peace between Pakistan and India as well as for the regional peace and standing for democracy and freedom of speech in Pakistan. Ahmed Saleem, Senior Fellow at SDPI, was of view that after the demise Faiz Ahmed Faiz, I. A. Rehman was the person who pursued his

mission. He has always been committed with his mission and passions, Mr. Saleem said and added further that HRCP will have a daunting task of perusing his ideals. He suggested that SDPI should compile his writing in a shape of book for the future generation. Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, informed the audience that I. A. Rehman was a permanent feature of almost all the mega activities of SDPI which has been a great honor for the organization. "He contributed to the progress and development of the country and its people through his thoughts and

literature," Dr. Suleri said while adding further that he was the guardian of those who had no guardians and was a great mentor and a true champion of democracy in the region. Senior Journalist, Ms Asma Sherazi, while recalling her memories with IA Rehman, said that he had always been very concerned for the people of Pakistan. I. A. Rehman's memories are guiding principles for us, she added. Social activist, Mr Karamat Ali, was of view that the vacuum created by the demise of I. A. Rehman cannot be filled by a single person but with a collective effort we can take his mission forward.

Illuminated guide maps being installed on roads to facilitate tourists

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), in its 'Light up Islamabad' drive, has started installing LED illuminated guide maps and informational boards at various points of the city to facilitate the locals as well as domestic and foreign tourists. The CDA has already installed lighted guide maps at various sectoral areas such as Sector F-6, F-7 and

F-8. The project, launched last week, will be expanded to the entire city, its Member Finance Rana Shakeel told media. He added that the initiative was scheduled to complete by the next couple of weeks. Rana Shakeel said under the project, the LED (light-emitting diode) illuminated guide maps were being placed at entry points of the sectoral areas, whereas informational boards illustrating history of a particular thing such

as road or initiative would soon be erected at different places. He said the informational boards for the highways and roads, named after prominent personalities such as Ibn-e Sina, Faiz Ahmed Faiz and many others, were being developed and would be installed shortly. He said the guide maps were meant to facilitate the locals and visitors coming to Islamabad from various parts of the country and world, while the

informational boards were aimed at sensitizing the younger generation about the history and introducing them with the national heroes. The senior official said there were hardly a fraction of people who knew about Agha Shahi and many other personalities whose names were given to many roads in the capital city. To a query, he said indeed, such initiatives would also help give 'Islamabad—the beautiful' a modern and distinctive look.

RCCI lauds PM orders to probe into Rawalpindi Ring Road project

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has welcomed Prime Minister Imran Khan's notice on the increase in cost of Rawalpindi Ring Road project and changes in the Master plan. In a statement, President Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that the business community was deeply concerned over the demarcation of the Ring Road project, the alleged increase in cost and changes in the master plan. We demand that immediate action be taken against the elements for whom these alleged changes have been made and that those involved be brought to justice and that the project should not be further delayed. The business community of Rawalpindi believed that the Ring Road project will be a game changer for Rawalpindi. It is an important project for the development of Rawalpindi. It should be completed as soon as possible, he urged. — DNA

Experts ask public to follow SOPs for safe Ramadan

Dr. Muhammad Salman stressed that adherence to the health guidelines issued by the government is the only way to curb the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic, adding, unfortunately attitude of people towards the SOPs seems casual

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Health Experts on Sunday advised public to remain vigilant while attending crowded bazaars and stick to safety precautions put in place to reduce the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) during the holy month of Ramadan. Faithful while visiting mosques should follow set health guidelines, such as bringing their own prayer mats, attending prayer on time, socially distancing and staying clear of overcrowding, health experts said while talking to a pri-

ivate news channel. Leading medical expert Dr Muhammad Salman stressed that adherence to the health guidelines issued by the government is the only way to curb the third wave of the coronavirus pandemic, adding, unfortunately attitude of people towards the SOPs seems casual and they are not exercising caution properly. Even patients, visiting the emergency wards of hospitals, did not care for social distancing, masks and other safety measures, he mentioned. Health experts further warn that foregoing Covid measures will

lead to a jump in infection rates and urged the masses to wear face masks, particularly in situations where social distancing is not possible, stressing that careless attitude of the public can lead to another spike. The experts also urged people to eat simple and healthy food, drink plenty of plain water after iftar till Sehr and suggested them to walk regularly after breaking fast to keep themselves from many stomach-related issues. He said masks and social distancing was very important when it came to travelling and dining out during Ramadan. He said the SOPs issued by the

government will be implemented in all mosques and Imambargahs with the support of Imam-e-Masjid. The people are also required to make ablution at home and wash hands for twenty seconds with soap before leaving for the mosque with masks on their faces, he added. Another expert Dr. Hassan Abbas Zaheer said the available corona vaccine has been prepared after a thorough scientific research. So people should have no confusion about its efficacy. Moreover, every individual is responsible to adopt precautionary measures. Ramadan gatherings and events

that do not follow strict Covid-19 SOP could cause a spike in transmission of the virus among the public, he warned. "Stay vigilant and eat healthy food during the month of Ramadan, he said, adding, people should be wary of attending large scale events and crowded Ramadan bazaars". Dr. said Covid-19 patients with no or mild symptoms could keep fast after consulting their physicians, adding that people with moderate and severe illness due to coronavirus should be in hospitals, where they should receive treatment under the supervision of experts.

Popularity of RDA among overseas hailed

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Business leader Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday lauded the Government and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) for achieving the milestone of attracting over one billion dollars through Koshan Digital Account (RDA) in seven months. The inflow of foreign exchange through RDA has encouraged the architects of the scheme to introduce two more schemes, "Roshan Apni Car" and "Roshan Samaji Khidmat" soon, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the extraordinary response of overseas Pakistanis in not only benefiting them but also strengthening foreign exchange reserves which is a welcome development. Increasing remittances, investment in RDA and other steps taken by the authorities has resulted in a current account surplus of almost one billion dollars while the current account deficit in 2018 was 20 billion dollars.

He said that the government has performed well in bringing the current account of surplus while the fiscal deficit fell to 2.9 percent of the GDP in the first seven months of the ongoing fiscal compared to 3.2 percent in the corresponding period last year.

Fiqh-e-Jaffrey fixes 'Fitrana' at Rs300 per person

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: This year's minimum amount of 'Zakat-al-Fitr' or 'Fitrana' for Faqih-i-Jaffria, has been fixed at Rs300 per person, said Allama Syed Matloob Hussain Taqi. Allama Taqi - the prayer leader of Markazi Jamia Masjid Darbar Alia Sakhi Shah Payara Kazmi, Al Mashadi, Rawalpindi said giving 'zakat al-fitra' is obligatory upon the head of households, who are not poor themselves, before the Eid prayer. The obligatory amount of 'zakat al-fitra' upon each person based on the usual main food - is around 3 kg of either wheat, barley, date, or raisin; or its equal in cash.

Covid cases in Attock cross 1900 tally

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: The novel coronavirus Covid-19 cases in Attock on Sunday crossed the tally of 1900 patients with 31 more tested positive.

Health officials on Sunday said it was the highest single day tally of the Covid-19 patients in the district during the month of April. District focal person for Covid-19 Kashif Hussain while giving details has said that one person lost battle against Covid-19 during last 24 hours. He informed that 60 years old Khurshid Bibi - a resident of Hazro who was admitted in district headquarters hospital succumbed to the virus. He said among the 31 patients detected positive on Sunday, 19 belonged to Attock, four to Hazro while eight to Pingdigheab. He informed that the number of active patients in the district was 302 and in which 298 were under home isolated while four others were hospitalized. He informed that six suspected patients were also admitted in district headquarters hospital and all were in critical condition. He informed that the number of suspected patients in the district rose to 32385 while screening of as many as 35637 persons was carried out across the district in which 29971 were tested negative. Responding to another question, he said the results of as many as 499 suspected patients were still awaited. He informed that so far 1,578 persons have recovered from the virus in the district. Responding to a question, he said safe burial of 110 victims including Covid-19 positive and suspected have so far been carried out in the district.

A different dynamic

THE PML-N, which over the past seven months has been represented chiefly by Maryam Nawaz and driven forward by the fierce speeches delivered by its Mian Nawaz Sharif, will now once again fall under the leadership of the more subdued Shahbaz Sharif. Shahbaz was released from jail on Friday on bail after a seven-month period in a case concerning money laundering. His presence brings to his own party new questions which need to be handled deftly. The seven months that Shehbaz Sharif spent in jail have seen a transformation of the PDM from a vibrant body of opposition leaders to a lackluster and loose bunch of bickering politicians. That said, his absence did provide Maryam Nawaz a fine opportunity to burnish her skills as a challenger to the ruling party and as an orator of considerable political talent. It may now be a daunting task for him to take the centre stage from Maryam as the differences of personality, persona, and physical health are quite evident and noticeable.

