

Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Impunity behind the Armenian hate crimes against Azerbaijanis

Detailed News On Page-06

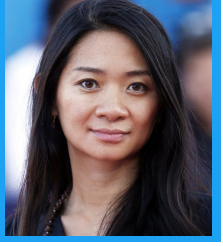
United Kingdom urged to recognize Northern Cyprus

Detailed News On Page-08



Zhao makes history with Oscar win

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Sehr & Iftar Timings

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:51 am	06:49 pm
FAISALABAD	03:57 am	06:45 pm
LAHORE	03:51 am	06:41 pm
KARACHI	04:37 am	07:01 pm
SARGODHA	03:57 am	06:48 pm

FIQA JAFARIA

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:41 am	06:59 pm
FAISALABAD	03:47 am	06:55 pm
LAHORE	03:41 am	06:51 pm
KARACHI	04:27 am	07:10 pm
SARGODHA	03:47 am	06:58 pm

Army helping civil admn against Covid

Army deployed in Islamabad, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swabi, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujrat, Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Muzaffarabad: DG ISPR



NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: DG ISPR Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar stressed it will do everything in its power to protect people's lives, as the third wave of the coronavirus intensifies across the country. "To help the civil government and assist law enforcement agencies is the primary purpose of the deployment of troops [to battle coronavirus]," said the DG ISPR during a news conference.

The DG ISPR said that the positivity ratio had shot up to over 5% in 91 cities of Pakistan, adding that the healthcare infrastructure was under "immense pressure" as critical care patients were increasing daily. Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said if the current coronavirus situation persisted, then oxygen supply will be diverted from other industries to the health sector. He said the Pakistan Army had brought about "enhanced deployment" of its troops in Islamabad, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Charsadda, Swabi, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Gujrat, Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta and Muzaffarabad, adding that these cities were reporting a high number of coronavirus cases on a daily basis. The DG ISPR revealed that 4,300 coronavirus patients were on critical care at the moment. "In some cities, 90% of the ventilators in hospitals are occupied," he said. Maj Gen Babar Iftikhar said Pakistan Army had been deployed in the country to help thwart the coronavirus situation, adding that the decision was taken with all stakeholders on board.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Maliki calls on Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, Fawad Chaudhry. - DNA

Information Minister invited to visit KSA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Minister for Media Dr Majed bin Abdullah Al-Kassabi has invited Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry to visit the kingdom. Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Maliki called on information minister Fawad in Islamabad on Monday and conveyed the invitation on behalf of the Saudi media minister, according to official statement.

In his letter, the Saudi minister stated that on the occasion of Holy Month of Ramadan, he desired to invite the minister to visit Saudi Arabia and perform Umrah and visit the Mosque of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in Madinatul Munawara. Further, he said, the visit would also provide both sides with the opportunity to discuss ways and means for strengthening of media cooperation. The information minister accepted the invitation and said he would visit Saudi Arabia soon. He said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed deep fraternal ties based on common faith, culture, traditions and values and he would like the media dimension added to these ties. During discussion with the ambassador, the emphasis was laid on the revival and implementation of memorandums of understanding (MOUs) signed between the two countries to strengthen cultural cooperation. Fawad said that collaboration in the field of culture is imperative to understand each other's values and bring the brotherly people of the two nations closer. He also stressed enhanced cooperation in the fields of media and information. Both sides also discussed the situation arising out of Covid-19 and exchanged views on utilising each other's experiences and best practices to cope with the pandemic.

SC accepts Justice Isa's review petitions

The Supreme Court gave the verdict in favour of Justice Qazi Faez Isa with a ratio of 6-4

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Announcing a short order in Supreme Court of Pakistan, judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa's review petition, the Supreme Court of Pakistan Monday accepted the applications submitted by the judge and his wife Serena Isa for the review of the presidential reference filed against the judge.



Justice Umar Ata Bandial wrote dissenting notes. Earlier, the Supreme Court had reserved its verdict in SC judge Justice Qazi Faez Isa's review petition on Monday afternoon. During the hearing, Justice Umar Ata Bandial remarked that the case hearing was complete. Justice Bandial said the

court also wanted to know when did the facts related to Justice Isa's case first surfaced. He said for the first time details of the SC judge case came to light in 2019. He expressed surprise at how on earth could Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Shehbaz slams vaccine strategy

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President and Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif took to Twitter on Monday to share a solution to combat the rampaging Covid-19. "The experience over the last year has shown that the only way to overcome the virus is to vaccinate as many people as early as possible," he wrote on his official Twitter handle. He said it was criminal negligence on the part of the government that it failed to accumulate enough vaccine which became the main cause of the rapid spread of Covid 19 in the country. He said the government should devise step-by-step administrative measures. "It is criminal that the government did not take timely steps to buy vaccines in sufficient quantity, and the result is a surge in infections."

PTI taking steps for political restructuring

DNA

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi Monday said the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) was the only party which had taken steps for political restructuring after culmination of One Unit and 1973 Constitution. "Today is a historic day. It is an honour for the PTI that it has initiated measures for the South Punjab province in shape of opening of a secretariat in Multan," he said while addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of South Punjab Secretariat here at the Circuit House.

Fazl urges PPP, ANP to reconsider PDM resignations

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Monday urged the PPP and the ANP to reconsider their decisions to resign from all posts of the alliance and leave it. Fazl, addressing a press conference flanked by PDM leaders, said: "I urge them to reconsider the situation, and if they have committed a mistake, they should accept it [...] as these are the tenets of democracy." Turning his guns towards the government, the PDM chief criticised the centre for not purchasing enough coronavirus vaccines.

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Maryam wants govt to complete its term

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: It appears that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz is willing to allow Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) government to complete its five-year term as in an interview with a private television channel she has said her party is not ready to take responsibility for the mistakes made by the present government.

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ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Overseas Pakistanis and HRD Sayed Zulfikar Bukhari and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Kuninori Matsuda witnessing signing ceremony between OEC and Inter-SES for export of Pakistani Manpower to Japan in Islamabad (News on Back Page) - DNA

China provides more vials of vaccine



SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The government of China has provided 500,000 more vials of COVID-19 vaccine under grant assistance of 'Third Batch of COVID-19 Vaccine Aid' to Pakistan. Federal Minister for Economic Affairs

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Vaccine registration opened for 40-49 group

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Asad Umar Monday announced that National Command and Control (NCCOC) meeting decided to open up registration of 40 plus age citizens starting from Tuesday (today). "Also the decision was taken to allow walk-in vaccination of all registered citizens of 50 plus age group. If you are 40 years or older please register and encourage others to register," the planning minister said. He announced that the inoculation drive to vaccinate citizens aged 40 and above against Covid-19 has begun. The minister's tweet came after he presided over a National Command Operation Centre meeting earlier in the day. On the other hand, Pakistan has reported 70 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 800,452.

Working hours reduced to 5 hours a day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In wake of Covid-19 pandemic, working hours of the Federal Government have been reduced to five hours a day. According to a notification issued today (Monday), offices working five days a week will follow 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. timings from Monday to Thursday. Offices working six days a week will also observe the same timings including Saturday. On Friday, all offices will work from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The notification states that the new office timings shall come into force with immediate effect and shall continue till further orders.

