



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, May 05, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

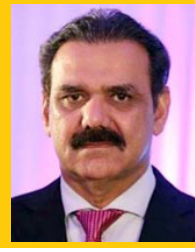
Price Rs. 20

**COAS Qamar Bajwa in Riyadh ahead of PM Imran's Saudi visit**

Detailed News On Page-

**Pakistan will never abandon CPEC: Bajwa**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Two ordinances approved for electoral reforms**

Detailed News On Page-01



Sehr & Iftar Timings

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:40 am	06:55 pm
FAISALABAD	03:47 am	06:51 pm
LAHORE	03:42 am	06:46 pm
KARACHI	04:29 am	07:05 pm
SARGODHA	03:47 am	06:54 pm

FIQA JAFARIA

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:30 am	07:05 pm
FAISALABAD	03:57 am	07:01 pm
LAHORE	03:52 am	06:56 pm
KARACHI	04:19 am	07:15 pm
SARGODHA	03:57 am	07:04 pm

## NA-249: ECP accepts vote recount plea

The recounting would be conducted of all the polling stations in the constituency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has accepted PML-N candidate Miftah Ismail's request for a recount in the NA-249 by-poll. The ECP, in a statement, directed all the political parties to reach the office of Returning Officer at 9:00am on May 6 where the recounting would be held. The recounting would be conducted of all the polling stations in the constituency. Ismail had written a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, seeking a vote recount in NA-249 after he lost the poll by 683 votes. PPP's Qadir Khan Mandokhel had pulled off a surprising victory in the April 29 election. The PML-N had also requested the ECP to conduct a forensic audit of the votes in the NA-249 constituency. In his letter, Ismail had mentioned that presiding officers from 34 polling stations did not WhatsApp the results. Ismail had said that the party "did not receive results from more than 30 polling stations". He had also claimed that many Form 45s were not signed and that the counting of votes on the Form 45 given to the party is different from the forms issued by the returning officer (RO), which were not provided to them. A four-member bench headed by the CEC heard Ismail's request for a recount, in which Latif Khosa from PPP and Salman Akram Raja from PML-N argued. During the hearing, PML-N lawyer Salman Akram Raja presented Form 45 to the commission and said that under the law, a signed Form 45 must be given to every polling agent. "At 167 polling stations, Form 45 was not signed by any polling agent. Not a single Form 46 has been issued to us and none of them were signed. Something happened with Form 45 and Form 46 after polling ended."

Continued on Page 06

## Shehbaz, Maryam delighted over ECP decision

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif and Vice President Maryam Nawaz said that they were happy to learn that PML-N's demand for a vote recount in NA-249 has been accepted. In a tweet uploaded on Tuesday, the Opposition Leader in the National Assembly said that the narrow difference in votes of the top contestants necessitated this in the interest of transparency. Shehbaz stressed, "Credibility of vote is a sure foundation of democracy." It may be mentioned here that the Election Commission of Pakistan has ordered a vote recount in the NA-249 by-election. The ECP also ordered all parties to reach the Returning Officer's office in Karachi on May 6 at 9am for the vote recount. PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz also tweeted, "Alhamdulillah we got a recount and we hope to win Insha'Allah but even if we don't, we will not relent and try all we can till we get our stolen votes and seat back. Will fight tooth and nail for the right of people of NA-249." Senator Musadik Malik congratulating PML-N candidate Miftah Ismail said, "The ECP orders a recount. Many congratulations to all, especially to Miftah. Does this decision now indicate what happened in the elections." He tweeted, "NA 249: Form 45 is the official summary of the polling results, required by the law to be signed by each polling agent. The signs confirm that the results are verified. Otherwise, as is the case here, one can issue Form 45, and subsequently stuff the polling boxes accordingly."



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of federal cabinet in Islamabad. - DNA

## Electoral reforms: Two ordinances approved

The Information Minister said the Covid SOPs are not being implemented in letter and spirit in Karachi

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said that the Federal Cabinet has approved two ordinances as part of electoral reforms to ensure transparency in elections. He was briefing media about the decisions taken in the Federal Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad Tuesday. The Minister said one ordinance will enable the



Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain speaking at a podium during a briefing in Islamabad Tuesday.

while the other empowers the ECP to take steps to give the overseas Pakistanis right to franchise. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the government's electoral reforms consist of four parts, including EVMs, e-voting for overseas Pakistanis, Biometric and Legislation. He said EVMs have been developed and the government has unveiled its legislation agenda for the purpose.

Continued on Page 06

## Briefs

### No 'visibility' of vaccine from Germany

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan does not have "any visibility" of 15 million coronavirus vaccine doses that Germany promised to provide by May, Dr Faisal Sultan, adviser to the prime minister on health affairs said on Tuesday. "We don't have any visibility of this delivery at this point," Dr Faisal told Anadolu Agency in a brief message. Germany agreed to provide the jobs to Islamabad during Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's visit last month. The 15 million doses were to be delivered by May under the COVAX facility, an initiative backed by the World Health Organization that aims to ensure equitable provision of COVID-19 vaccines, Qureshi said on Twitter after meeting his counterpart Heiko Maas in Berlin on April 13.

### 'Stealing elections must stop'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) senior leader Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Tuesday said the practice of stealing elections and lodging false cases should be stopped. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi talked to media in Islamabad and said the country should be run according to the constitution and there will be no need for electoral reforms. He said electronic voting machines will create more ambiguity. The PML-N leader said Prime Minister Imran Khan visited empty markets. He said the treatment of govt officials with an officer was witnessed by all and they should ask for forgiveness as the employees are not their personal servants.