It is also not clear as yet, how and when Shahbaz would like to take up the reins of the PML-N, if at all. Perhaps a better option for him would be to mend fractures within the PDM by initiating a reconciliatory dialogue with the PPP, and let Maryam lead her onslaught against the PTI. These are two different fronts and two heads are better than one in this battle of wits. To rekindle the fire of the PDM's united front against the government, Shahbaz can definitely play a role – provided he does not confront the pivotal narrative of his brother and niece. While the Nawaz Sharif faction in the group still wishes to conduct a long march to Islamabad and possible resignations from the assemblies, it is just not clear if Shahbaz will go along with this line of action. He has himself in the past, unlike his elder brother, avoided direct attacks on the establishment and taken a quieter view on the situation.

At the same time, he must also play his part of an opposition leader who is able to challenge the government and draw attention to the multiple crises affecting the country. These include inflation, which is hitting the country badly, especially in the month of Ramadan and also the Covid-19 pandemic, which continues to have a devastating impact on lives. Shahbaz at this point will need to show statesmanship and the ability to lead. The extent to which he succeeds in keeping the PDM together or creating a new strategy to challenge the government will determine the kind of politics we see in the coming months. Anyway, with increasing cases of corona infections the next few months are likely to see subdued political activity. And, most importantly, if the situation turns into a national crisis, as it has happened in India, then the government and the opposition must come together to help the nation rather than trying to outdo each other in politics.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily
Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza
ABC CERTIFIED
Vol: 01 Issue: 336
Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com
Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960
Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Shrinking FDI

DESPITE its claims of having provided quite a lot of ease of doing business, the ruling PTI has failed to lure foreign investors to the country – well, like its predecessors. According to the latest SBP data, foreign direct investment (FDI) has plummeted to \$1.395 billion during the July-March period of the ongoing fiscal year as compared to \$2.15 billion in the same period of last fiscal. This shows a 35.1% fall in foreign investment flows. The inflows for March 2021 (\$167.6 million) suffered a 40% fall in comparison with what had been recorded in March 2020 (to \$278.7 million) which is when the economy started to suffer Covid-19 lockdowns.

So while the impact of the raging pandemic is there, it's also a fact that Pakistan has never been a go-to destination for foreign investors. There are a variety of reasons for that including lack of political stability and security in the country as well as unfavourable business climate marked by absence of tax incentives, high power and gas tariffs, low growth potential, dilapidated transport infrastructure, etc. No wonder, the volume of foreign direct investment in Pakistan has been abysmally low. Save for years 2007 and 2008 when the country had witnessed historic highs of \$5.99 billion and \$5.44 billion respectively, the FDI flows have mostly been less than one per cent of GDP – ranging between \$0.86 billion and \$2.58 billion over the past decade.

Besides, investment flows from China for CPEC-related projects constitute much of the total. During the period under study i.e. the first three quarters of the ongoing fiscal year, inflows from China stand at \$859.3 million which is equal to 46% of total foreign investment. However, what must be a cause for concern for the government is that these inflows have also decreased – to \$650.8 or by 24% – year on year. With imports surging by 13.4% year on year in the first three quarters and exports only meagerly high, by 7.1%, in the same period, remittances have been our sole saving grace in the external sector, rising by about 24% over the last 10 months.

Fruits of CPEC would soon reach people

Amjad Aziz Malik

Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong also attended the function organized by Pak-China Friendship Association. Provincial Local Government Minister Akbar Ayub welcomed the ambassador. He said that there is no example of everlasting friendship like Pak-China which is always found in the world. Addressing the function, Akbar Ayub Khan welcomed Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong on his first visit to KPK

RECENTLY, Nong Rong, Ambassador of China to Pakistan visited Peshawar. This was his first visit to Peshawar since his appointment as Chinese Ambassador. During the visit, he met Chief Minister Mehmood Khan, officials of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and the Economic Zones Management Committee regarding the Rashakai Economic Zone, briefing, inaugurated a project to rebuild schools in Bara, met Governor Shah Farman, attended the Pak-China Friendship Association function, visited China Window, met with media representatives and visited the Historical Museum in Peshawar. This one-day visit can be termed as very important because in the coming days the importance of Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which used to be less important due to the distance from the sea, has now increased due to the Rashakai Special Economic Zone and trade to Afghanistan and Central Asian. The establishment of industrial estates in many other districts of the province will undoubtedly contribute to the economic development of the region and the well-being of the people. In this context, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong briefed by the Javed Iqbal Khattak, Chief Executive Officer, KP Economic Zones Management Committee, that all resources were being utilized to provide facilities to investors.

On the occasion, Provincial Additional Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir also briefed the Chinese Ambassador about the facilities provided by the provincial government to the industrialists. Nong Rong expressed satisfaction over the steps taken by the provincial government but suggested that free facility should be provided to the industrialists to bring the raw material from the port to

the factory. He was assured by the provincial government that the matter would be looked into. After the encouraging meeting, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong along with Asim Saleem Bajwa called on Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan. After the one-on-one meeting, the Secretary, Provincial Planning Department briefed them on a plan for the reconstruction of schools in Bara which had been targeted by terrorists.

In the first phase of the project, 50 schools destroyed due to terrorism in Bara Tehsil of Khyber District will be rebuilt, including 24 Boys 'Schools and 26 Girls' Schools. The total estimated cost of the project is Rs. 2323 million out of which Rs. 868 million will be provided by the Government of Pakistan while 10.29 million will be provided by the Chinese Government. The project will be completed by January 2023. Welcoming the Chinese Ambassador to Peshawar, Chief Minister Mehmood Khan said that the friendship between Pakistan and China is time tested and the CPEC project is a living example. He added that he was grateful to the Chinese government for its assistance in rebuilding the damaged schools in the tribal districts and appreciated the Chinese government's cooperation. Chinese Ambassador to Nong Rong said that the friendship between Pakistan and China is deeper than the sea and higher than the Himalayas and the Chinese government is keen to further strengthen the friendly relations with Pakistan. He added that Pakistan-China bilateral relations and areas of mutual interest. Cooperation is ideal. The Chinese Ambassador further said that the Chinese government is also keen to work in the areas of poverty alleviation and economic development in Pakistan.

After the meeting, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan and Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong formally inaugurated the project to rebuild the destroyed schools in the merged districts. An agreement was also signed between the Department of Education and the relevant Chinese authorities on the implementation of the school reconstruction project. In a meeting between Governor Shah Farman and Chinese Ambassador, Shah Farman welcomed the guest on his arrival in Peshawar and assured him of all possible cooperation in further strengthening Pak-China friendship. Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa briefed the Chinese Ambassador about the potential of five sectors in the province, namely olive, honey, fresh and dried fruits, saffron and precious stones. There are great opportunities for economic development through the development of these sectors. Create vast employment opportunities.

The Chinese Ambassador expressed interest in working in these areas and said that work would be started in the above five areas on the basis of an excellent relationship system and a comprehensive strategy would be formulated at the governmental and business level for these areas. The Chinese Ambassador said that the Chinese Embassy would extend all possible policy support to the Chinese companies for working in these fields and would draw the attention of the Chinese companies to take advantage of the vital potential of Pakistani olives and precious stones. He said that the people of the two countries have fraternal and friendly relations and the people of the two countries are committed to work together for economic and social development. The meeting was very pleasant and everyone was very happy with the warm welcome extended to the Chinese diplomats. Given

The Chinese Ambassador also visited China Window, a Chinese cultural and information center in Peshawar. Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong visited various sectors of China Window and appreciated the efforts of the management. He was also shown a special documentary

film of China Window in which he took keen interest, he cut the cake in celebration of the completion of seventy years of Pak-China diplomatic relations. On this occasion the Chinese Ambassador formally inaugurated China Window's website. He also signed on the Pak-China Friendship Wall and recorded his impressions in the guest book. He was informed on the occasion that more than 26,000 people have visited the center since its inception. The Chinese Ambassador appreciated the services of the organizers and announced to continue all possible cooperation for China Window.

A meeting was also arranged with the Chinese Ambassador and representatives of print and electronic media and a large number of media persons attended the briefing. Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said that he had received a great deal of encouragement during his visit to Peshawar. I am very happy that the Chinese Cultural and Information Center China Window in Peshawar is playing an important role in introducing Chinese culture in the Province. We acknowledge its services and hope that Chinese embassy will continue to support China Window. Ambassador hoped that the window will continue to play a role in bringing the people of the two countries and people of different schools of thought closer together. He said that we are grateful to China Window for hosting a special function at China Window on the occasion of the completion of 70 years of Pak-China diplomatic relations. Expressing his sentiments regarding the visit to China Window, he said that China Window Center It is a great pleasure to visit. China Window is an excellent example of mutual cooperation at the level of cultural, economic and CPEC.