Pakistan slams Israeli acts of hooliganism

Pakistan condemns these violent acts carried out by the Israeli Occupation forces and urges the international community for prompt action to protect Palestinians

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday expressed its strong reservations on the recent developments in the occupied Palestinian territories. The spokesman of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan in a strong-worded message said the situation was alarming and thus needed immediate response. The Israelis are harassing people coming for prayers, arresting innocent Palestinians and committing other arbitrary restrictions in violation of fundamental human rights. These illegal measures have seen an upsurge since the onset of the holy month of Ramadan, the Spokesman further said. He said Pakistan condemned these violent acts carried out by the Israeli Occupation forces and urged the international community for prompt action to protect Palestinians. Pakistan steadfastly supports the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination. For just and lasting peace, it is imperative to have a two-state solution in accordance with the

relevant United Nations and OIC resolutions, with the pre-1967 borders, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as the capital of a viable,

independent and contiguous Palestinian State, the Spokesman added. It may be mentioned here that Palestine

National Council (PNC) had said that the battle of Jerusalem, which was sparked by the heroes of this Holy City, came in response to the daily racist crimes committed by the occupation and its terrorist groups of settlers against the citizens of Jerusalem, and these crimes have escalated, especially since the beginning of the blessed month of Ramadan. In a press statement, PNC indicated that the Israeli occupation authorities have transformed the city of Jerusalem, the capital of our eternal state, as well as the neighborhoods of Jerusalem into military barracks, chased their sons, erected iron barriers in squares and yards, and attacked worshippers and prevented them from reaching the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. PNC had called for the unification of all Palestinian energy and capabilities, and to reject and abandon all that leads to weakening the front of confrontation and facing the Israeli occupation and its crimes, and to engage in this honorable national battle that the people of Jerusalem are waging with courage and valor on behalf of the Arab and Islamic nations.



JERUSALEM: Israeli police unleash violence against the innocent Palestinian people. - Photo Al-Jazeera

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Briefs

Free polls to boost liberation struggle

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has expressed his resolve that state government would hold general elections in fair and free manners to strengthen the democratic struggle of Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination.

"We will hold free and fair elections in Azad Kashmir and these elections should be publicized not only at the national but international level, so that the world should know we believe in elections and we want to decide our future through the power of the vote by participating in a UN-sponsored plebiscite," he asserted.

He expressed these views during an interview to London based web portal here on Tuesday. The President said that fair and free elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been conducted since 1970. These elections have strengthened democratic institutions and promoted democratic values in the liberated territory. While contrary to AJK, elections in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir have never been held fair and transparent and the people demanding their democratic rights are showered with bullets.

He said innocent people in IOJK are killed, wounded, maimed, and disappeared simply because of their democratic right to self-determination.

The people in IOJK, he regretted have been deprived of even those rights which they had enjoyed even during the dictatorial Dogra rule while in Azad Kashmir, the people not only enjoy basic civil liberties but also have all human rights in the democratic system," he added.

41 pickets erected to control crimes

DNA

FAISALABAD: The police department has erected 41 pickets in various parts of 13 circles of Faisalabad district and appointed 396 cops there for duty.

Giving details, police spokesman said on Monday that City Police Officer (CPO) Sohail Chaudhry had issued special direction for erection of police pickets to control street crimes and ensure implementation on anti-corona SOPs in true letter and spirit.

Therefore, the police department erected 41 police pickets in different parts of Faisalabad including Chenab Club Chowk, Rajbah Road, Chinot Bazaar, Bohar Chowk Jhang Road, Graveyard Mor, Punj Pulli Daewoo Road, Abbas Bridge Kokianwala Road, Faisal Pulli Canal Road, Imam Jalvi Market, Ideal Bakery Gulfishan Colony, Faisal Valley Canal Road, Boraywala Chowk, main Chowk new Garden Colony, Stop No.5 D-Type Colony, T-Chowk Novelty Bridge, Madni Chowk Samanabad, Jahangir Mor Dijkot, Fish Farm Sitiana Road, Bypass Chowk near Sher Islamia School, Chak 105/G-B, Chak 39/G-B Sitiana Road, Phattak Mandi Wala Road, Bypass Chowk Makkoana, etc.

Carrefour shares gifts with over 400 kids

DNA

LAHORE: Carrefour Pakistan, owned and operated by UAE-based Majid Al Futaim, has brought happiness to 400 young orphans and underprivileged children of various SOS Children's Villages through a distribution initiative.

A group of Carrefour colleagues from Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad visited the children at the villages, where they shared gifts, toys and clothes, and participated in fun-filled activities.

Comprehensive mechanism being followed to control prices

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali paid surprise visit to Ramzan Bazaars for inspecting the availability, quality and prices of the essential items. He went to Ramzan Bazar Kaleem Shaheed Colony Narwala road and other bazaars and checked the quality of essential items. He interacted the consumers and enquired about the quality of food items and arrangements of Ramzan Bazaars. Speaking on the occasion, DC said that provision of every possible economic relief to the public was the foremost priority and entire administrative machinery was striving to pass on benefits of the Ramzan package of Chief Minister Punjab to the public. He said that comprehensive price control mechanism was being followed to check the prices of essential items in open market and profiteers were being dealt with iron hand.



He said continuous and regular monitoring of the ramzan bazaars was being carried out to maintain the ramzan arrangement throughout the holy month. He said that Punjab govt. was very serious and utilizing the all out resources to make the ramzan bazaars a success for the provision of daily use items to the public on comparatively reduced

prices under one roof. He also inspected the stalls of subsidized sugar and flour and said that the Punjab govt. had given the subsidy of Rs. 5.5 billion under ramzan package for providing flour to the consumers on discount rate. He directed for keeping all process of sale of subsidized flour transparent and stressed upon maintaining discipline

in sale of cheap sugar. Earlier Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali went fruits & vegetables market GMabad and inspected the bidding process of vegetables.

Food packets distributed Under the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan, Ehsas Koi Bhoka Na Soye programs was underway and in this connection the food packets was distributing to

passers-by and travelers in different public places before Iftar through two mobile food vans and 2500 Packets are being distributed daily. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali said that since April 11, the process of distribution of 1250 packets through each mobile food vans has been going on and a total of 37500 packets have been distribut-

ed in 15 days. He said that Mobile Food vans are driven to District Council Chowk, Samanabad, Samundari Road, Riaz Shahid Chowk, Sargodha Road, Jaranwala Road, Mansoorabad, Jhang Road, Satiana Road and other densely populated areas and food packets are being distributed in an organized way among the people present on the roads. He said that the implementation on program "Ehsas koi bhoka na soye" will be continued.

35724 senior citizens get vaccinated

As many as 35724 senior citizens have been vaccinated Corona vaccine in district, in which 27930 have been given first while 7794 have been given second dose and 6 vaccination centres are functional in double shift in this regard. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visit to vaccination centre Sports complex Samanabad. Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari and other officers were also there.

Four shopkeepers held over profiteering

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: The price control magistrate arrested four shopkeepers for profiteering and overcharging in various parts of city on Monday. According to official sources, the magistrates inspected various points, including chak 23-NB, chak 10-NB and Bhalwal and found violations at four points and arrested shopkeepers -Jaz, Yasin, Zaher Abbas and Shafique. The magistrates also imposed fine on them.

Cases were registered against the accused.

Four drug-peddlers held The police on Monday arrested four alleged drug-peddlers and recovered narcotics from them.

Police sources said that teams of different police stations conducted raids and arrested the accused besides recovering 1,450-kg hashish and 32 litres of liquor.

The accused were identified as Babir Hussain, Hassan, Abdul Sattar, and Mohsin Ali.

Woman body found in canal

A body of a woman, yet to be identified, was recovered from the canal in Wah Bachrah here on Monday. Police sources said that some locals spotted the body floating in the Mahajir canal and informed the police.