## India violates ceasefire agreement after 2 months

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: India has violated the ceasefire along the Working Boundary, the first time since the two countries agreed to restore the truce on February 25, the Foreign Office confirmed on Tuesday. The Indian Border Security Force (BSF) violated the ceasefire at the Charwa Sector of the Working Boundary on Monday, foreign office spokesperson Zahid Hafiz Chaudhri said. The spokesperson confirmed that the Indian Charge d'Affaires was called to the Foreign Office to lodge a protest against the violation. "The Indian side was reminded of its obligation to respect the ceasefire understanding," he added. But unlike the past, the

## "An Indian diplomat was called to the Foreign Office to lodge a protest against the violation"

foreign office tried to downplay the incident as no formal statement was issued. Instead, the spokesperson responded to media queries. Tensions between Pakistan and India have eased considerably along the LoC after the two countries decided to honour the 2003 ceasefire understanding in February. Since then, the LoC and the border remain calm as there has not been a single incident of ceasefire violation until the latest one. The truce violation at the Working Boundary caused no casualties. The de-escalation in tensions were attributed to backchannel talks between the senior intelligence officials of Pakistan and India. The backchannel talks were confirmed by a high official in a recent interaction with journalists. But retired diplomats and generals warned against being too optimistic about these contacts as New Delhi has yet to give any positive signal. Pakistan is hoping that Modi government would take steps, particularly with regard to the situation in Occupied Kashmir in order to create a conducive environment for further engagement. Tensions between the two countries had been simmering after India revoked the special status of the disputed territory of Kashmir.

## COAS reaches Saudi Arabia

ZAHEER BHATTI

RIYADH: Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa has reached Saudi Arabia on official visit. According to the DG ISPR, COAS will meet Saudi Arabia's civil military leadership during the visit. It is pertinent to mention here that Prime Minister Imran Khan will visit Saudi Arabia this week in a crucial trip that suggests a thaw in ties between the two countries which were marred by differences on certain regional issues. "I can confirm that Prime Minister Imran Khan will be undertaking an official visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman, early next month. Further details of the visit will be shared in due course," the Foreign Office spokesperson told reporters here on Thursday. The army chief was received by Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Lt-Gen (ret) Bilal Akbar and Saudi military officials.

## NCOC forms monitoring teams to ensure SOPs

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Tuesday decided to form monitoring teams at federal, provincial, and district levels to ensure the implementation of coronavirus SOPs from May 8-16. The NCOC, in a statement,

said the development came during a meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar and co-chaired by National Coordinator Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman Khan. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan was also present at the meeting.

During this period, all businesses and shops will remain closed with few exceptions like food outlets, grocery stores, pharmacies, petrol pumps and bakeries etc., the forum said, adding it was informed that there would be a complete ban on tourism for both locals and outsiders.

Continued on Page 06

## Inside...

- DC urges ACs to present during vegetables bidding process - Page 02
- ICCI, UKPBC sign agreement to promote Pak-UK trade ties - Page 03
- PARC signs three projects with RDA, Korea - Page 04
- China's Xinjiang & baseless Western propaganda - Page 05
- India's IPL cricket suspended indefinitely over coronavirus - Page 06
- Hatred behind Armenia's destructions in Karabakh - Page 07
- Azerbaijani graduate marries Pakistani student in Baku - Page 08

## Lockdown urged as India's Covid-19 cases cross 20 million

United States stops all kinds of air traffic from India; Rahul Gandhi calls for complete lockdown across country

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi called for a nationwide lockdown as the country's tally of coronavirus infections surged past 20 million on Tuesday, becoming the second nation after the United States to pass the grim milestone. India's deadly second wave of infections, the world's biggest surge in coronavirus infections, has seen it take just over four months to add 10 million cases, versus more than 10

### Desperate hospitals turn to courts

NEW DELHI: A court in India's capital New Delhi has become the last hope for many hospitals struggling to get oxygen for COVID-19 patients as supplies run dangerously short while government officials bicker over who is responsible. A two-judge bench of the Delhi High Court has been holding almost daily video conferences to hear petitions from hospitals invoking India's constitutional right to protection of life. Local and federal officials are attending. The court's intervention has saved lives, lawyers say. On Sunday, with just 30 minutes of oxygen left for 42 virus patients at Sitaram Bhatia hospital, and new supplies nowhere in sight, hospital authorities approached the Delhi court as a "last resort" for help, lawyer Shyel Trehan said. The judges ordered the Delhi state government to immediately arrange supplies. "Oxygen cylinders arrived soon after the hearing, and a tank arrived a few hours later," Ms Trehan said. - DNA

months for its first 10 million. Currently, the country has 3.45 million active cases. On Tuesday, India reported 357,229 new cases over the last 24 hours, while deaths rose 3,449 for a toll of 222,408, health ministry data showed. Medical experts say actual numbers in India could be five to 10 times higher than those reported. "The only way to stop the spread of the coronavirus now is a full lockdown [...] GOI's inaction is killing many innocent people,"