Replying to a question on C-Pack, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong said that the pace of work on CPEC was not slowing down but the fruits of this great project would soon reach the common people of Pakistan. Are done He said that the history of Pak-China friendship. Over a period of seven decades, the top leadership of both the countries believe in mutual development. Pakistan and China are brothers, living together in every difficult time. He said that China has also ensured mutual cooperation with Pakistan in the case of corona virus, especially in the field of vaccine and will defeat covid 19 with collective efforts. He said China is cooperating in Orange Line, Gawadar Port and other development projects. He said that CPEC projects are progressing. New projects are also under consideration. There are many projects related to CPEC. There will be a lot of

good news for the people. He further said that attention would be paid to alleviate the plight of Pakistani students studying in China. Nong Rong said that corona vaccination was going on in a better way in China which would improve the travel situation of students and business community.

He said that the process of arrival in China has started. He said that as conditions improve, students from both the countries will be able to come more easily. The Chinese Ambassador said that he had several meetings with Prime Minister Imran Khan and the Army Chief which would yield encouraging results. He said that this was his first visit to Peshawar where he met the Governor and Chief Minister. The meetings have been very fruitful and he is confident that CPEC will also benefit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and he is happy that the provincial government has assured him of all possible cooperation. Media plays an important role in Pak-China friendship. CPEC is getting full attention. In this regard, he expressed confidence in expecting positive reporting from media as well.

Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong also attended the function organized by Pak-China Friendship Association. Provincial Local Government Minister Akbar Ayub welcomed the ambassador. He said that there is no example of everlasting friendship like Pak-China which is always found in the world. Addressing the function, Akbar Ayub Khan welcomed Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong on his first visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and expressed the hope that Nong Rong during his diplomatic stay in Pakistan would enhance the friendly and bilateral relations between the two countries.

We will further deepen and expand, especially the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. Nong Rong likened Pak-China friendship to an evergreen and fruitful tree, saying that "climate change" does not affect the friendly relations between China and Pakistan. Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani introduced the Friendship Association and said that the journey of friendship which started with the establishment of Pak-China Students Friendship Association in 1970 continues today which has crossed many milestones of success.

In the last leg of his one-day visit, Chinese Ambassador Nong Rong and other officials of the Chinese Embassy visited the History Museum in Peshawar. Director Archeology Abdul Samad received the distinguished guest. The Chinese Ambassador was informed that the history of the museum is very old and as the center of Gandhara, this museum is famous all over the world.



Pakistan Navy bold operations at sea

Muhammad Azam Khan

Finally, efforts by Pakistan Navy finally paid off. Despite the challenges being faced w.r.t. establishing correct identity of the crew/ flag of the vessel due fake registration documents and unclear identification of the owner until the very last moment the crew was successfully recovered and repatriated back to Pakistan

IN pursuance of established National Objectives, Pakistan Navy always actively participate in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations under the ambit of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW). On 21 March 2021, the report of OSV MEHR (a Tanzanian flag ocean tug boat) being dead in water in Red Sea with 6 x Pakistani crew members onboard was aired on the social and electronic media. Upon confirmation of the reports and directions from relevant Ministries, PN Ship ZULFIQUAR, which was deployed in North Arabian Sea for Regional Maritime Security Patrol, was tasked by Naval Headquarters to expeditiously head towards Red Sea to provide technical, medical and humanitarian assistance to the crew of OSV MEHR. In



addition, efforts were made by Pakistan Navy to provide assistance to the stranded ship through friendly navies in the Red Sea Region. The provision of support through earliest possible means was also coordinated with MoMA, MoFA, PMSA and PNSC which lead to delivery of ration, medicines and fresh water to the stranded crew through Pakistan merchant ship MT KHAIRPUR.

By the time, PNS ZULFIQUAR sailed a long voyage of 2200 nautical miles to provide assistance to crew of OSV MEHR despite challenging sea conditions. The onerous task was to locate the vessel in the first place in the vast expanses of turbulent Red sea. The situation was compounded by the fact that communication could not be established with the vessel. The crew was also not responding on satellite telephone for several days, likely due non-availability of power supply onboard. After strenuous efforts, OSV MEHR was located by ZULFIQUAR grounded near the coast of Egypt. Despite challenging sea conditions in Red Sea, PN Ship after obtaining requisite diplomatic clearance closed the vessel to access the situation for subsequent rescue efforts. Subsequently, necessary coordination was undertaken with Egyptian Navy as the vessel was grounded on Egyptian territory. Thereon the crew was rescued and PN Ship proceeded in vicinity of Egyptian Berenice Naval Base to receive the crew. However, it was informed through diplomatic channels that the crew was handed over to Pakistan's embassy in Egypt.

Finally, efforts by Pakistan Navy finally paid off. Despite the challenges being faced w.r.t. establishing correct identity of the crew/ flag of the vessel due fake registration documents and unclear identification of the owner until the very last moment the crew was successfully recovered and repatriated back to Pakistan. The marathon Rescue Operation by Pakistan Navy thousands of miles away from homeland is quintessential of Pakistan Navy's commitment to protect the maritime interests of Pakistan and respond to call of duty whatever the odds. The rescue effort made by MoFA/ MoMA, Pakistan Navy and all other relevant agencies in saving lives was also appreciated by the crew through social media. The Search and Rescue operation also endorses Pakistan Navy expanding footprint and influence across the region.



Briefs

Robertson maintains momentum at WCS

DNA

LONDON: Australia's Neil Robertson kept his form going as he reached the quarter-finals of snooker's World Championship with a 13-9 victory over Jack Lisowski on Saturday. Robertson, the 2010 world champion, already led 9-7 overnight and he wasted little time as breaks of 126, 87 and 70 saw him to a second-round success at Sheffield's Crucible Theatre in northern England.

In the 11 years since he won snooker's biggest prize, he has reached the semi-finals of the tournament just once. But Robertson came into this year's edition in fine form after beating six-time world champion Ronnie O'Sullivan in last month's Tour Championship final.

"The Tour Championship was certainly the best I've ever performed in an event, certainly from start to finish," he said. "I've kept that momentum going into the first two rounds here, but the form and results don't really matter - it's all about what I do in my next match." The 39-year-old, one of just two players from outside Britain and Ireland to have been crowned world champion in the modern era along with Canada's Cliff Thorburn in 1980, added: "I've got to forget about playing well or anything and just prepare as well as I have done. "Yesterday was an awesome session of snooker, I think we both had four frame-winning visits each in the eight frames and so coming into tonight (this morning) I felt really good."

Work on CPEC Western route in...

From Page 01

On the Western route, he said, the four-lane Hakla-Dera Ismail Khan Motorway was in the final stages. Its total length was 285 kms, which had been divided in five packages. The first 55 kms package would be completed on priority, which started from Yarik near D I Khan and ended at Rehmani Khel, the official told APP.

The National Logistics Company (NLC) has completed all infrastructure work of the motorway by keeping in view the international standards.

The infrastructure work included construction of road, two Interchanges at Abdul Khel and Yarik, six underpasses, four bridges, residential facilities and other development works.

The motorway passes mostly through deserted areas where there is dearth of green areas, so around 150,000 trees have been planted along the motorway. The motorway would not only provide a fast and comfortable traveling facility for the commuters, but it would also link National Highways N-50 and N-55 with the motorway at DIKhan, he said.

After the completion, the travelling time between Islamabad and DIKhan would be reduced from existing over five hours to only two and half hours, the official added. He said the second part of the western corridor, Yarak-Zhob-Quetta, was 540km long and would decrease the distance from Islamabad to Quetta to only 830km and would reduce travel time to eight hours.

Similarly work on the 146 kilometers Hoshab-Awaran motorway has also been started which would improve connectivity with Gwadar port besides improving life standards of the people living along the road. Talking about the overall progress of CPEC, the Authority's official said the mega project would move forward with more pace during the current year and the years ahead, which would further strengthen the bilateral relations between Pakistan and China.

Their strategic relationship, which was being strengthened with every passing day, was of great importance both on regional as well as international fronts, the official said. He said in the next phase, work on four important sectors, including industry, agriculture, socio-economic development and Gwadar New City would also be done at a fast pace.