The team reached the spot and fished out the body. The victim was removed to mortuary for autopsy to ascertain the cause of death.

Father, children die of electrocution in Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: In a shocking incident, two children and their father died of electrocution in Lahore's Ravi Road while trying to save each other. According to police, eight-year-old Gohar became the first victim after he was electrocuted while trying to take off clothes from an iron rod.

"11-year-old Faiza, his sister, then tried to save Gohar, however, she also got electrocuted," the police said adding that the father of the victims also tried to rescue both the children and got electrocuted. The bodies of the children and father were shifted to a hospital for medico-legal formalities.

It is pertinent to mention here that incidents of electrocution have mostly been reported in the country from Karachi, where court orders and NEPRA have directed the authority responsible for supplying electricity to compensate the victims.

In one such case recently, a session court in Karachi has directed the K-Electric to pay an Rs15 million fine in an electrocution case that involves a 12-year-old child who was electrocuted in Karachi during 2013.

On 26 November 2013, 12-year-old Safer got electrocuted in an incident that also involves the death of a man identified as Arif.

Police, Army and Rangers carry out flag march

LAHORE: Lahore Police along with district government teams as well as contingents of Pakistan Army and Rangers on Monday carried out flag march in different areas of the city, in wake of the present critical situation of Corona pandemic to instil confidence and sense of security among the citizens and make them aware to follow the SOPs of wearing mask and follow business timings.

Capital City Police Officer Lahore Additional IG Ghulam Mahmood Dogar led the flag march whereas Commissioner Lahore Capt (R) Muhammad Usman, DIG Operations Sajid Kiani, CTO Lahore Syed Hammad Abid and other senior officers of Army and Rangers participated in the flag march. Contingents of Pakistan Army, Rangers, Dolphin Squad, Elite Force, traffic police, Police Response Unit and Ababel Force were part of the flag march.

Police March started from Capital City Police Headquarters and passed through different important roads and markets and business centres of the city including Qartaba Chowk, Chuburji, Samanabad, Moon Market, Kareem Block Market, Wahdat Road, Ichhra and ended back at CCPO office. - APP



MULTAN: Prime Minister Imran Khan receives briefing about development projects in Multan. - DNA

Heavy price will be paid for violation of SOPs

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman of National Business Group of FPCCI, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday said Pakistan should learn from disaster in India are immediately impose lockdown before

the situation goes out of control. The world's largest vaccine producing country India is paying a heavy price for not realizing the threat on the government level and lax attitude of the masses and we still have some time to avoid the reappearance of the disaster of this magnitude, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that economy cannot be preferred over human lives and

that Prime Minister Imran Khan is reluctant to enforce a complete lockdown in major cities as it will hit poor and daily wagers. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the government lack resources to feed underprivileged during the lockdown but full observation of SOPs should be ensured.

The cities badly hit by virus should be locked

down, shopping centres should be closed, unnecessary services should be discontinued while public transport should be banned and educational institutions should be closed to save precious lives, he demanded.

These steps will reduce the burden of crumbling healthcare infrastructure and it will also tackle the shortage of oxygen and its skyrocketing prices.

Kissan Card to ensure subsidy in transparent manner: CM Buzdar

DNA

MULTAN: Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar on Monday said that Kissan Card was launched to provide benefit of subsidy on seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and agriculture machinery in transparent manner.

Speaking during Kissan Card Launching ceremony, chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan, here, he said initial-

ly, subsidy of Rs 17 billions will be given to the farmers through Kissan Card. CM Buzdar stated that farmers would obtain subsidy through registered shops. The holders of the Kissan Card will also get agriculture loans easily, he maintained.

Buzdar remarked that Kissan Card was part of PM's Agriculture Productivity Enhancement Programme which comprised of Rs 300 billion.

Sindh govt bans inter-city transport

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh government, keeping in view the fresh spike in coronavirus cases, has taken some pragmatic policy decisions to ban inter-provincial transport, close educational institutions, slash government offices staff by 80 percent and purchase two oxygen plants and one of them would be airlifted from china.

"We have also decided to seek the services of armed forces to assist district administration and the police implement Coronavirus Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the province."

This was disclosed by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah while addressing a press conference at the auditorium of the Sindh Assembly just after presiding over a Provincial Task Force meeting on Coronavirus. He was flanked by provincial ministers, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Syed Nasir Shah, Ikram Dharejo, Advisor Law Murtaza Wahab and Parliamentary secretary on health Qasim Siraj Soomro. The chief minister said that the coronavirus situation was comparatively better in Sindh but during the last 60 days detection ratio of the new cases has shown a dangerous surge.



THATTA: Ration bags are being distributed among deserving families of Keti Bandar by Pakistan Navy and Sahil Welfare Association. - DNA

Chairman Sanjrani assures support to FPCCI

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani hosted an Iftar-cum-Dinner in honour of FPCCI's delegation at his official residence and discussed issues of the business community.

President of the Pakistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo met Mr. Sadiq Sanjrani, Chairman Senate of Pakistan; along with a large delegation of FPCCI comprising of office bearers and senior representatives of business, industry, and trade community of Pakistan.

Mr. Sadiq Sanjrani and FPCCI's delegation - led by Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo - discussed the issues concerning the business environment of the country and hampering the economic growth



of Pakistan at length. The delegation briefed the Chairman Senate on their concerns and inputs on macroeconomic, industrial, financial, energy, taxation/tariffs, ease

of doing business, and trade policies of Pakistan. Chairman Senate assured the delegation of his full support and promised to take up the issues with the Prime Minister

of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan. Notably, FPCCI's delegation comprised of Khawaja Shahzeb Akram - Senior Vice President; Ather Sultan Chawla, Adeel Siddiqui,

and Arif Jeewa - Vice Presidents; Haji Ghulam Ali - Vice President SAARC CCI; Former Senator Zafar Chaudhry, Khurram Tariq Sayeed, Sheikh Aslam, and Qaiser Khan - Former Vice Presidents; Mirza Abdul Rehman, Coordinator Capital Office; Sheikh Sultan Rehman, Coordinator Head Office Karachi; Mohammad Ali Mian, Coordinator Punjab; Irfan Iqbal Sheikh - Former President Lahore CCI; and Chaudhry Waheed, Nadeem Qureshi, and Mudassar Mansoor. Several Federal Ministers/Advisors to Prime Minister including Shibli Faraz and Azam Sawati were also present on the occasion.

Sadiq Sanjrani presented Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo with the Crest of the Senate of Pakistan and Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo presented him with the Crest of FPCCI.

Briefs

Skylights at Faisal Mosque to be replaced

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) will start fixing skylights at Faisal Mosque during next week to attract more visitors at the area. Tenders have been floated in that regard to replace 35 lights that had been obsolete for a long period of time, CDA spokesman said on Monday. The authority Chairman, Aamer Ali Ahmed, he said had ordered to complete the work before Eid-ul-Fitr. Similarly, he said the maintenance directorate has formulated a plan to carry out renovation work at the mosque for the convenience of the visitors.

IESCO ensures continuity of power supply

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Appreciating tireless efforts of formation, Chief Executive Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) Ch. Abdul Razaq has said that continuity of power supply was ensured in the first decade of holy month Ramadan. He said that IESCO officers and staff always proved themselves a front line worker, whether it has been raining, storm, cold or any emergency situation, said a press release. The IESCO chief reiterated commitment that during second and third decade of Ramadan we would continue our performance. The IESCO Chief said that from Central Monitoring Cell established in distribution control center Islamabad, he along with Zubair Khan Operation Director IESCO and other senior officers were continuously monitoring demand and supply position of electricity and load on feeders. The Chief said that by providing best and timely services to our valued customer we proved that IESCO was customer friendly company. He added that for registration of customer individual complaint our complaint offices, helpline Number 118, Complaint and monitoring cell Islamabad phone number 051-9252933-6 were available round the clock.