Continued on Page 06

Estd. 1860

**MURREE BREWERY**  
ISO 9001, 14001, HACCP & OHSAS Certified Company

**BiGG Family for a Family Feast!**

**FUN KA MAZA - YOUR ULTIMATE CHOICE**

f murreebrewerycompany www.murreebrewery.com



## Briefs

## VC gives 2 girls in marriage by force

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ALIPUR: A local Panchayat (village council) has given two underage orphan girls into marriage over purported illicit relation of their brother with a girl. "The head of the panchayat (Sarpanch) attacked the house of a widow with 10 armed men and beaten the family members," according to a report. The panchayat head arranged to solemnize Nikah of 10-year Zehra with Wajid and eight-year Sajida with Majid, report said. Kundai police station on the report of the incident conducted raids and recovered the minor girls given in Nikah. The Sarpanch has been arrested along with another accused, police said. Police has also conducted raid at the house of the Nikahkhan, who solemnized the marriage. District Police Officer (DPO) Muzafgarh, Yousuf Haroon, has been ordered to initiate investigation of the incident. In several parts of Pakistan, village councils an organ of traditional justice system, used to punish a man's omission or commission by giving the girls' of that family, even underage, to the men of the aggrieved family in Nikah as 'compensation'. Underage and forced marriage is a crime by law.

## Ferozsons Laboratories salutes healthcare heroes

DNA

KARACHI: To honour the selfless efforts and sacrifices made by doctors, nurses, paramedics and frontline health workers during the ongoing pandemic, Ferozsons Laboratories Limited, a leading pharmaceutical company, launched a nationwide initiative to turn three iconic monuments - Faisal Mosque, the Lahore Fort, and Frere Hall - into beacons of blue light on 4th and 5th May. The activity took place with the collaboration and generous support of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA), Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), as well as the Ministry of Interior. The initiative aimed to pay tribute to the healthcare community, the unsung heroes of the pandemic. Representing all those who bravely battled the pandemic and lost their lives in service of their patients, Management of Ferozsons Laboratories, Government Officials and Family Members of Doctors initiated the illumination of the monuments by lighting candles in memory of their loved ones. Speaking on the occasion, CEO of Ferozsons Laboratories Limited, Mr. Osman Khalid Waheed, said "We are all indebted to doctors and frontline health workers everywhere, who risk their own lives every day to put patients first. This initiative aims to show these true heroes the nation's gratitude and support." In Karachi, Mr. Laeeq Ahmad, Administrator of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC), on the lighting of Frere Hall, said "We must never forget the workers at the frontline. Every day is a struggle for them and by lighting up Frere Hall, we want to tell them that we see them, and we stand with them."

## Four drug peddlers held with narcotics

SARGODHA: Police claimed on Tuesday to have arrested four drug peddlers and recovered narcotics from their possession. The teams of different police stations conducted raids within their jurisdiction and arrested 4 accused and recovered 3.25 kg hashish, 20 liters liquor and 2 pistols 30 bore from them. The accused were identified as Gulzar, Younis Maseeh, Rafique and Ramzan. Cases have been registered against the accused. - APP

## DC urges ACs to monitor vegetables bidding process

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has said that the bidding process in the vegetable markets is being monitored continuously to pass on the benefits of the marked reduction in the prices of vegetables. He visited vegetable Market GM abad and inspected the bidding process of vegetables. He visited various sheds and checked the bidding procedure and also checked the record of supply of vegetables and fruits. He urged the Assistant commissioners to be present during the bidding process in the vegetable markets and ensure that the fruits of reduction in quotas are reaped by the common man. He also reviewed the cleanliness situation in the vegetable markets while directed to implementation of Corona



SOPs in letter and spirit. He checked the security

arrangements in the vegetable market and direct

ed to make them more strengthened.

34 shopping malls, restaurants sealed

The district administration has sealed another 24 shopping malls, 5 restaurants, 4 grocery shops and a private office and arrested 20 people besides imposing a fine of Rs 126,500 on charge of violation of anti-coronavirus SOPs and lockdown during last 24 hours.

A spokesperson of district administration said that during last 50 days, 1,041 shopping malls, 314 restaurants, 44 marriage halls, 113 private schools, 4 grocery shops, a private office were sealed while 79 public vehicles were impounded.

The administration also arrested 211 people for not wearing face mask besides imposing a fine of 2.4 million on violators. He said that anti-coronavirus SOPs were being implemented in true letter and spirit in district by taking strict action against violators.



PESHAWAR: Director General Khana Farhang Iran Mehran Sikandaryan and PTI MPA Rabia Basri in a group photo with other participants at the end of Baitul Muqdas painting competition held at Khana e Farhang Iran in connection with Int'l day of Al Quds. - DNA

## New examples of public service being set by PTI govt: CM

CM said the government would continue to introduce institutional reforms under the leadership of Imran Khan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said new examples of public service have been set by the PTI government as no corruption scandal was surfaced during the two-and-a-half years tenure. Talking to parliamentarians at his office, the CM said the government would continue to introduce institutional reforms under the

leadership of PM Imran Khan. Each day started with a new corruption story in the past and resources were mercilessly employed for personal projection by the past rulers, he regretted and indicated that not a single scandal of the incumbent government had surfaced. The past rulers mercilessly squandered public money and people faced the consequences of maladministration, he

added. He said the resistance to the electronic voting system showed fears of the gang remain involved in rigging. The former rulers were opposing transparent elections as it would put an end to their political career, he added. Rigging was their strategy while the electronic voting system will ensure electoral transparency and no one would raise a finger at electoral results, added the CM.