Pakistan edge out Zimbabwe by 24 runs to clinch T20I series

The slow progress finally got to Sharjeel as he miscued a slower low full toss into the hands of fielder Blessing Muzarabani, off the bowling of pacer Luke Jongwe, after scoring 18 runs off 15 balls



SPORTS DESK

HARARE: Pakistan edged out a gutsy Zimbabwe side by 24 runs in the third and final Twenty20 International (T20I) to clinch the three-match series two-one in Harare on Sunday. After being set a target of 166 runs, Zimbabwe were off to a confident start. Pacer Hasan Ali, however, struck the first blow when he removed opener Tari-saiMusakanda with a successful LBW appeal after the batsman had scored 10 runs off 11 balls. Batsman Tadiwanashe Marumani then joined opener Wesley Madhevere for a 65-run partnership off 51 balls to provide a stable foundation for his side to

chase down the imposing total. With Pakistan in trouble, the bowlers stepped up and got breakthroughs in a crucial part of the chase. Pacer Mohammad Hasnain first bowled Marumani (35 off 26 balls) before fast-bowler Hasan Ali forced a miscue from Madhevere (59 off 47 balls), expertly caught by wicketkeeper Sarfaraz Ahmed, as the Men in Green roared back into the match.

Hasan then removed batsman Regis Chakabva, caught by fielder Sharjeel Khan, for a golden duck as Zimbabwe's chase started to unravel. As the required rate climbed, Hasan removed batsman Sean Williams (nine off seven balls), caught by fielder Faheem Ashraf, and pacer

HarisRauf removed all-rounder Luke Jongwe (five off four balls), caught by fielder Hasan Ali, as Pakistan inched closer towards a T20I series victory. Batsman Brendan Taylor (20 off 22 balls) succumbed to pacer HarisRauf, caught by fielder Mohammad Rizwan, towards the end as Zimbabwe fell short of the target by 24 runs, ending on 141 runs with the loss of seven wickets in their allotted overs.

Hasan Ali, who bagged the award for player of the match, was the standout performer from the Pakistan bowling attack picking up four wickets at the expense of 18 runs from four overs. Earlier, Pakistan's most reliable batsmen Mohammad Ri-

zwan and Babar Azam stepped up to guide their side to an imposing 165-run total. After winning the toss and electing to bat first, Pakistan were off to a cautious start despite the introduction of hard-hitting opener Sharjeel Khan to the lineup. The slow progress finally got to Sharjeel as he miscued a slower low full toss into the hands of fielder Blessing Muzarabani, off the bowling of pacer Luke Jongwe, after scoring 18 runs off 15 balls. The fall of Sharjeel, however, brought out skipper Babar Azam who joined opener Mohammad Rizwan for a massive 126-run partnership off 89 balls. Pacer Luke Jongwe finally got the better of Babar towards the end of

the innings as the batsman miscued a slog into the waiting hands of fielder Ryan Burl after scoring 52 runs off 46 balls. Jongwe then removed batsman FakharZaman, caught by fielder Ryan Burl again, for a golden duck. Mohammad Rizwan, however, remained unbeaten at the end with an incredible 91-run knock off 60 balls as Pakistan raced to an imposing total of 165 runs for the loss of three wickets in their allotted overs. Luke Jongwe was the pick of the bowlers for Zimbabwe after taking three wickets at the expense of 37 runs in his four overs. Mohammad Rizwan was declared player of the series after impressive performance at the top of the order.

Henderson surges to victory in LPGA

DNA

LOS ANGELES: Brooke Henderson fired a four-under par 67 to win the LPGA Los Angeles Open on Saturday, erasing a four-stroke deficit to edge Jessica Korda by one shot.

Canada's Henderson, 23 and ranked sixth in the world, finished with a 16-under par total of 268 to claim her 10th LPGA title and her first since the 2019 Meijer LPGA Classic in Michigan. "I felt like I was playing really great golf," Henderson said. "It just wasn't my time. It's nice to get the win and get some confidence back." Six birdies, including a chip-in at the par-three 12th propelled her past overnight leader Korda and world number one Ko Jin-young, who played alongside Henderson in the final group at Wilshire Country Club.

Two-under through the first nine holes, Henderson took the solo lead with a short birdie putt at the 11th, then pushed her advantage to two with her chip-in at 12. "I was definitely disappointed that I missed the green there," she said. "But fortunately I had a lot of green to work with. To catch the hole there and make birdie was a huge momentum change - that's probably what won it for me today." She added another birdie at 14 and was three-up with two to play.

No defeat if you don't give up, says PM...

From Page 01

He established his argument by giving examples of all the third-world's developing nations that they too were, are, marred by the same menace of corruption by their ruling class and the same was the case with our country, which prompted us to found a party based on this one cornerstone to end corruption from the ruling class.

"We named our party after justice. When there is justice, there cannot be any instance of corruption. Justice means the supremacy of law, meaning the weak and the mighty are equal before the law," the PM said.

He said this was the only motivation behind the endeavour we had set out on 25 years ago today, adding that to a man like him who already had everything, including fame and money, even before choosing to be in politics was to seek justice, unlike others who had nothing before sliding into politics.

The first 15 years of this struggle were the most gruelling and many of our partners and friends cut off from us saying they were being ridiculed due to the far fetched ideas proposed by the party that had secured no seat, he said.

One million doses arrive from China

From Page 01

the age group 50-59 has also been started from April 21. The National Command and Operation Centre started registering citizens above 50 years of age for COVID-19 vaccination from March 30. Pakistan began a vaccination drive last month with over a million doses of Sinopharm vaccines donated by China. Islamabad received first COVID-19 vaccine consignment after a military aircraft airlifted it from Beijing in February 1, this year.

According to a senior Chinese official, the vaccine cooperation between Pakistan and China reflects the sincere mutual assistance between the two as all-weather strategic cooperative partners.

India asks Twitter to block Covid posts

From Page 01

showed pictures and videos of a recent attack in Chhattisgarh carried out by Maoist guerrillas, the paper reported, citing disclosures made by the social media platform to the Lumen Database, which collects and analyses legal complaints and requests for removal of online materials.

53 crew of lost sub are dead: Indonesia

FOREIGN DESK

JAKARTA: A missing Indonesian submarine has been found cracked apart on the seafloor in waters off Bali, the military said on Sunday, as it confirmed all 53 crew were dead. Rescuers found new objects, including a life vest, that they believe belong to those on board the 44-year-old KRI Nanggala-402, which lost contact as it prepared to conduct a torpedo drill. "Based on the evidence, it can be stated that the KRI Nanggala has sunk and all of its crew have died," military chief Marshal HadiTjahjanto told reporters. The submarine - one of five in Indonesia's fleet - disap-

peared off the Indonesian holiday island of Bali. "There were parts of KRI Nanggala-402 - it was broken into three pieces," said Navy Chief of Staff YudoMargono. "The hull of the ship, the stern of the ship, and the main parts are all separated, with the main part found cracked." Authorities said they received signals from the location more than 800 metres (2,600 feet) deep early on Sunday and used an underwater submarine rescue vehicle supplied by Singapore to get a visual confirmation. Tjahjanto said more parts from the vessel were discovered on Sunday, including an anchor and safety suits worn by crew members.

Steps for withdrawal from Afghanistan have begun

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: The commander of foreign military forces in Afghanistan has said "local action" has begun as part of the planned withdrawal of foreign troops from the country, about two weeks after US President Joe Biden announced all US forces would leave by September 11. US Army General Scott Miller said on Sunday that foreign military bases would be gradually handed over to Afghan forces. "All our forces are now preparing to retrograde. Officially the notification date

will be the 1st of May, but at the same time as we start taking local actions, we have already begun that," said Miller, who has commanded US forces and the NATO Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan since 2018. "As we retrograde to zero US forces, we will turn over the (military) bases primarily to the (Afghan) Ministry of Defense and other Afghan forces," he told reporters in the capital, Kabul. Biden framed his plan to withdraw some 2,500 remaining US troops from Afghanistan by September 11, the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in New York

City and Washington, DC, around a need to end the US's longest war. "I am now the fourth American president to preside over an American troop presence in Afghanistan," Biden said on April 14. "I will not pass this responsibility to a fifth." The US president nevertheless pushed back a May 1 deadline for the US troop withdrawal that was reached by his predecessor, Donald Trump, and the Taliban during negotiations last year. After Biden's announcement, the Taliban reiterated its call for all foreign forces to leave Afghanistan by May

1, the date stipulated in the group's so-called Doha agreement with the Trump administration. "The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan seeks the withdrawal of all foreign forces from our homeland on the date specified in the Doha Agreement," Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid wrote on Twitter. "If the agreement is breached and foreign forces fail to exit the country on the specified date, problems will certainly be compounded and those who failed to comply with the agreement will be held responsible," Mujahid added.