Minister vows to complete projects on time

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Minister for Social Welfare Syed Yawar Abbas Bukhari Monday said that all ongoing development projects in the public interest would be completed on time. Transparency would be ensured and strict action would be taken against those who were involved in malpractices and embezzlement. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting on ongoing development projects at the Commissioner's Office here. On the occasion, Provincial Minister for Literacy and Non-Formal Education Raja Rashid Hafeez, Provincial Minister for Revenue Punjab Colonel (ret'd) Muhammad Anwar, Member National Assembly Sheikh Rashid Shafiq, Commissioner Rawalpindi Gulzar Hussain Shah and officers of other concerned departments were present on the occasion. The minister said that despite severe economic problems, mega projects worth billions of rupees would be launched in Rawalpindi division which had been neglected for many years. He said that Rawalpindi Ring Road Project, Leh Expressway Project and Jalapur Irrigation Project Jhelum are mega projects which were indispensable for the public interest but in the past the previous governments did not pay attention to them but under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan work is being started on these projects. Billions of rupees have been allocated to uplift the Rawalpindi city. - APP

BOI asked to setup one window facility for investors

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan stressed that BOI should set up a one window facility as early as possible to facilitate the investors in making investment in Pakistan

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading a delegation held a meeting with Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State/Chairman, Board of Investment and discussed with him various options for promoting local and foreign investment in the country. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President ICCI, Umar Hussain, Omais Khattak and Usman Khalid Executive Members ICCI were in the delegation. Fareena Mazhar Secretary, Mukarram Jah Anwar Executive Director General, Muhammad Khashih ur Rehman Executive Director General, Jamil Ahmed Qureshi Director General and Suriya Jamal Director General, BOI were also present in the meeting.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan stressed that BOI should set up a one window facility as early as possible to facilitate the investors in making investment in Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has tremendous potential for investment in various sectors of its economy including tourism, hospitality, infrastructure development and others, however, lengthy business registration



processes, complicated taxation regime, inconsistent policies, insufficient policy reforms and red tapeism in the government departments were the major hurdles for local and foreign investors. He emphasized that BOI should work with relevant departments to address these issues in order to facilitate the growth of investment in the country. He said that BOI and other government departments should take major chambers of commerce on board during policy making processes that would help in making more business friendly policies and promoting business and investment activities in the country.

Fatma Azim Senior Vice President ICCI, Umar Hussain, Omais Khattak and Usman Khalid Executive Members ICCI also offered useful proposals for investment promotion. They said that many foreign diplomats and delegations used to visit ICCI and other chambers, therefore, BOI should regularly share updated information with chambers about potential areas of investment in the country that would be helpful in attracting more FDI to Pakistan. They said that further cut in policy interest rate, reduction in high tax rates, simplification of taxation system, easy allocation of land and prompt provision of utility services would

increase local and foreign investment in the country and urged that the government should work on these lines. Addressing the ICCI delegation, Atif R. Bokhari, Minister of State/Chairman BOI said that his organization was taking many initiatives to promote ease of doing investment in Pakistan. He said that the government had launched Pakistan Regulatory Modernization Initiative (PRMI) and BOI was designated as lead agency for its implementation. He hoped that this initiative would reduce compliance costs of businesses and improve the regulatory regime for them as well. He said that ICCI

should develop a sector-wise list of major issues/hindrances in way of the investment and share the same with BOI so that efforts could be made to address them for facilitation of business and investment activities. He said that Mukarram Jah Anwar Executive Director General BOI would work as focal person with ICCI for strong liaison between both sides in order to make joint efforts for investment promotion. Fareena Mazhar, Secretary BOI and other members of BOI delegation also spoke at the occasion and assured that BOI would keep the private sector in loop on major initiatives for investment promotion.

CDA dismantle 22 roadside setup along IJP road

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority's (CDA) enforcement teams on Monday dismantled some 22 roadside setup along IJP road near Mandi Mor. The authority has continued drive across the city without any discrimination to retrieve safe land, a news release said.

In another operation at Bari Imam 08 rooms, 16 boundary walls, 03 each washrooms and kitchens and 02 DPCs were demolished. Similarly, at Rimsha Colony 02 homes, 03 rooms, 1 each kitchen and washroom and 06 boundary walls were removed.

Cleanliness awareness drive conducted

RAWALPINDI: In connection with ongoing special cleanliness and public awareness drive at nine Sasta Ramadan Bazaars installed in different UCs of the city, the communication team of Albayrak and Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) on Monday carried out awareness activity in the Ramadan Bazar at Committee Chowk (UC-42) and informed the stall holders and bazaar goers to maintain sanitation while dealing with eatable items. Spokesman of Alnyrak told that a squad of additional sanitary workers have been deployed in these Ramadan bazaars to ensure that the buyers and sellers are facilitated in the best possible way in terms of cleanliness and waste management. As many as Six to ten workers in two shifts have been deputed in each Bazar, he told and added that the company's communications team guided the stall-holders and general visitors to discard papers, wrappers and other waste material in waste bags or waste-containers to keep the area tidy. - APP

IHC seeks comments from MCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday sought comments from the Municipal Corporation Islamabad (MCI) on a petition filed by the Islamabad Food Chain Bikers against alleged harassment. Chief Justice Athar Minalah, who heard the case, also suspended MCI's March 4 notification and stopped it from taking any action against the food chain. The petitioner, in the petition, pleaded that the food chain was doing business of food delivery through the motor bikes, while the MCI had stopped the food chain from advertising on bikes and riders' uniform. It added the MCI had no authority to regulate advertising under 1977 regulations. The company's name printed on uniforms and motorbikes did not meet the definition of advertising. The petitioner said the MCI was harassing it and prayed the court to suspend its notification against it. The court served notices to respondents and adjourned hearing of the case.

Est. Division notifies transfers

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division on Monday issued a notification, directing transfers and postings of various high ranking officers. According to a notification, Omer Rasul has relinquished the charge of the post of Officer on Special Duty (BS-22/PAS) in this Division with immediate effect. Similarly, Saba Asim has relinquished the charge of the post of Deputy Secretary (BS-19/Acting charge) on 12.04.2021 and also assumed the charge of the same post in (BS-19/PAS) on a regular basis in the same Division on the same date, the notification said. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defense Production, Ms. Zubaida Jalal calling on Minister for Interior Rashid Ahmed. - DNA

CDA to start cleanup operation

ISLAMABAD: Administration of Capital Development Authority (CDA) is continuously taking action against encroachments and illegal constructions. In this regard, administration removed 22 illegal roadside setups at Mandi Mor on IJP road on Monday. Government's land was retrieved by conducting these operations. According to detail, CDA is conducting operations against encroachments and illegal constructions in the city. 22 road side setups were demolished and government's land was retrieved by the fresh operation of CDA at IJP road. 03 setups of construction material were also demolished. - DNA

Police launch crackdown against drug pushers

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police on Monday conducted successful operation against drug peddlers at Athal and Dore villages and nabbed 18 outlaws besides recovered huge cache of narcotics from them, said DIG (Operations) Afzaal Ahmed Kausar. Addressing a press conference here at police line headquarters along with SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, he said that special police squads have been constituted to ensure effective action against drug pushers in the Capital. Successful operations were conducted against drug peddlers in villages of Dore and Athal during last night and in wee hours on Monday, he said adding that police arrested 18 drug dealers including six notorious

persons involved in this ugly business besides recovery of cache of narcotics from them. DIG (Operations) Afzaal Ahmed Kausar said that 3730 gram heroin, 1110 gram hashish was recovered during operation at Dore village while 22 kilogram hashish, one kilogram heroin, 70 gram ice, one pistol, a short gun and ammunition was recovered from 12 other persons active in Athal village, he added. He said that effective crackdown was underway in other parts of the city and also against those supplying drugs at educational institutions. During the last one month, he said that 55 drug pushers including nine Nigerian nationals have been arrested and 40022 gram heroin, 32783 gram hashish, 16 gram cocaine, 60 gram ice, 270 tranquilizing pills and 338 wine bottles were recovered.