Those who met the Chief Minister include Special Assistant to the PM on Food Security Jamshed Iqbal Cheema, Provincial Livestock Minister Sardar Hasnain Bahadur Dareshk, MNAs Raja Riaz Ahmed, Haji Imtiaz Ahmed and MPAs Shahab Uddin Khan, Adil Pervaiz, Abdul Rehman Khan, Malik Asad Khokhar, Tariq Tarar, Rai Hassan Nawaz and Tahir Bashir Cheema.

## Firdous, chief secretary stick to their guns

DNA

LAHORE: Both Special Assistant to CM Punjab Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan and Punjab Chief Secretary Jawad Rafiq have stuck to their guns, refusing to budge from their position. Both Dr Firdous and Chief Secretary Rafiq called on Chief Minister Usman Buzdar on Tuesday and explained their respective positions on the matter of Dr Firdous' harsh behaviour towards assistant commissioner Sialkot Sonia Sadaf. The chief secretary in his meeting with the Punjab CM expressed his dis-

pleasure over the attitude of Dr Firdous saying it was very disrespectful to use foul language against a government official in public. He said AC Sadaf and other administrative staff were working day and night in hot weather. "Using abusive language against any government officer or staff is immoral and I vehemently oppose it," said the chief secretary. He said assistant commissioners were appointed with the consultation of the chief minister himself. He told the chief minister that he must have heard the language which Dr Firdous had used against AC Sadaf.

## Commissioner orders for all arrangements to tackle expected floods

MAHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: Commissioner Sargodha Farah Masood has directed the deputy commissioners of the four districts and the officers of the Irrigation Department to complete all arrangements to tackle the expected floods before the start of monsoon season. She was addressing a meeting, called to discuss a plan for dealing with the possible flood hazards, here on Tuesday at her office. Chief Engineer Canals Chaudhry Ghulam Murtaza, Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Naila Baqir, Deputy Commis-

sioner Mianwali Umar Sher Chatha, Deputy Commissioner Bhakkar Syed Musa Raza, Additional Commissioner Shahbaz Hussain Naqvi and other officers attended the meeting. She said that a detailed report should be prepared by re-surveying the embankments of rivers, canals and watercourses and ongoing development projects should be completed on time. The commissioner said that desilting of all watercourses should be done on time while Rescue-1122, Civil Defence and other civil agencies should conduct mock exercises in that regard.



QUETTA: Yar Mohammad Rind, SAPM presenting a bouquet to Ambassador of China Nong Rong. - DNA

## Rs 1 bln needed to operate PSM oxygen plant

DNA

KARACHI: Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday announced that the oxygen plant at Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM) could be made operational in three months with an amount of Rs 1 billion. The chief minister during his meeting with renowned doctors in the province for devising a strategy on COVID situation said that the provincial government will look into the oxygen plant. "We are ready to spend Rs1 billion for making the Steel Mill oxygen plant operational," he said adding that with rising COVID cases, the country especially the province would need oxygen supplies.

The meeting was attended by provincial ministers, Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Nasir Shah, Advisor Murtaz, Chief secretary Mumtaz Shah, PSCM Sajid Jamal Abro, VC Dow Dr Saeed Qureshi, Dr Bari, Dr Faisal, Dr Shehla Baqi, Executive Director Dr Seemin Jamali, Dr Nusrat Shah, DR Ra- qiq Khokhar, Dr Qaiser Sajjad, Dr Ghaffar Shoro, Dr Sharif Hashmi, Dr Qazi Wasiq, Dr Anoop, Dr Faisal Mahmood, Dr Sabir Memon, Dr Abdul Bari and others. AT the outset of the meeting the chief minister said that the new wave of coronavirus has badly affected various major cities of Pakistan. "We are also facing its severity and trying to take measures whatever seems to be feasible to control the situation," he said and added the

purpose of meeting with the leading doctors was to review the situation and firm up the recommendations for containing the virus. The doctors appreciated the preparatory efforts of the chief minister right from the first wave and said the establishment of Infectious Disease Hospital in Karachi, provision of ventilators to every district and recruitment of doc-

tors and para-medical staff were commendable. They urged the chief minister to make necessary arrangements for production of oxygen.

"When timely oxygen is given to a patient his changes to go to the ventilators are reduced," Dr Qaiser Sajjad said and added the provincial government should take necessary measures to operationalize oxygen plants of Pakistan steel mills. The chief minister said that a team of the federal government had visited Pakistan Steel Mill plant and reported that it could not be revived.

"We held a meeting with the people of Pakistan Steel Mills at Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto and they told us that it could be revived within three month at a cost of Rs1 billion," he said and

added he would send his expert team to visit the plant and if it was worth to revive the provincial government was ready to spend Rs1 billion. "We need oxygen for which we would take all our efforts," he vowed.

The doctors suggested the government to strictly enforce implementation of COVID SOPs. "At present the situation in Sindh is not as bad it is in other provinces but our Hyderabad, East and South have been affected badly," he pointed out. The chief minister said that he has directed administration and the police to work in close coordination and ensure proper implementation of the SOPs. He added that the Karachi administration on Monday issued 93 warnings for non-wearing of masks.