VILLARREAL: Barcelona's Player Antoine Griezmann celebrating with teammates after scoring goal against Villarreal in a La Liga match. - DNA

Myanmar shadow govt welcomes ASEAN call

DNA

YANGON: Myanmar's shadow government of ousted lawmakers has welcomed a call by Southeast Asian leaders for an end to "military violence" after their crisis talks in Jakarta with junta leader Min AungHlaing. The general attended a high-level summit Saturday with leaders from the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to discuss Myanmar's mounting crisis. Since the military ousted civilian leader Aung San SuuKy in a February 1 coup, Myanmar has been in an uproar - with near-daily protests and a nationwide boycott of work in all sectors of society staged to demand a return to democracy. Security forces have deployed live ammunition to

quell the uprising, killing more than 740 people in brutal crackdowns, according to local monitoring group Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAPP). But the ASEAN meeting produced a consensus that there would be "an immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar," said a statement released by the bloc Saturday night. ASEAN will also have a special envoy to "facilitate mediation" between all parties, and this representative will be able to travel to Myanmar. A spokesperson from a shadow government of ousted lawmakers - many of whom are from SuuKy's National League for Democracy party - on Saturday welcomed the call for an end to violence in Myanmar as "encouraging news".

Six things to know about Biden's first 100 days

That raises growing doubts over his upcoming big projects - an infrastructure bill, greening of the economy, police brutality reforms and immigration

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden has hit some big targets in 100 days, starting with an epic effort to pull the United States from its Covid-19 nightmare, but headaches lie ahead. Here are three big achievements and three areas where much remains to be done.

1. Covid vaccinations: the raging pandemic was the gravest single threat facing Biden's administration when he took over on January 20. The solution was mass vaccinations. On this, Biden is delivering. Last week he celebrated the 200th million vaccine shot administered and Covid deaths have fallen dramatically.
2. Economic stimulus: Biden pushed through a nearly \$2 trillion rescue plan for an economy that has been hobbled and hollowed by the more than year-long coronavirus shutdown. Although Democrats control Congress,

their margin is razor thin and he had to work hard to get the American Rescue Plan passed. Polls show it is popular both among Democratic and Republican voters.

3. Foreign policy rethink: Biden's priority was to undo what he saw as the reckless damage caused by Donald Trump to traditional US alliances. Inviting Japan's Prime Minister YoshihideSuga as the first foreign leader to the White House showed that Washington is serious about its ties to Asia. The White House says Biden's own first foreign trip will be to Europe, where he will attend G7, NATO and EU summits in June. The transatlantic alliance, which

Trump questioned, is back. As well as returning the United States to the Paris climate accord and seeking to revive the Iranian nuclear negotiations, Biden has also set a clear date for pulling the final US soldier out of Afghanistan: September 11.

1. Working with Congress: Biden promised bipartisan support but so far he has worked on the back of a razor thin Democratic majority. That raises growing doubts over his upcoming big projects - an infrastructure bill, greening of the economy, police brutality reforms and immigration. Midterm congressional elections next year could erase the Democrats' advantage in Congress.

2. Immigration: nowhere has the smooth running Biden administration stumbled more than on handling illegal immigration at the southern border. Biden promised a more humane approach after Trump's hardline crackdown, which relied largely on physical barriers. But the new administration was unprepared for a surge in people, many from Central America. Facilities overwhelmed with unaccompanied migrant children provided Republican critics with political ammunition while angering Biden's own supporters. The administration's confusing back-and-forth on promises to greatly increase the cap on refugees allowed into the United States has fueled the sense of disarray.
3. Foreign policy trouble: Although Biden moved quickly to repair ties with allies, his plans for dealing with adversaries remain very much a work in progress. He has also yet to be tested by a genuine crisis. China, Iran, North Korea and Russia could provide one at any time.



Briefs

Morocco
summons
Spanish
envoy

FOREIGN DESK

RABAT: Morocco summoned the Spanish ambassador Saturday in "exasperation" after the leader of the Western Saharan independence movement was allowed into Spain for medical care, an official source told AFP. The Spanish foreign ministry said Thursday that Brahim Ghali, who heads the Algeria-backed Polisario Front, is being treated for Covid-19 and had been transferred to Spain for "strictly humanitarian reasons".

"This will not obstruct or trouble the excellent relations Spain has with Morocco," Spanish foreign minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya said at a press conference Friday.

But her counterpart Nasser Bourita expressed Morocco's "incomprehension and exasperation" and "demanded an explanation" from Spain's ambassador, a Moroccan official told AFP late Saturday.

The status of Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony which the United Nations classifies as a "non-self-governing territory", has for decades pitted Morocco against the Polisario, who demand a referendum on an independent state.

Yemen rebels
advance on
Marib

DNA

DUBAI: At least 65 fighters have been killed over the past two days as Yemen's Huthi rebels have advanced to within a few kilometres of government-held Marib city centre, military sources said.

The rebels have taken full control of the Kassara battlefield, northwest of Marib, and made progress on western frontlines despite airstrikes by the Saudi-led military coalition, government military sources told media.

5 held and
police hurt at
anti-lockdown
protests

DNA

LONDON: Police in London said Saturday they arrested five people, and eight officers were injured, after disorder at large-scale protests against England's remaining coronavirus restrictions, the mandatory use of masks and possible introduction of so-called vaccine passports.

Demonstrators had gathered early afternoon and marched along several major arteries, including the main shopping district Oxford Street, with videos and photos showing thousands in attendance. Hundreds then rallied in Hyde Park later following the march, an AFP reporter said, where "small pockets of disorder" broke out, according to London's Metropolitan Police Service.

"Eight officers were injured as they worked to disperse crowds in Hyde Park this evening," it said, adding that missiles including bottles were thrown. "Two officers were taken to hospital. Thankfully, they are not believed to be seriously injured."

"Five people were arrested for offences including assault on police and are now in custody."

Britain began to gradually lift Covid-19 restrictions in March after months of restrictions and a successful mass vaccination campaign. Pubs were allowed to serve customers outdoors this month and non-essential shops reopened, but some curbs remain.

Organisers used various websites and online platform pages to encourage turnout to protest the pandemic measures, despite rules which limit outdoor gatherings to 30 people among them.

An exception for protests carries requirements including a Covid-19 risk assessment being conducted.

"Anyone coming into London for a protest must make sure their gathering is lawful, with a risk assessment carried out by the organiser," the Met had said warned on Twitter.

Pakistan urges Canadian govt to
reconsider suspension of flights

Raza Bashir Tarar drew the attention of the minister to the fact that Pakistan, like all other countries, had been facing the epidemic but it had managed it well due to its strategy of smart lockdowns

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar has written to the Canadian government to reconsider its decision of suspending all passenger flights from Pakistan for 30 days in view of it being disproportionate to the actual Covid-related problem in the country.

In a letter addressed Mr. Omar Alghabra, Minister of Transport, Government of Canada, Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar drew the attention of the minister to the fact that Pakistan, like all other countries, had been facing the epidemic but it

had managed it well due to its strategy of smart lockdowns.

Keeping with this, Pakistan's Covid related positive cases were 5,870 yesterday but in the Canadian announcement Pakistan was bracketed with a country that had recorded 332,503 cases on the same day.

The High Commissioner noted that there had been no new variant of COVID-19 developed in Pakistan and yet the Canadian media had quoted Health Minister Patty Hajdu as having said that "1.8 per cent cases detected so far are in travellers, but that eliminating direct travels from both India and Pa-



Pakistan is intended to give health officials time to sequence and better understand the variant first

detected in India". Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Mr. Raza Bashir Tarar said the decision of suspending passenger flights from Pakistan betrayed a lack of understanding of the dynamics in South Asia as "it ignores the fact that both trains and flights are not operational between the two countries ... so the ban on flights from Pakistan because a new variant has developed in another country whose population has no possibility of contact with Pakistan, defies logic".

He also called for seeing the positive test results of passengers after arriving in Canada in the context of

their interaction in the society during the 72 hours before taking the flight. He assured the minister that Pakistan's testing mechanism is very robust and Pakistan International Airlines only accepts results from the best and well-reputed laboratories and matches them with the barcode on every result sheet.

In view of all this, the Canadian government should reconsider its decision and restart the passenger flights from Pakistan at the earliest, the letter concluded.

Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission reactivation must get benefit of border points' opening.



KABUL: High level delegation led by Ambassador (R) Mohammad Sadiq had comprehensive meeting with Dawood Zai, Afghan Special representative for Pakistan and Hamdullah Mohib, National Security Advisor to the President, both sides discussed bilateral relations including peace talks, transit trade and pledged to enhance terrorism measures. - APP

Japan to open large
vaccine centres in
Tokyo, Osaka

DNA

TOKYO: The Japanese government is planning to open large vaccination centres in Tokyo and Osaka in the coming weeks in a bid to speed up its inoculation drive, local media reported today.

The Nikkei newspaper said on Sunday the government will open a vaccination site in central Tokyo as early as May that will be able to vaccinate around 10,000 people a day.

The site will be open to anyone living and working in Tokyo, the paper said, adding that medically trained staff

from Japan's Self-Defense Forces will also assist with vaccinations in such centres.