Capital reports 469 new cases in last 24 hours

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the Federal Capital with 469 more persons infected with the deadly virus in city during the last 24 hours, the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Monday. As many as 368 corona cases were reported on Sunday and 463 on Saturday. According to an National Command and Operation Center official, so far 73,450 cases were reported from the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), with 665 deaths while 59,993 patients had recovered completely.

Govt committed to protect children from violence

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: National Parliamentary Task Force on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Convener Riaz Fatyana Monday said safeguarding the children from all forms of violence was a key priority area for the government. Mentioning The Zainab Alert, Response and Recovery Bill, 2020 and support by the government for the National Assembly Bill on Corporal Punishment, he said Pakistan's progress towards SDGs was satisfactory. He said this while addressing a seminar on COVID-19 and Elimination of Violence against Children, organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) here at a lo-

cal hotel. The seminar was aimed to create awareness about the rising trends of violence against children during the ongoing pandemic. Riaz Fatyana acknowledged that unfortunately Pakistan had not delivered on its international and national commitments towards child rights however, the present government was striving to change this situation. In addition, Pakistan's national and provincial assemblies established SDGs Task Forces to oversee the progress on the goals, he added. Addressing on the occasion, Special Group on Child Rights of National Parliamentary Task Force on SDGs Chairperson, Member of the National Assembly Mehnaz Akbar Aziz highlighted the role and functions of the SDGs

Special Committee and task force. She discussed in detail the progress of SDGs especially regarding SDGs 16.2. She said parliamentarians from different parties were supporting the government in the realization of commitments under SDGs. All the parliamentarians and members of the Task Force were playing active role in highlighting key issues and supporting the completion of various tasks, she added. National Commission on Child Rights Chairperson Afshan Tehseen Bajwa told the participants that the Voluntary National Review (VNR) was a process through which countries assess and present progress made in achieving the global goals and the pledge to leave no one behind.

TVET lauds NAVTTC's 75 high-tech skill centers

The Executive Director said that technologically highly equipped skill centers will serve as platform for further strengthening the international linkages in the field technical and vocational trainings

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Conference on establishing 75 Prime Minister's High-Tech Skill Centers across Pakistan was held on Monday at NAVTTC headquarters Islamabad. The participants included representatives from provincial TEVTAs, related public sector organizations, NAVTTC regional offices and Vice Chancellors of skill universities, etc. Chairman-NAVTTC, Syed Javed Hassan in the opening remarks welcomed the participants from all over Pakistan and said that establishment of these centers will prove to be a milestone in reforming the process of the country's skill development sector. He also pointed out that these centers will revolutionize the skill sector in the country. Executive Director NAVTTC, Dr. Nasir Khan gave a detailed pres-

entation to the participants of the conference and apprised them that objective of establishing 75 Prime Minister's high-tech skill centers is a part of NAVTTC's comprehensive reforms process of the country's skill development sector to make it compatible with the requirements of the country's huge youth population as well as domestic and international job markets. The proposed skill centers will be equipped with smart labs for

providing high-tech environment for TVET learning, facilitation centers for preparing youth for overseas employment, career counseling, recognition of prior centers, business incubation centers, trade centers for overseas employment and training of 2000 teachers through state of the art technology, he added. The Executive Director said that technologically highly equipped skill centers will serve as platform for further strengthening the in-

ternational linkages in the field technical and vocational trainings. He mentioned that most of the preparatory work for establishing these centers has been completed and these centers will be fully operationalized by September 2021. The participants of the conference appreciated the NAVTTC's initiative of establishing 75 high-tech skill centers to uplift the TVET sector of Pakistan and said the effective execution and implementation of this initiative will transform

the skill development landscape of the country. The participants also put forth a number of valuable suggestions for the establishment of these skill centers and assured full cooperation for timely completion of this game changer component of Skills for All Program. The Executive Director welcomed the valuable suggestions of the participants and highlighted that these suggestions will be given due importance during the process of establishing skill centers.



Briefs

Turkey orders 532 arrests over Gulen links

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkish prosecutors have ordered the arrest of 532 suspects, including 459 serving military personnel...

Turkish lira dips to near record low

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's lira has edged lower in early trading, adding to a recent slide and nearing an all-time low...

Market negativity is intense. (The) risk of an overshooting episode is unfortunately elevated...

The lira has shed 3.5 percent in the last three trading days as it became clear that US President Joe Biden would officially recognise the 1915 killings and deportation of Armenians...

Russia 'concerned' over situation in Myanmar

FORAIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia is concerned over the situation in Myanmar, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday. The Kremlin closely follows the situation in the country and condemns any actions...

Indian farmers continue protests amid COVID surge

The protests entered their sixth month. While Modi claims the new laws will modernise India's agriculture, multiple rounds of talks held between farmers' unions from across the country and the government failed to break the deadlock

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Even as India battles a second and more brutal wave of coronavirus infections, thousands of farmers demanding the repeal of farm laws passed by the government last year remain undeterred...

On Monday, the protests entered their sixth month. While Modi claims the new laws will modernise India's agriculture, multiple rounds of talks held between farm-

ers' unions from across the country and the government failed to break the deadlock. Even an escalating COVID-19 crisis, which has seen the world's most populous nation break records for daily infections and deaths for weeks now, has failed to break the protest by farmers...

ing whether or not we want those reforms," he told Al Jazeera. "Why can't the government announce it will revoke the laws? We will continue our protest unless this government takes them back and guarantees us a minimum support price for our crops..."

and volunteers offer health-care facilities for free. Inside their tents and tractor trailers, farmers have installed fans and water coolers to fight India's notorious heat. The farmers have refused to vacate the sites unless the government agrees to completely roll back the farm laws and guarantee the continuation of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) system that gives them a minimum sale price for their produce...

ber of people could be challenging, mostly because the health system around New Delhi is now collapsing. There is an acute shortage of oxygen and beds." Epidemiologist Dr Giridhara R Babu told Al Jazeera all types of crowds that have 10 or more people should be prevented. "Any gathering should not be allowed, whether it's a cinema house in full attendance or a marriage event. Any type of crowd should be avoided at this stage because the surge is everywhere..."

Leaked Zarif recording stirs hot debate

TEHRAN: A leaked interview in which Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif frankly discusses behind-the-scenes manoeuvres in Iranian politics has stirred fierce conversation and debate ahead of the country's presidential elections in June.

More than three hours of audio from an interview in March with government-aligned journalist and economist Saeed Leylaz was anonymously leaked to Farsi-language media outside Iran on Sunday. Foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the original interview was seven hours long...