## Yaum-i-Ali (R.A) observed peacefully

HYDERABAD: Yaum-i-Ali (R.A) was observed with devotion and reverence here in Hyderabad on Tuesday to pay tribute to the fourth Caliph of Islam on the day of his martyrdom under strict observance of coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs). In order to contain the spread of COVID-19, National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) had imposed a ban on processions for observance of Yaum-i-Ali (R.A) while district administration also adopted strict security measures to maintain law and order situation. Senior Superintendent of Police Abdul Salam Shaikh along with ASP City Aleena Rajpar visited Qadam Gah to Qarbala Dadan Shah route of the central mourning procession and held meeting with leaders of Anjuman Haideri Nawaz Bhutto, Raza Irani and others and stressed them to ensure strict implementation of coronavirus related SOPs.

All the participants of the mourning procession should maintain social distancing, wear face masks and use sanitizers for their safety against COVID-19, the SSP stressed. Meanwhile, the main mourning procession was taken out from Karabala Dadan Shah amid strict adherence to COVID SOPs which culminated at Qadam Gah Moula Ali (R.A) at Maghrib prayer where Iftar was served to the mourners. A Majlis was also held at Qadam Gah Moula Ali (R.A) to highlight contribution of Hazarat Ali (R.A) in promoting Islam. The contingents of Police, Rangers and other law enforcement agencies were deployed at the procession route to provide foolproof security to the mourners. - APP

## 3 cops booked over escape of arrested dacoit

DNA

FAISALABAD: Three police officials were booked on charge of their negligence and escape of arrested dacoit from their custody. Police said here on Tuesday that SHO Ghazanfar Javid, FIEDMC police station had arrested three persons including Suleman r/o chak 159-RB, Abrar Masih r/o chak 48-RB from a house in Chak No.159-RB on charge of their involvement in a dacoity case. The SHO handed over these accused to head constable Tariq Ejaz, constable Faiz Rasool and constable (driver) Faryad Husain who were carrying them to police station but on the way the arrested accused managed to escape from the police van. Therefore, FIEDMC police on complaint of SHO Ghazanfar Javid registered a case against three officials on charge of their negligence and escape of arrested accused. Further investigation was under way.

## WASA plans to install 24MW solar power plant

FAISALABAD: Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) has prepared a plan for the installation of a 24MW solar power plant near Chakera on Narrwala Road here. The installation of solar power plant will help save money in the head of bills, said Wasa vice chairman Sheikh Shahid Javed. After presiding over a meeting of the governing body of FDA and WASA here Tuesday, he said that anti-encroachment operation was in full swing in the city which was bearing fruitful results. He said the WASA had so far retrieved state land worth Rs 3 billion from illegal occupants and the land would be utilized for water supply and improvement of sewerage system. WASA Managing Director Jabbar Anwar said that feasibility for installation of 24 MW solar plant with an estimated cost of Rs 4 billion had been prepared. - APP



## Briefs

### Motorway police bans Private bus service

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: The National Highways and Motorway Police on Tuesday banned the entry of the buses of the private bus company on all motorways of the country on the charges of reckless driving claimed 12 precious lives and injury of over twenty passengers. The decision was made by Inspector General (IG) National Highways and Motorway Police Ishfaq Ahmed who paid visit to the site of the accident.

According to spokesman of National Highways and Motorway Police, the ban was made accordance with rule NHSO-45 and MVR (10) 35 of motor vehicle ordinance 1969. The spokesman said that National Highways and Motorway Police Chief has also ordered strict legal action against the bus company which poor crew has led to loss of 12 previous lives including a toddler.

A help desk was also established at National Highways and Motorway Police camp Burhan to provide assistance to the family members of the injured and deceased and handing over them belongings of the ill-fated passengers of the bus which met accident on Monday evening at Islamabad-Peshawar motorway (M-) near Burhan.

The Motorway Police Spokesperson Saqib Waheed further said that the patrolling staff which has carried out rescue operation also returned a sum of Rs 1.20 million to one of the injured of the bus accident who has lost the money after the accident.

### 14,023 people get Covid jabs

RAWALPINDI: As many as 14,023 vaccine doses were administered in the past 24 hours for the first time since the drive began on March 10, the total district tally of coronavirus vaccination reached 126,339 here on Tuesday.

According to the daily situation report issued by the District Corona Management center, 17,351 front line workers while 108,988 other people including senior citizens have received the doses of the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine so far. District Health Coordinator for Coronavirus management Dr. Jawad Zahid informed that the district health authority has registered 120 new infections during the last 24 hours, rising the tally of confirmed cases to 24,261 in the district. He said that out of the total positive cases 22,390 belonged to Rawalpindi while 1871 to other districts. The health officer told that 21,866 patients were discharged after recovery while 3196 including 1879 were quarantined at homes and 1317 in isolation. - APP

### Schools, malls, fined for violating SOPs

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Syed Gulzar Hussain Shah Tuesday urged the public to strictly adhere to COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in the wake of the increasing number of infections during the third wave of COVID-19. Chairing a meeting of reinforcing SOPs committee, he said the implementation of SOPs was essential to prevent the spread of the coronavirus and the district administration was taking action against the perpetrators without any discrimination while arrests and fines were being carried out on a daily basis. Sharing details, Gulzar said that a total of 37 Masjid/seminaries, 8 shrines and 13 private sector offices were inspected during the last 24 hours. Similarly, 17 education centers were checked out of which 2 were sealed on violation of COVID-19 SOPs issued by the government.