While Japan has avoided an explosive spread of the virus experienced by many countries, the government has come under sharp criticism for its sluggish vaccination roll-out, which has been handled mostly by municipal authorities. Only about 1% of its population has been vaccinated, according to a Reuters tracker. A recent surge in infections driven by the spread of a variant has also stoked alarm and there is a critical shortage of medical staff and hospital beds in some areas.

Muslims' rights
fully guaranteed
in Xinjiang

KASHGAR: Muslims in China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region enjoy complete religious freedom and their rights to offer prayers and observe fasting during the holy month of Ramadan are fully guaranteed, Imam of Kashgar 'Id Kah' Mosque, Muhammad Juma said.

The government fully respects people's choice of religious freedom in accordance with the law and allow Muslims and other ethnic groups to exercise their religious rituals, he said while talking to a group of foreign journalists based in Beijing. About the history of the mosque, he said, it is located on the central square in Kashgar City, Xinjiang Uygur

Autonomous Region. As the biggest mosque in China, it is a group of old Islamic constructions with strong ethnic style and religious features. Imam Juma said, the mosque was built in 1468 as a very small structure. Several renovations and enlargements have created it with today's scale and style. It is now equipped with facilities including tap water, electricity, heating, toilets, and radio and television as well as library, he added. The whole complex occupies 16,800 square meters and consists of the courtyard, the Hall of Prayer, and the gate tower and as well as some other attached structures. - APP

Turkic Council denounces US
statement on 1915 events

DNA

ANKARA: The Turkic Council deplored the statement by US President Joe Biden on the events of 1915, saying it harms the hopes of regional cooperation and stability. "I am very saddened by the statement of the US President regarding the events of 1915, which clearly bears political motivations at the expense of historical facts and damaging the hopes of cooperation and stability in the region," Secretary-General Baghdad Amreyev said in a written statement on Saturday.

He said a "transparent and

fair" study about the events of 1915 is needed, with international law and relevant documents applied, not a trial or conviction of countries and their people by parliaments and administrations of third countries.

"Weaponization of distorted historical allegations towards another country could only play into the hands of those willing to fan the feelings of hatred, revenge and enmity among the societies," he said. "While denouncing the statement of US President, I believe that distortion of history with political ends or attempts to 'rewrite history' and its use for political pressure will only beget

further polarization among countries and peoples that will hinder peace and stability in our region," he added. Earlier Saturday, Biden called the events of 1915 a "genocide," breaking American presidents' long-held tradition of refraining from using the term.

Amreyev also hailed Turkey's initiative to establish a joint historical commission to study the events of 1915 and open its archives as a "brave and commendable" constructive approach. Turkey's position on the events of 1915 is that the deaths of Armenians in eastern Anatolia took place when some sided with invading Russians

and revolted against Ottoman forces. A subsequent relocation of Armenians resulted in numerous casualties.

Turkey objects to the presentation of these incidents as a "genocide," describing them as a tragedy in which both sides suffered casualties.

Ankara has repeatedly proposed the creation of a joint commission of historians from Turkey and Armenia as well as international experts to tackle the issue. In 2014, then-Prime Minister Erdogan expressed condolences to the descendants of Armenians who lost their lives in the events of 1915.

Armenian PM Pashinyan resigns
to trigger snap election

FOREIGN DESK

YEREVAN: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan, who was swept to power in pro-democracy protests in 2018, has triggered an early election to try to overcome criticism over his handling of last year's conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

His resignation on Sunday, which was expected, came a day after US President Joe Biden said that massacres of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire in 1915 constituted



genocide, a move welcomed by Armenians worldwide but condemned by Turkey, which denies the killings were systematically orchestrated and amount to genocide.

Pashinyan told Biden the symbolic decision was a matter of security to Armenia after the six-week conflict over Nagorno-Karabakh, in which Turkey backed Armenia's neighbour Azerbaijan, where the ethnic Armenian-populated enclave is located.

Pashinyan had been under pressure to resign since he agreed to a ceasefire after ethnic Armenians lost territory in the fighting with Azeri forces in and around Nagorno-Karabakh. He had already named a June 20 date for an early election.

Announcing his resignation, he said on his Facebook page on Sunday that he was returning power received from citizens to them so they could decide the future of the government through free and fair elections. He said he had been compelled to agree to the peace deal, which was brokered by Russia, to prevent greater human and territorial losses. The Armenian army called for his resignation and he then tried to sack the chief of staff, a decision blocked by the former Soviet republic's president.

Italy's digital divide

FOREIGN DESK

COLLE DI TORA: The last time a customer tried to pay by card in Anna Rita Pani's grocery store in Colle di Tora, a small town outside Rome, things got a bit awkward. "We had to wait 15 minutes for the card reader to work... Meanwhile, we were just standing there, staring at each other," she told media.

Her card reader works with wifi, but Colle di Tora is one of the least connected towns in Italy - itself a digital laggard compared with the rest of the European Union.

Closing the gap is a priority for Prime Minister Mario Draghi and his drive to revive Italy's coronavirus-ravaged economy with EU-funded investments.

He will on Monday present to parliament his plan to spend some 191.5 billion euros (\$232 billion) in loans and grants from the EU's post-virus recovery fund between now and 2026 - with digitalisation expected to be a major focus.

For Italy, part of the challenge is to transform places like Colle di Tora, which are not so much cut off from the modern world, as a little behind.

FPCCI for operationalizing unimplemented accords

Pakistan and Iran have several times agreed to enhance their trade relations and improve rail connectivity to achieve a target of \$5 billion annual bilateral trade through the platform of Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's ruling group has called for reactivation of Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission to get the real benefit of border point's opening, exploiting the full potential to achieve \$5 billion annual bilateral trade target between the two countries.

Pakistan and Iran have several times agreed to enhance their trade relations and improve rail connectivity to achieve a target of \$5 billion annual bilateral trade through the platform of Pak-Iran Joint Economic Commission. But unfortunately, this Commission has been inactive and did not hold its meetings

on regular basis. So, the serious working of Joint Economic Commission along with opening of Pakistan and Iran's multiple borders' points will steer trade avenues between the two Muslim countries in real terms, observed FPCCI's ruling party BMP Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar. He said the volume of two-way trade between Pakistan and Iran is negligible and mutual trade does not match the respective potential. The opening of Pak-Iran border new crossing at Pashin Mand point adjacent to Ketch Turbat district is a historic step, especially for the people of Balochistan, which would further strengthen and deepen bilateral cooperation in terms of trade with Pakistan, observed FPCCI former chief. "Through

this step the exporters of both the countries would be able to get direct access to the consumers of each other's countries border markets, he said.

Mian Anjum Nisar said various decisions regarding the expansion of trade and economic relations between Pakistan and Iran have been taken up previously. Unfortunately, due to the instable and unpredictable international and regional political processes, nothing has been in practicality. The BMP leader reiterated the need for developing and deepening bilateral relations in various fields, including economic relations and trade, as well as development and strengthening of border markets. In a reference to unimplemented agreements signed by the two countries in the past, including

the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline agreement, he called for implementing and operationalizing those accords, especially expanding mutually beneficial economic cooperation and development. Business community of Pakistan fully supports the government's initiative to establish border markets. The opening of international border crossing point at Mand-Pishin would facilitate pedestrian movement and enhance bilateral trade, he maintained. He pointed out that Pakistan faced the challenge of trade deficit with lower exports, besides balance of payments deficit, development of energy sector and lower foreign investment, which can be resolved by enhancing regional trade. Under this government relations

between the two brotherly Muslim neighboring countries were gaining historic momentum, he said, and added that opening of two crossing points in less than six months was a major milestone. He said Pak-Iran border crossing would provide employment and trade benefits to the residents of the border areas and provide better opportunities for economic development in the areas. He said it was the third Pak-Iran border crossing point, earlier in December 2020, Ghabad Ramdan connecting to Gwadar district had also been inaugurated. These border crossing points would not only help in boosting bilateral trade but also bilateral relations and tourism between the two Muslim brotherhood neighbors, he maintained.

Record cases
in Thailand

NEWS DESK

BANGKOK: Thailand on Sunday set a record for the daily number of COVID-19 deaths for the second consecutive day, as authorities step up the response to a rapid third wave of infections after about a year of relative success slowing the spread of coronavirus.

Thailand will slow down issuing travel documents for foreign nationals from India due to the outbreak of a new coronavirus B.1.617 variant, said Taweasin Wisanuyothin, a spokesman for the government's COVID-19 taskforce.

"For foreigners from India entering Thailand, right now we will slow this down," said Taweasin adding that 131 Thai nationals in India already registered to travel in May will still be allowed into the country.

LA police
shoot dead
man wearing
body armor
in Hollywood

LOS ANGELES: Los Angeles police said on Saturday officers shot dead a driver wearing body armor who had reversed into a patrol car in Hollywood.