In the interview, Zarif repeatedly uses "the field" in reference to military operations and politics driven by the outward-looking Quds Force of the IRGC, and its then-leader Major-General Ghassem Soleimani. -Foreign Desk



JIAOZHOU: 2021 SCO International Investment and Trade Expo opens in. Pakistan ambassador to China Moin ul Haque also attends the opening ceremony. - DNA

Israeli police remove East Jerusalem barricades

FOREIGN DESK

JERUSALEM: Israeli police on Sunday removed barricades from near the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, in a move apparently aimed at easing tensions after days of violent confrontations. The barricading of the area near the Damascus Gate in East Jerusalem's walled Old City - a popular gathering place for Palestinians during the holy month of Ramadan - was partly blamed for several nights of tensions. Israeli police said the barriers were put in place as part of coronavirus restrictions. The decision came following consultations with local leadership, religious leaders, situation assessments,

while taking into consideration the shop owners who need to make a living, and in order to lower the level of violence," an Israeli police spokesman told AFP news agency. "Our forces are still deployed on the ground, and we won't let violence re-surge," the spokesman said. Violent clashes erupted on Thursday night after the arrival of far-right Israeli groups at the end of a march during which they harassed Palestinians and chanted "Death to Arabs". Hundreds of Palestinians have been wounded and dozens of others arrested in several days of violence. Hundreds of Palestinians held celebratory rallies in the plaza, watched over by police.

They chanted celebratory remarks and waved Palestinian flags before minor scuffles erupted when Israeli police attempted to confiscate the flags. AFP reporters saw several young Palestinians being detained by police. But the plaza remained open, with police maintaining a heavy presence in the area into the early hours of Monday. Samir Gheith, a 66-year-old Palestinian from Jerusalem, said people had been looking forward to gathering at Damascus Gate during Ramadan after it was closed last year due to coronavirus restrictions. "I think they don't want to see us be happy," he told AFP, referring to the initial decision to barricade the

plaza. "But then they came to understand that they needed to put a stop to all these tensions," he said. The Palestinian leadership wants East Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state. Its fate has been one of the thorniest issues in the peace process, which ground to a halt more than 10 years ago. Ahmad Tibi, a member of the Israeli parliament with the Joint List, the Palestinian-majority electoral alliance, said on Monday that placing barricades in the Old City was a mistake from the start. In a statement he said the decision to reopen the gates is correct, but "they should stop attacking the Palestinians".

Russia suspends activities of Kremlin critic Navalny's groups

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: State prosecutors in Moscow have ordered campaign groups supporting Alexey Navalny to stop their activities, pending a request to outlaw them and the jailed Kremlin critic's Anti-Corruption Foundation. The move on Monday came as a court in the Russian capital met for a preliminary hearing to consider a prosecutor's request to label Navalny's foundation and its regional offshoots as "extremist". The prosecutor has accused pro-Navalny groups of plotting to destabilise the political situation in Russia and working to promote a popular revolution. At the hearing, prosecutors asked the court to prohibit the opposition politician's groups from publishing anything online, organising protests, and taking part in elections, Leonid Volkov, a Navalny ally said. The hearings are being held behind closed doors as authorities have classified some of the case details, said lawyer Ivan Pavlov, whose legal team is handling the case. "We all understand perfectly that there is no extremism in [our] work..." The extremism allegation is being used purely as a pretext for political repression," Volkov said. Al Jazeera's Bernard Smith, reporting from Moscow, said Navalny's allies had already pledged to "reappear under different names" if blacklisted by authorities.

Somali opp fighters 'cordon off Mogadishu'

FOREIGN DESK

MOGADISHU: Somali opposition fighters have taken up positions in parts of the capital Mogadishu a day after clashes with government troops erupted over the president's bid to extend his mandate. Witnesses reported that armed men and vehicles mounted with machine guns were stationed in opposition strongholds on Monday, while key roads in the capital were blocked. "Both the Somali security forces and the pro-opposition fighters have taken positions along some key roads, there is civilian transport movement but, in some areas, they are not allowing anyone to move," witness Abdullahi Mire told AFP news agency. Somalia, recovering from decades of civil war, is facing its worst political crisis in recent years after the failure to hold planned elections in February. President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, best known by his nickname Farmajo, has faced harsh criticism at home and from foreign allies after signing a law earlier this month extending his mandate by two years. On Sunday night, sporadic gunfire rang out across the capital after fighting broke out between government forces and those allied to various opposition leaders. The clashes - mainly in the northern neighbourhoods of Sanca and Marinaya and the busy KM4 crossroads in the centre - began after dozens of opposition supporters marched in protest against Farmajo's term extension. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Kazakhstan starts using indigenous vaccine

WEB DESK

NUR SULTAN: Kazakhstan started administering its homegrown COVID-19 vaccine. Health Minister Alexey Tsoy received his first dose of QazVac vaccine in a local outpatient clinic in the capital Nur-Sultan on Monday. After being inoculated in a live broadcast, Tsoy said he feels good, adding they have started vaccinating the public in various parts of the country. He said that the first batch of QazVac vaccine - 50,000 doses - was delivered to different cities and regions. Noting that they are in talks with various production facilities to increase the vaccine production capacity, Tsoy said: "We are also evaluating the fields of our Turkish partners in this regard." The minister also recalled that his country is one of the five countries in the world that has developed its own vaccine against COVID-19. The vaccine will be administered in two doses, 21 days apart. Developed by the Research Institute for Biological Safety Problems of Kazakhstan, the QazVac vaccine can be stored at temperatures between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius (35-46 degrees Fahrenheit).

Armenian mob attacks Turkish family

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: Four people were injured when a group of around 40 Armenians attacked a Turkish family in Saint-Denis-des-Vosges, France. The group broke into the family's home in Kellerman district and assaulted them. Speaking to Turkish media, one of the family members said that on Saturday, an Armenian hit the son from his cousin's family with their car and a dispute broke out between them. Noting that they had met with Armenians afterwards and thought they were tied to the incident, the family member said that later that day, Armenians entered the home of his cousin's family and attacked them with baseball bats, knives and iron bars. The family member added that one of the attackers also had a gun. Four people were injured in the incident, the family member said, adding one suffered three fractures to their skull and three were hospitalized, with one of them undergoing surgery.

Pak carries huge potential of its citrus export

Pakistan is one of the top citrus producers in the world. Citrus contributes about 30% to the country's total fruit output