# ICCI, UKPBC sign agreement to promote Pak-UK trade ties

Both will also work in close collaboration with their respective governments to further enhance business linkages between the private sectors of both countries

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and UK Pakistan Business Council (Pakistan Chapter) (UKPBC) have signed an agreement of cooperation to work jointly for further improving bilateral trade and economic relations between Pakistan and UK. For this purpose, a ceremony was held at Chamber House in which Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President ICCI and Khurshheed Barlas, President UKPBC Pakistan signed the MoU. By signing the agreement, ICCI and UKPBC have agreed to work together for organizing an investment conference on Pakistan in the UK in the summer season this year to highlight the investment potential available in various sectors of Pakistan's economy including SEZ in order to attract more investors from the UK including overseas Pakistanis to Pakistan. Both will also work in close collaboration with their respective governments to further enhance business linkages between the private



sectors of both countries. They will work jointly to enhance bilateral cooperation between their respective members in order to explore new avenues of promoting bilateral

trade and economic relations between Pakistan and the UK. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce &

Industry said that Pakistan and UK have the potential to increase their bilateral trade from current £ 3 billion to £ 10 billion by developing direct connectivity between their

private sectors. He said that close cooperation of UK companies with Pakistani counterparts would help in producing value added products and improving our exports. He said that ICCI and UKPBC will work together to foster greater business linkages between the member companies of both trade bodies in order to explore new opportunities of trade promotion, JVs and investment. He said that both sides shall provide regular support to each other and exchange information on business and investment opportunities so that the business community of both sides could take benefit of all potential business opportunities. Khurshheed Barlas, President, UK Pakistan Business Council said that the UKPBC with an organizational chapter in Pakistan was a developing organization building stronger business relations between Pakistan and UK. He said that UKPBC in cooperation with ICCI would make strong efforts to achieve the objectives and goals envisaged in the agreement for the mutual benefit of business communities of both countries.

## Third wave a challenge to growing economy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Owing to timely and prudent policies of the incumbent government, the country's economy had been showing signs of recovery, with construction and manufacturing sectors in lead, however, the economic revival had once again been pitched against the stronger than ever third wave of Covid-19, official sources said on Tuesday.

The economy had registered positive signs during first nine months of financial year (FY) 2020-21 as indicated by various economic indicators. The remittances grew by 26.2% from July 2020 to March, 2021 while the revenue collection by the Federal Board of Revenue grew by 10.9% to reach Rs3.4 trillion in the first three quarters of the current financial year, according to the official data. The careful expenditure management and effective resource mobilization helped in containing the fiscal deficit within reasonable limit while primary balance continued to remain in surplus. Likewise, the large scale manufacturing exhibited 7.5% growth during July-February, FY 2021 compared to negative 2.8 percent last year. Cement sector registered 17 percent growth during July-March, FY 2021 with 100 percent capacity utilization; significant increase in sale of cars, motorbikes and tractors signifies that economic revival was taking place. The country recently launched triple-tranche Euro bonds raising USD\$ 2.5 billion while on other side, the overall liquid foreign currency reserves reached at \$23 billion, which helped in building the valuable foreign exchange reserves. The sources said in order to control inflation, the government had adopted a policy of close monitoring of the supply and demand side of essential food items as well as providing essential commodities at affordable prices through the support of assisting mechanisms like Utility Stores, Sasta Bazaars and providing subsidies on essential food items like sugar, wheat flour, vegetable oil etcetera.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus Andrei Metelitsa met with Dr. Muhammad Tariq, Additional Secretary (Europe) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan. - DNA

## Kazak delegation completes Urdu certificate at NUML

The Rector NUML while speaking on this occasion encouraged the students and expressed hope that they would act as ambassadors of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A graceful Certificate distribution ceremony was arranged for the students of Kazakhstan who successfully completed a four-week Special Certificate Course, organized by the Department of Urdu, Faculty of Languages, National University of Modern Languages (NUML). Rector NUML Major General Muhammad Jaffar HI (M) (Retd) graced the ceremony as chief guest while Director General NUML/Pro-Rector Resources & Planning Brig Muhammad Badr Malik, Pro-Rector Academics Dr. Safer Awan, Dean Faculty of Languages, Dr. Shahid Siddique, Director Administration Brig (R) Ahmad Salman, HoD and faculty members of Urdu Department also attended the event. The Rector NUML while speaking on this occasion encouraged the students and expressed hope that they would act as ambassadors of Pakistan. The Rector also appreciated the Faculty of Languages and the Department of Urdu for putting together a successful course. He also distributed certificates and souvenirs among the participants. The course was coordinated by Professor Sofia Lodhi and was taught by the senior faculty members of the department. - DNA

## Kamyab Jawan collaborates with Huawei

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Kamyab Jawan Programme and Huawei Technologies Pakistan have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Tuesday for mutual cooperation towards youth development in the country. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar and VP Middle East Huawei Technologies Spacelee witnessed the MoU signing ceremony here at the PM office, a news release said. Officials of the Prime Minister's Office, Deputy Chief Executive Officer Wuhan, Deputy CEO Huawei Pakistan Ahmed Bilal Masood and Director Huawei Jehanzeb Malik were also present during the signing ceremony.