The officers were responding to a call when a car pulled in front of them on Sunset Boulevard, hit the brakes and backed into their vehicle, the LA Police Department tweeted Saturday. "The driver of the car exited, was wearing body armor, & had his right hand concealed behind him," LAPD tweeted.

"He moved toward the (officers) who had exited their patrol car. He counted '3, 2, 1' & began to move his arm to the front of his body, at which time there was an OIS (officer-involved shooting)."

The man was hit by gunfire and pronounced dead at the scene, police said.

Famed Sunset Boulevard was temporarily blocked off to traffic. A body covered in a white sheet was lying on the road next to a black vehicle with a shattered driver's side window, photographs of the scene showed.

Force Investigation Division detectives, who investigate police-related shootings, were at the scene conducting interviews and gathering evidence, LAPD said. - APP

Vienna cafe
hopes to
unite world's
grandmas

VIENNA: Framed by wooden cabinets, Karin Hofbauer holds a stick of butter to her laptop camera and imparts to the novice bakers gathered virtually in her kitchen the secrets of kneading shortcrust dough.

"It's a simple recipe, I've made it so many times for friends and family, and it's always a success," the 62-year-old Austrian says before filling the baked apple tart with nuts and vanilla custard.

The five Germans and Austrians taking notes have come to the online class because the recipes are simple and straightforward - and because they're taught by real-life grandmothers like Hofbauer, who will soon be joined by fellow grannies and grandpas from across the world in a scheme run by a Vienna cafe.

Two years ago, Hofbauer retired from an administrative position at a hospital.

Healthy, active and eager to "do something meaningful", she joined about 50 other "grannies" at Vienna's Vollpension cafe, a social enterprise where retirees bolster their often meagre state pensions and bake away the loneliness many senior citizens can feel.

The idea was born almost 10 years ago, over a too-dry slice of cake at a Vienna cafe. "Nobody makes better cakes than grandma," Vollpension's co-founder Moriz Piffel-Percevic tells AFP, recalling how wistful the dry sponge made him for the comforting indulgence of his grandma's cakes.

Following a "Granny Wanted" classified in a local paper and some trials as pop-up cafes at festivals, the intergenerational team opened the first "Vollpension" - a German term referring to both full retirement and accommodation with full board. - APP

Briefs

Chairman NAB vows to eradicate corruption

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Justice Javed Iqbal has said that the investigation into billion of rupee mega corruption sugar, flour, money laundering, fake accounts, abuse of authority, assets beyond means and fake housing society scams would be brought to logical conclusion without caring about any pressure or intimidation as per law. He said that NAB took action against all those who were untouchable against whom any punitive measures were incomprehensible. But NAB had filed 1,269 references against such influential elements in various accountability courts where law will take its own course of action.

NAB and corruption can't go together but NAB and Pakistan go together. During the last three years, NAB has directly or indirectly recovered Rs 487 billion and deposited in the national exchequer. He advised all those who criticise NAB unheard to have a look over the performance of NAB and also read NAB Ordinance as NAB since its inception has recovered unprecedented Rs 790 billion which is the best performance of any anti Corruption organisation. The performance of NAB has appreciated by reputed national and international organisations.

APNS grieved over death of Raja Ibarat

DNA

KARACHI: "Sarmad Ali, President and Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Secretary General of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society have expressed profound grief on behalf of APNS Office Bearers and members of the Executive Committee over the sad demise of Raja Ibarat, elder brother of Mr. Mehtab Khan, Chief Editor, Ausaf Group of Publications and uncle of Mr. Mohsin Bilal Khan, Joint Secretary, APNS.

The APNS Office Bearers have offered condolence to the bereaved family and have prayed that Almighty Allah rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give them courage and patience to bear the loss.

Armenia PM resigns to enable snap polls

FOREIGN DESK

YEREVAN: Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan resigned on Sunday while retaining interim duties, formalising a parliamentary vote to be held June 20 in an effort to defuse a protracted political crisis.

Pashinyan has faced calls to stand down since signing in November a Russian-brokered peace agreement with Azerbaijan that ended a war between the two arch-foes for control of the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

"I am resigning from my post as prime minister today" to hold the snap vote on June 20, he said in an announcement broadcast on his Facebook page. After Pashinyan announced his resignation, all members of his cabinet handed in their own resignations, as required by Armenian law. Pashinyan said he would continue to fulfill his duties as head of the interim government. Armenia's humiliating defeat at the hands of Azerbaijan's technologically superior army spurred mass protests in the impoverished ex-Soviet republic on the borders of Turkey and Iran. The tiny Caucasus nation's military, equipped with ageing Soviet-era hardware, struggled to hold ground it had controlled for three decades when clashes broke out against Azerbaijan's better-equipped army in Nagorno-Karabakh in September.

Turkey rejects Biden calling events of 1915 'genocide'

Words cannot change or rewrite history. Turkey has nothing to learn from anybody about its own past," Mevlut Cavusoglu

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: Turkey "entirely rejects" US President Joe Biden's recognition of the 1915 Armenian events as "genocide," Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu has said, minutes after Biden's declaration. Biden on Saturday said the killings of Armenians constituted "genocide," a historic declaration that is set to strain frayed ties between the two NATO allies. "We have nothing to learn from anybody on our own past. Political opportunism is the greatest betrayal to peace and justice," Cavusoglu said on Twitter. We entirely reject this statement based solely on populism.

"Words cannot change or rewrite history. Turkey has nothing to learn from anybody about its own past," Mevlut Cavusoglu wrote in English on Twitter on Saturday. Saying that political opportunism is the greatest betrayal of peace and justice, he stressed that Turkey totally rejects Biden's statement.

Shortly before Biden's statement, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said the debate over the Armenian claims, which have been politicised by



third parties and turned into tools of interference, has helped no one. "We cannot allow the centuries-old culture of coexistence of Turks and Armenians to be

forgotten," Erdogan said in a letter to Sahak Mashalian, head of the Armenian Patriarchate of Turkey.

Earlier President Joe Biden had become the first US president to officially recognize the massacre of Armenians under the Ottoman Empire as a genocide, risking a potential fracture with Turkey but signaling a commitment to global human rights.

In a statement marking the 106th anniversary of the massacre's start, Biden wrote, "Each year on this day, we remember the lives of all those who died in the Ottoman-era Armenian genocide and recommit our-

selves to preventing such an atrocity from ever again occurring."

"Today, as we mourn what was lost, let us also turn our eyes to the future - toward the world that we wish to build for our children. A world unstained by the daily evils of bigotry and intolerance, where human rights are respected, and where all people are able to pursue their lives in dignity and security," Biden said. "Let us renew our shared resolve to prevent future atrocities from occurring anywhere in the world. And let us pursue healing and reconciliation for all the people of the world."

Fire at Baghdad Covid hospital kills 82 people

BAGHDAD: A fire that ravaged a Covid-19 hospital in the Iraqi capital killed 82 people and sparked angry calls for the sacking of officials, in a country with long-dilapidated health infrastructure.

The blaze at Baghdad's Ibn al-Khatib hospital started with an explosion caused by "a fault in the storage of oxygen cylinders", medical sources told AFP.

Flames spread quickly across multiple floors in the middle of the night, as dozens of relatives were at the bedside of the 30 patients in the hospital's intensive care unit where most severe Covid-19 cases are treated, a medical source said. "The hospital had no fire protection system and false ceilings allowed the flames to spread to highly flammable products," the civil defence said.

"The majority of the victims died because they had to be moved and were taken off ventilators, while the others were suffocated by the smoke," it added. At least 23 deaths were reported in the immediate aftermath of the fire, with an official toll of 58 announced Sunday on Twitter by Ali Bayati, a member of Iraq's Human Rights Commission.



"The number of deaths as a result of the Ibn al-Khatib hospital fire was 58, of which 28 were on ventilators" being treated for Covid-19, Bayati said. Medical and security sources told AFP some 50 others were injured in the blaze, and the civil defence said it "rescued 90 people out of 120 patients and their relatives". Videos on social media showed firefighters battling to put out the blaze as patients and their relatives tried to flee the building. "It was the people who got the wounded out," Amir, 35, told AFP, saying he saved his hospitalised brothers

"by the skin of his teeth". Iraq's hospitals have been worn down by decades of conflict and poor investment, with shortages in medicines and hospital beds.

The incident sparked outrage on social media and Prime Minister Mustafa al-Khademi called for an investigation into the cause of the blaze, and declared three days of national mourning. After daybreak, dozens of tall oxygen cylinders that had been evacuated could be seen lined up outside the building, alongside gurneys and scattered debris, an AFP photograph said.

More than 200 patients in all were rescued, according to the health ministry, which pledged to release an official toll of the dead and wounded later.

The fire - which according to several sources was caused by negligence often linked to endemic corruption in Iraq - sparked anger on social media, with a hashtag demanding the health minister be sacked trending on Twitter. Baghdad Governor Mohammed Jaber called on the health ministry "to establish a commission of enquiry so that those who did not do their jobs may be brought to justice".