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistani kinnow industry has witnessed a breakthrough last week as Iran has lifted restrictions on the import of Pakistani kinnow, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. Pakistan is one of the top citrus producers in the world. Citrus contributes about 30% to the country's total fruit output. Last year, Pakistan earned its highest export revenue from kinnow of \$222 million amounting to 370,000 tonnes, according to a report on Pakistani citrus industry released by the China-Pakistan Agricultural and Industrial Cooperation Information Platform (CPAIC). The report also points out that most of the citrus fruits produced by Pakistan are consumed in foreign markets. Among the export varieties, kinnow is the most

important one. However, as old varieties are wearing out, kinnow quality is worsening. For years, there has been no major breakthrough in kinnow varieties. Among the export kinnow, only 2.6% goes to developed countries, mostly because consumers in these markets favor seedless citrus. Such a trend is gradually expanding to other parts of the world. Currently, seedless varieties represent 61% of total citrus export worldwide, which leads to a sharp decline in the price of Pakistani kinnow by more than 50% from 2016 to 2020. Actually, there is a research institute in Sargodha dedicated to the development of new citrus varieties, but it has not published any substantive results in the past five years. The situation is similar for the National Agricultural Research Cen-

tre (NARC), Islamabad. If these research institutes can be stimulated to produce new seedless kinnow varieties, they could have brought huge wealth for Pakistan. In addition, even with new varieties, citrus growers in Pakistan are not qualified to grow the new varieties-they have neither the professional knowledge nor the suitable equipment. Also, they are not willing to engage in export themselves for lack of financing channels, infrastructure (transportation, grading, cold storage and warehousing facilities), technical guidance, international market information, and time to wait for the issuance of various permits. Therefore, the CPAIC report recommends growers be trained and informed of such basic knowledge as sowing time, planting methods, fertilizer ratio, harvesting methods, etc. The government should also pro-

vide credit to them so that they have the finances to purchase equipment necessary for the variety shift, such as automatic irrigation systems and sprinklers. Formal packaging, grading and transportation systems are also required by dedicated exporters. The cheapest packaging materials used by exporters not only causes catastrophic losses to the fruit in transit, but also brings about a tarnished reputation in the international market. None of the international airports in Pakistan are equipped with storage facilities for fresh agricultural products; only one port has such facilities but its capacity is seriously insufficient. Fortunately, the education level of citrus growers in Pakistan is gradually improving. With appropriate training and information access channels, growers may improve the quality of fruit through crop management and other meth-

ods, and provide value addition through processing; this will help develop and expand the citrus industry in Pakistan. Meanwhile, the country will establish better domestic and international supply chains for the citrus industry leveraging the newly developed infrastructure and transportation systems, thereby improving efficiency and reducing overall waste. By expanding the cultivation of seedless citrus varieties, formulating quality management regulations, optimizing the supply chains, establishing certification initiatives, and reducing post-harvest losses, citrus export in Pakistan can be significantly boosted. Pakistani citrus is expected to be exported to European countries, China and Central Asian markets with higher value addition beyond the existing markets in the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia.

Briefs

4 HP projects to attract \$7.7 bn investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Four hydel power projects, under the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), would be completed at a cost of \$7.7 billion in next six years, contributing 3428 MW of clean and cheap energy to the national grid. Official in the CPEC authority said on Monday that in order to fulfill the electricity requirements and to produce atmosphere friendly clean and green energy, numerous hydel power projects with installed capacity of 3,428 MW are being completed under the second phase. The projects would help generating thousands of new jobs besides providing affordable clean electricity to the consumers. Nine coal-based energy projects completed in the first phase are contributing 5,320 MW to the national grid which are largely helping to overcome the load shedding problem in the country. The CPEC Authority official informed that 720 MW Karot Hydro Power Project is in final stages and likely to be completed within the current year at a cost of \$700 million.

China willing to help India fight Covid-19

BEIJING: China has expressed willingness to provide medical supplies to India to fight a resurgence of COVID-19 at the request of Indian side, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Wang Wenbin said on Monday. "China has been following closely the epidemic situation in India and expressed readiness early on to help curb the latest surge. At present, the two sides are communicating with one another," he said during his regular briefing held here. According to some Indian media reports, China's Sichuan Airlines has decided to suspend cargo flights to India for 15 days because of the resurgence there, which will disrupt Indian private traders' procurement of medical supplies, including oxygen concentrators from China. Wang replied that the Indian private companies' procurement of medical supplies from China was actually normal business deals. "You asked about Indian companies' purchase of China's anti-epidemic medical supplies. As far as I know, that's normal business interaction. We stand ready to offer support and assistance to the best of our capability if the Indian side informs us of its specific needs," he said. To yet another question, he made it clear that China was ready to provide necessary support and help to India in its fight against the new wave of infections. "If India raises any specific demand, we will offer support and help to the best of our capability." - APP

30-day remission sought for inmates

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Interior Ministry on Monday sent a summary to the federal cabinet for giving a 30-day remission to the inmates on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. According to the details, the summary sent to the federal cabinet sought remission for inmates who are being jailed in petty cases. Male inmates aged above 65-year-old and female inmates aged above 60-year-old will also be able to avail the facility. After being approved by the cabinet and prime minister, it would be sent to President Arif Alvi for final approval. The remission would not be applicable to inmates facing terrorism and murder charges and those who are facing corruption cases. The federal and provincial governments in the country grant remission to prisoners on various occasions and previously in October 2020, the federal government has granted special remission for the prisoners across the country on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi Peace Be Upon Him.

Pakistan to further strengthen economic linkages with UK

The minister was talking to British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr. Christian Turner, who called on him at the Finance Division

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin said Monday that Pakistan attached special importance to bilateral relations with the United Kingdom and affirmed to further strengthen economic and business linkages between the two countries. The minister was talking to British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Dr. Christian Turner, who called on him here at the Finance Division. Secretary Finance Division and Secretary Economic Affairs Division were also present during the meeting, said a statement issued here. The minister also thanked the High Commissioner for the support extended by the British government and its people for the people of Pakistan during the on-going COVID-19 pandemic.



Emergency Cash program regarding direct cash transfers to underprivileged women. The Ehsaas program, he said had played a significant role in mitigating the economic hardships of the marginalized groups of the society amid COVID-19. He also underlined the various measures taken by the government to stimulate economic recovery during these testing times. He commended the Pakistani diaspora abroad for sending in record remittances, which enhanced the foreign exchange reserves and strengthened Pak-Rupee, adding that the Pakistani diaspora in United Kingdom were the real asset for the country. He reiterated the firm commitment of the government in implementing vital economic reforms and achieving macro-economic stability with the help of development partners to build a better future for the people of Pakistan. On the occasion, Christian Turner discussed the issues of mutual interest and assured the minister of the full support of the British government and its people to the government and people of Pakistan. He also felicitated the Finance Minister on assuming new responsibilities.

Abbasi appears before NAB

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi appeared on Monday before the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in a new inquiry regarding appointment of managing director of Pakistan Petroleum. He was handed a questionnaire consisting of 26 questions and is required to file his reply within two weeks. Ex-PM Shahid Khaqan Abbasi has been asked to explain his and Arshad Mirza's role in the appointment of Syed Wamiq Bokhari as the Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) managing director. The PML-N leader is further required to explain why services of a consultant were sought for the appointment. "Was Wamiq Bokhari not eligible for the top PPL post?" the NAB has asked Abbasi. The bureau questioned if the rules were relaxed for Bokhari's appointment. The corruption watchdog will decide whether to summon the former premier again or not after he files his reply. The inquiry pertains to alleged financial irregularities in the Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) and illegal appointment of Syed Wamiq Bokhari as its managing director.

Covid cases in US on the decline

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The rate of new coronavirus cases is declining in the United States, with the most recent seven-day averages dipping below the 60,000 mark for the first time in over a month, as experts hail the impact of inoculation of the masses. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that as of April 24, the rolling average was 57,123 cases, and a month-long mini bump was now over. It comes as the number of people vaccinated continued to rise, though the rate is beginning to taper off as domestic demand slows. Almost 140 million people have now received one dose or 42% of the whole population. Writing on Twitter, Ashish Jha, dean of Brown University School of Public Health, said he believed this time the decline would be permanent. "Because in mid-March when the last mini-surge began, 21% of the population had been vaccinated. Today, we're twice that." He said that 42% with one shot wasn't "enough," but added: "42% close to number at which we should see steady declines in infections. In Israel, once 45% of the population was fully vaccinated, case numbers started to plummet."