## Session Courts designated as anti-rape special courts

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan promulgated the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial) Ordinance, 2020 on 17th December, 2020 whereunder designation of Special Courts throughout Pakistan was envisaged for effective prosecution/trial and expeditious disposal of scheduled offences specified in the said Ordinance. The Ministry of Law & Justice under section 15 of the Ordinance had constituted a Special Committee under the chairmanship of Barister Maleeka Ali Bokhari, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice. This Special Committee was overseeing the implementation of the said law. According to the press release issued by MoL&J here on Tuesday, the said

committee being well cognizant of the significance of the mandate of the Ordinance and need for speedy redressal of rape and cases involving sexual offences has not left any stone unturned in achieving the same. After the promulgation of said Ordinance, the Ministry of Law & Justice upon directions of Parliamentary Secretary of Law & Justice wrote to the Chief Justice of Pakistan for designation of Courts of Session Judges throughout Pakistan as Special Courts under Anti-Rape (Investigation & Trial) Ordinance, 2020. The Chief Justice of Pakistan was kind enough/pleased to approve the designation of all courts of Session Judges as Anti-Rape Special Courts throughout Pakistan under Anti-Rape (Investigation & Trial) Ordinance, 2020.

Thereupon, under the direction of chairperson of Special Committee a summary was prepared by Ministry of Law and Justice for the consideration of President of Pakistan, who was empowered under the said law to designate the Anti-Rape Special Courts throughout Pakistan provided prior consultation with the CJP was held. The summary for the President of Pakistan was routed through the office of PM. The summary stated that it was a rudimentary principle of law that "if law required a thing/act to be done/performed in a certain manner, then that thing would only be done in that manner and not otherwise." There was an elaborate mechanism devised for the passage of summaries in the corpus juris of Pakistan where numerous codal formalities are to be fulfilled.

## Former CNS Admiral Karamat Niazi laid to rest

The Admiral had an illustrious naval career spanning over four decades. He has the unique honor of being the first Commanding Officer of Pakistan's first Submarine GHAZI

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Former Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Karamat Rehman Niazi was laid to rest in Islamabad. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi beside former Naval Chiefs, retired & serving Tri-Services officials and civilians participated in late Admiral's funeral prayers. The Admiral had an illustrious naval career spanning over four decades. He has the unique honor of being the first Commanding Officer of Pakistan's first Submarine GHAZI, remained pioneer Commander of Submarines Squadron and Director of Submarine Operations. The Admiral was one of the valiant war veterans who saw action in both 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak Wars. During the war of 1965, the Admiral was commanding maiden Pakistani submarine

GHAZI and under his bold and able leadership, GHAZI kept the entire Indian Fleet confined in its harbor. Not only this naval action infused fear in the enemy lines but provided significant strategic

leverage to Pakistan. The Admiral in all his professional pursuits exhibited dynamic leadership skills, impeccable moral strength, extraordinary professional competence and highest sense of responsibility.

Admiral Karamat Rehman Niazi joined Royal Pakistan Navy in November 1948 and completed his initial training from Britannia Royal Naval College Dartmouth, UK. He

was a graduate of National Defence College, Pakistan. In March 1979, he was appointed as 8th Naval Chief of Pakistan Navy. The Admiral had dynamic and distinguished career encompassing various Command and Staff assignments, both afloat and ashore including Commander Submarines, Commander 25th Destroyer Squadron and Commander Pakistan Fleet. He also served as Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) and Vice Chief of Naval Staff. In recognition of his military valour, meritorious services and outstanding performance, the Admiral was awarded Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) and Sitara-e-Jurat. Floral wreath was laid by Chief of the Naval Staff on Admiral's grave. Beside, floral wreaths on behalf of President of Pakistan, Prime Minister, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Senior Naval Officers and notable Civilian were also laid on the grave.



## IRSA releases 151,700 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 151,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 157,600 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1399.23 feet, which was 15.23 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 43,900 and 45,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1105.30 feet, which was 65.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 57,000 and 50,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 71,600, 33,700 and 15,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 38,600 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 4,000 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

## Hot, dry weather likely to persist in most parts

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (MET) Tuesday forecast hot and dry weather in most plain areas of the country during next 24 hours. While gusty winds with rain-wind-thunderstorm are expected in Islamabad, Punjab, Northern Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, MET office reported. Continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country. Weak moist currents are reaching western and upper parts of the country. Maximum temperature's recorded in (°C): Shaheed Benazirabad 43, Mohejo-Daro, Dadu, Rahim Yar Khan, Larkana, Jacobabad 42, Mithi, Noorpurthal, Sargodha, Sibbi and Padidan 41. - APP



## Briefs

## RPO pin badges to promoted Inspectors

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer Imran Ahmar on Tuesday pinned the badges to Inspectors over their promotion in the next ranks. The officers were promoted to the rank of DSP.

A ceremony was held at Regional Police Office and RPO formally pinned badges to the promoted officials. The services of the promoted Inspector Abdul Jabbar have been handed over to the Additional IG Special Branch while among the other inspectors of Rawalpindi region, Inspector Azhar Mahmood Aslam has been posted as DSP Investigation while Inspector Zafar Shakeel has been posted as DSP Headquarters Rawalpindi.

RPO congratulated the police officer and hoped for their best contribution towards effective policing. Now your responsibilities have been further enhanced. We have to make it our motto to serve the people and provide immediate justice while performing our duties with utmost diligence and honesty, RPO added.

## Rescue 1122 playing a vital role in emergencies

STAFF REPORT

ATTOCK: MPA Malik Jamshed Altaf has said that Rescue 1122 is playing a vital role in helping the humanity during all type of emergencies and we cannot pay them back for the services being provided by this department.