First research centre of Intercropping approved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Establishment of Pakistan National Research Centre of Intercropping (NRCI) at the Islamia University of Bahawalpur (IUB) was officially approved, according to a report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Sunday.

This will be the first-ever national research centre regarding intercropping technologies in Pakistan. "Before this, there was no national research centre dedicated to intercropping in Pakistan. The centre firstly will be affiliated with the key laboratory of China's Ministry of Agriculture undertaken by Sichuan Agricultural University (SAU), which is well-known throughout the world for intercropping research especially in maize and soybean.

Pakistan wants to increase its soybean production desperately," Muhammad Ali Raza, post-doc from Sichuan Agricultural University told CEN. It's learned that 25 acres of land has been allocated to the centre. "Chinese scientists are well experienced in intercropping technology. We will provide the land for research and technology transfer to the Chinese professors and scientists, especially those who are working

on intercropping technologies.

In the near future, we will invite Chinese professors and scientists to our university and will arrange workspace for them," said Prof. Athar Mehboob, Vice Chancellor of the Islamia University of Bahawalpur.

"The Islamia University of Bahawalpur is looking forward to the intercropping technology transfer from China such as technologies of maize-soybean, cotton-soybean, cotton-peanut in particular," Athar Mehboob added.

Moreover, on April 21, a meeting regarding the selection of the 25 scholars for PhD studies at Sichuan Agricultural University was held at the Vice Chancellor's office.

Athar Mehboob chaired the selection committee, and Prof. Muhammad Iqbal, Dean Faculty of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Dr. Abid Shahzad, Director International Linkages IUB, and Dr. Muhammad Ali Raza, Representative from Sichuan Agricultural University were among the members of the selection committee.

25 PhD scholarships from Sichuan Agricultural University were processed through the Directorate of International Linkages, IUB.

Fazl calls PDM session on April 29

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has summoned a summit meeting of the alliance on April 29 in Islamabad.

According to sources, estranged allies Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Awami National Party (ANP) have not been invited in the PDM session.

The Pakistan Democratic Movement session will give its final approval to the decisions of the steering committee, sources said.

The opposition alliance will also set its future strategy in view of the departure of the PPP and the ANP, sources added. PDM chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman earlier asked the PPP and the ANP to revisit their resignations from the alliance.

In a press conference, Fazlur Rehman said both the parties still have time to reconsider their decision and contact the Pakistan Democratic Movement.

He said PDM is an alliance of the 11 opposition parties, where decisions are made with the consensus and if any party found violating the consensus then it must be made answerable.

Both the parties had the opportunity to summon Pakistan Democratic Movement meeting to give an explanation on the matter, but they decided to part ways with the alliance.

People are at mercy of covid-19: Ahsan Iqbal

DNA

NAROWAL: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday said that incumbent government has left people on mercy of coronavirus.

Ahsan Iqbal, while talking to media persons, said that government should be ashamed as only over 900,000 people have been vaccinated against coronavirus in a nation of 220 million.

While criticizing Prime Minister, Ahsan Iqbal said that Imran Khan never followed coronavirus related SOPs and now how will people listen to him. On the other hand, deaths from Covid-19 has crossed 17,000 mark in Pakistan as number of positive cases surges to 795,627.

Iran bans flights from Pakistan, India

DNA

TEHRAN: As coronavirus cases rise in both India and Pakistan, Iran's Ministry of Aviation banned passenger flights from the two countries in an attempt to stem the spread of the infection.

The decision was made by Iran's Health Ministry and has been effective from Saturday midnight. There are no routine flights between Iran and India, and flights are operated occasionally. International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) spokesperson told the Iranian agency.

However, connecting flights between the countries have also been prohibited, he added. Saudi Arabia, Canada, and the United Kingdom had earlier banned the arrival of passengers from Pakistan given, the worsening situation of Covid-19 in both countries.

Canada's government said it would temporarily bar passenger flights from India and Pakistan for 30 days starting on Thursday as part of stricter measures to combat the spread of the coronavirus. Meanwhile, the UK has added Pakistan to its Red List of travel ban countries. Saudi Arabia on the other hand has decided to resume international flights from May 17 except for the 20 countries, including Pakistan.

India's COVID-19 tally nearing 17 million

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally reached 16,960,172 on Sunday with as many as 349,691 new cases recorded in the past 24 hours.

This was the fourth consecutive day when over 300,000 cases were registered in a single day.

According to the figures released by the federal health ministry, as many as 2,767 deaths took place in the past 24 hours, taking the total death toll to 192,311.

There are still a total of 2,682,751 active cases in the country, with an increase of 129,811 active cases through Saturday, as 14,085,110 people have



been cured and discharged from hospitals so far across the country. The COVID-19 figures continue to peak in the country every day, as the federal government has ruled out imposing a complete lockdown to contain the worsening situation. While some school examinations stand

cancelled, others have been postponed due to the COVID-19 situation. Delhi has been put under a week long lockdown till April 26.

The number of daily active cases has been on the rise over the past few weeks. In January the number of daily cases in the country had

come down to below-10,000. January 16 was a crucial day in India's fight against the pandemic as the nationwide vaccination drive was kicked off during the day. So far over 140 million vaccination doses (140,916,417) have been administered to the people across the country.

Meanwhile, the federal government has ramped up COVID-19 testing facilities across the country, as over 277 million tests have been conducted so far.

As many as 277,918,810 tests were conducted till Saturday, out of which 1,719,588 tests were conducted on Saturday alone, said the latest data issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) on Sunday.

Vaccine doses pass one-billion mark

Nevertheless, the number of new infections topped 893,000 worldwide on Friday, a new daily record

PARIS: The number of Covid-19 jabs administered globally surpassed the one-billion mark on Saturday, offering hope after months of pandemic misery, even as the number of coronavirus cases worldwide hit a new daily record, mainly to an explosion of the virus in India. At least 1,002,938,540 doses have been administered in 207 countries and territories, according to an AFP tally. Nevertheless, the number of new infections topped 893,000 worldwide on Friday, a new daily record. And India accounted for more than a third of these, with authorities there announcing 346,786 new cases on Saturday, a record for a single country since the start of the pandemic.

The pandemic has now killed more than three million people worldwide since the outbreak emerged in China in December 2019.

And India, with its population of 1.3 billion, has become the new hotspot, with the current surge blamed on a new virus variant and recent "super spreader" public events. The country reported 2,624 new deaths in the past 24 hours. Overwhelmed by the devastating new surge, the Indian government is scrambling to organise special trains to get oxygen supplies to worst-hit cities. One "oxygen express" carrying 30,000 litres of oxygen arrived in northern Lucknow at dawn on Saturday, where armed guards were waiting to escort trucks to hospitals. The Indian air

Pakistan vaccinates over 93,000 individuals in past 24 hours: NCOC

ISLAMABAD: The country has vaccinated the highest number of individuals in past 24 hours making the total count of inoculated population over 1.8 million. The NCOC in a tweet said on April 24, over 93,445 doses of Covid-19 vaccine have been administered across Pakistan, making a total of more than 18 lac 43 thousand doses. It may be mentioned here that the vaccination at designated Mass and Covid Vaccination Centers (MVCs & CVCs) was carried out in two different timings ranging from 10 a.m. till 3 p.m. In the second shift from 8:30 p.m. to 12 a.m. whereas these timings are during Ramadan. - DNA

force is also being used to transport oxygen tankers and other supplies around the country and to bring oxygen equipment from Singapore. Thailand is also grappling

with a spiralling caseload. Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said Saturday that more than 1,400 Covid-19 patients are waiting to be admitted to hospital. With the

pandemic still showing no sign of slowing, governments around the world are placing their hopes in vaccines.

And worldwide, the number of vaccine doses administered has doubled in less than a month. Nevertheless, while the majority of poor countries have also started to vaccinate - mainly thanks to the Covax programme - inoculation is still largely a privilege of high-income countries, home to 16 percent of the world's population, have administered 47 percent of vaccine doses.

By contrast, low-income countries account for just 0.2 percent of shots so far. In the US, regulators have approved the re-start of a rollout of Johnson & Johnson vaccines halted over blood

clotting concerns.

In Europe, Belgium said Saturday it would authorise the J&J shot for all adults, having already received 36,000 doses and expecting a total of 1.4 million between April and June.

The European Union as a whole said it would have enough vaccines to immunise 70 percent of its adult population by the end of July. A 91-year-old British grandmother, Margaret Keenan, who on December 8 became the first person in the Western world to get an approved coronavirus vaccine, urged people to get inoculated. "It really is the best thing I've ever done," she said.

"I'm telling everyone to go and get it... I hope everyone comes forward," she said.