'No content in curriculum against minorities'

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, Special Aide to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Monday said, there is no content in the curriculum against minorities. Talking to visiting delegates of Ulema-Mashaykh of different religious schools of thought, he said the rights given to minorities by the Constitution of Pakistan and Islamic law cannot be disputed. Minority students have choice in curriculum to read the Islamic history and Islamic teachings in the curriculum, said Ashrafi adding that there is no content in the educational curriculum against the minorities and their respective sanctity. No one will be allowed to usurp the rights of minorities in the country, said Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi. He said that recommendations as put forward by the one-member minority commission have also been opposed by the National Minorities Commission. He further said that sentiments of Pakistanis on the prevailing situation of Coronavirus pandemic in India are in line with Islamic teachings.

Groundbreaking of S. Punjab secretariat a new beginning

DNA

MULTAN: Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday said that establishment of South Punjab secretariat was a step towards new beginning as now, the allocated development funds would be spent on the prosperity of the people of this neglected region. Addressing a groundbreaking ceremony of South Punjab Secretariat, the prime minister said that according to statistics, the area consisted of 33 per cent population of Punjab province, but in the past, it got only 17 per cent of the total budget allocation. Due to re-allocation of these uplift funds, about Rs260 billion losses incurred on these areas by the policies of the previous rulers of the province, he added.



The prime minister said they had also decided that South Punjab would get its due job quota according to its size and population. All the issues of the area would be resolved in the secretariat. He said "South Punjab secretariat is a historical event, a new beginning for South Punjab province and a transition." The ceremony was attended by Foreign Minister

Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, ministers Khusr-u Bakhtiar, Fakhar Imam, Zartaj Gul, provincial ministers and other high officials. Criticizing self-centered policies of former rulers of Takht-e-Lahore especially chief minister Shahbaz Sharif towards the South Punjab people, the prime minister shared that he had entered into politics after witnessing that a small segment, a ruling elite was enjoying all powers and impunity. "Laws have been different for them as they frequently indulged in corruption, deals and NROs. No law of the land was applicable on them. They lived in palatial houses abroad which they had purchased through money laundering," he added. The prime minister said these people had been living in posh areas of London where even a British minister could not afford to purchase a property. About the deprivation and poverty of South Punjab, the prime minister said he brought Chief Minister Usman Buzar so that he could implement his vision over the area. He wanted a person who preferred to live and die in Pakistan and understood the sufferings of common man and did not go to London on sojourns, he added. In a veiled reference to former ruling elite, the prime minister said they had been doing politics in Pakistan and making investment abroad. The prime minister said performance of a chief minister was judged on the basis of how much he had lifted the weaker segments of society and lauded chief minister Sardar Usman Buzdar for making efforts in this regard.

Pak Army patrol Lahore for SOPs enforcement

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Pakistan Army's troops patrolled Lahore roads along with police and district officials to ensure enforcement of COVID standard operating procedures (SOPs). COVID awareness messages were displayed on the vehicles of the troops patrolling the city. "Join hands in the fight against coronavirus," one of the awareness messages read. Stay safe and keep the country protected from the deadly pandemic. The troops of the Pakistan Army were called in to ensure strict adherence to the COVID SOPs. On Sunday, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed

had announced that deployment of the Pakistan Army to implement COVID standard operating procedures had been approved for three provinces except for Sindh. The interior minister had made the announcement in a video after he chaired a meeting on the COVID-19 situation and reviewed the deployment of armed forces in aid to civil administration. Rasheed had said that a notification for military deployment has been issued for three provinces, Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir after the prime minister announced the decision. "A decision on military deployment in Sindh is yet to be taken," he had added.

Pakistani workforce recruitment in Japan underway: Bukhari
Japanese Ambassador said as of today, above 30,000 Pakistanis were living and working in Japan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development Sayed Zulfikar Abbas Bukhari said on Monday that the country would soon start sending its skilled workforce to Japan under a government-to-government Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) as a recruitment process of many young workers in final stages. He revealed this while addressing the signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between the Overseas Employment Corporation (OEC) and Inter-SES. The partnership was meant to explore employment opportunities for Pakistani



manpower in Japan by reaching out to major Information Technology (IT) companies. The MoC was signed by OEC Managing Director Kashif Noor and Inter-SES Chief Executive Officer Zafar Mahmood in presence of SAMP Zulfikar Bukhari and Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan Kuninori Matsuda. He said after signing of this MoC, the Inter-SES and OEC would make joint efforts to find new and lucrative job

opportunities in Japan for qualified youth of Pakistan. Recruitment of 120 skilled workers, who had been imparted Japanese language by the ministry, was underway, he added. The SAPM said the chief aim of MoC was to boost footprint of Pakistani workforce in Japan through extensive marketing of the jobs' demand, emanating from Japanese companies, in Pakistan. Unfortunately, both the countries were devoid of linkages for human resource in the past, but now there was a Memorandum of Understanding between the two states for manpower export, he added. He said all-out efforts would be made to ensure presence of the Pakistani diaspora in Japan at par with the gulf countries as it had immense potential to meet the growing

employment needs of Pakistan. "Since Japan is an aging population and will be needing around 5,00,000 of workforce in future, it is our priority to fetch maximum quota for Pakistan out of this," Zulfikar Bukhari maintained. The SAPM said the ministry's prime focus for export of manpower to Japan was on IT sector as Pakistan had the best block chain developers in the world. The IT sector was not given due attention in the past which was 'very unfortunate', he added. He said the ministry was exploring new markets to create maximum job opportunities for Pakistani workforce in other than gulf countries. "We want to digress as a country and ministry and do not want to be heavily populated in one region."

UK urged to recognize Northern Cyprus

"Turkey will never give up or change its mind. It will continue probably increasingly to support the Turkish Cypriots"

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LONDON: The UK can assist a "historic opportunity" to end a decades-long stalemate in Cyprus by recognizing the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), the Turkish Cypriot president said. Speaking to British tabloid The Sunday Express, Ersin Tatar "urged Boris Johnson's government to get behind his plan for a two-state solution," which he will propose at the talks that are set to start in Geneva on April 27. Tatar said that "after Brexit freed Britain from the EU it can now fulfill its role as a neutral guarantor for the eastern Mediterranean island, ensuring that both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are treated in a balanced way." Citing sources in the British government, the daily said UK ministers are considering to officially recognize the TRNC as an "independent country". Resolving the longstanding dispute on the island would help around 300,000 Turkish Cypriots who live in the UK to seek direct flights to their country, the daily added. "With the developments in the eastern Mediterranean, the island has become even more valuable," Tatar told the daily. He said: "Turkey will never give

up or change its mind. It will continue probably increasingly to support the Turkish Cypriots." He said that a two-state plan is



now the only way forward and one which has the full backing of the Turkish government. "It is the facts on the ground," he added. "What we have at the moment is peaceful coexistence with two neighbouring states. "Different people, different language, different history, different culture. Therefore it was our true right to establish our own state which we did [in 1983]. "Since 1974 we have been separated. The young generation don't know one another. They have different language, culture and experiences. There have been so many bitter experiences that there is no hope for a federal relationship in

the future. "Therefore we demand that our state is recognised," he said, adding that he has held "positive talks" with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and Europe minister Wendy Morton. Tatar said: "My message is as a Turkish Cypriot, as an elected President, as a friend to the British people, I lived in England in 17 years, I went to school in East London, I went to Jesus College Cambridge, I graduated as an economist, then I worked with PwC as a chartered accountant. "I am a friend. And as a friend I am asking the British community to reconsider what did happen in Cyprus over all these years."