He said this after inaugurating new building of Rescue 1122 Jand. On the occasion AC Jand Ejaz Abdul Karim, DEO Dr. Ashfaq Mian, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Jand Farhat Khan, DMS Dr. Neelam Chaudhry and Rescue staff was also present. MPA Jamshed Altaf said that rescue 1122 service is a great gift for the people of Tehsil Jand and said that for emergency services two ambulances, a fire vehicle will be available round the clock for attending road accidents, medical emergencies and fire services DEO Dr. Ashfaq Mian, AC Jand Ejaz Abdul Karim and Chief Officer Farhat Khan also spoke on the occasion.

## Islamabad registers decline in Covid

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The federal capital city has registered gradual decline in new cases of Covid-19. Health Officer (DHO) Islamabad Dr. Zaem Zia has stated that 283 new cases reported in the capital territory in 24 hours, which is minimum in last 10 days.

The ratio of positive cases in the city has been recorded 7.87 percent in last 24 hours. In the said time 3,596 tests were conducted in Islamabad. Two patients of Covid-19 were died in the city in last 24 hours, the health official said.

DHO Islamabad termed the coronavirus situation stable in Islamabad, adding that "it will be premature to give a final opinion over the decline in coronavirus cases." Thus far, Islamabad has reported 76,492 Covid-19 cases.

While Punjab has reported 308,529, Sindh 286,521, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 120,590, Balochistan 22,664, Azad Jammu and Kashmir 17,397 and Gilgit Baltistan 5,330 cases. The novel coronavirus has claimed 161 more lives across Pakistan over the previous 24 hours, taking the death toll from the disease to 18,310.

According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO), 3,377 new infections emerged when 37,587 samples were tested during the same period. The positivity rate of new cases was recorded at 8.98%, the NCO said.

The countrywide tally of confirmed cases currently stands at 837,523 with the addition of 3,377 new cases.

## PARC signs three projects with RDA, Korea

He anticipated that the Agricultural Technology Co-operation will be another successful story of Korea and Pakistan's Relations

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The signing ceremony of Technical Cooperation Projects, between Korea Program on International Agriculture (KOPIA), Rural Development Administration (RDA) Republic of Korea and Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) was held today at NARC Islamabad.

The Ambassador Seo Sang pyo, Dr. Cho Gyoung-rae, Director KOPIA-Pakistan Centre, Mr. Ghufuran Memon, Secretary MN-FS&R, Dr. Azeem Khan, Chairman PARC, focal person for the KOPIA project from Pakistan, Engr. Shamim ul Sibtain DG NARC, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali Member Plant Sciences PARC, Member Co-ordination and Monitoring Dr. Shahid Hameed and other high officials also attended the Event today.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Azeem on his Welcoming Remarks has briefly described the undertaking



of the Memorandum of Understanding between South Korea and Pakistan Starting from 22nd March 2018 to the signing on 6th August 2020 by the Ambassador of Pakistan at RDA Headquarters Korea. The explanation for the agreed upon TCPs was given: Self Sufficiency of virus free Potato seed Multiplication by Aeroponics technique, Establishment of production technology of Major Fodder Crops in Pakistan,

and Chili production and Post-harvest Management technology Development in Pakistan. PARC Chairman appreciated the engineers from South Korea who came to Pakistan for the Post haste Installation of the Aeroponic Greenhouse for Virus free Potato Seed Multiplication at NARC. The Chairman also gave remarks for the progress at AZRC - Umerkot regarding the screen house

for the nursery raising of Chilies under Protected conditions, five local varieties were raised and transferred to a demonstration plot of five acres, Two Dehydration plants and one washing unit has also been Received at NARC Islamabad for the Installation at AZRC Umerkot, they will be used for red chili drying to make them Aflatoxin free, a main hindrance for the chili export, and a great alternative for pro-

ected and fast drying. Dr. Azeem also appreciated the Introduction of five Rye grass varieties at NARC for their Adaptability trials in climatic conditions of Pakistan One Variety has shown exemplary resilience for Growth in Pakistani Environment and a great alternative to existing livestock feed even in winters. His Excellency the Ambassador of Republic of Korea, Seo Sang Pyo, appreciated

the efforts of bilateral co-operation between KOPIA and PARC and expressed his views that the Signing of TCPs is the first of many more to come in Agricultural Technologies. He appreciated the diversity of Agricultural production in Pakistan especially Mangoes and Basmati Rice and that the transfer of technologies would further enhance the quality of Pakistani Agricultural Products enabling greater export as well as better food security. He anticipated that the Agricultural Technology Co-operation will be another successful story of Korea and Pakistan's Relations. Mr. Ghufuran Memon Secretary of National Food Security & Research has also put forward the remarks that Pakistan is fortunate to have received technology that has already been tried and tested and has shown great results in South Korea. This Transfer of technology will enable Pakistan to further Enhance Productivity and food Security.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Nong Rong visited Central Secretariat of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI). He also met with Chief Organizer, Central Secretariat of PTI, Mr. Saifullah Nyazee, discussed mutual interest of both countries and the relationship between PTI and Communist Party of China. - DNA

## RCCI, TDC ink MoU to create awareness about diabetes

Medical camps will also be conducted in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness about diabetes

SAIFULLAH

RAWALPINDI: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) and The Diabetes Centre (TDC) here on Tuesday.

RCCI President Nasir Mirza and CEO TDC Mr. Tahir M. Abbasi signed the MoU and exchanged the documents. Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahriz A Malik, Secretary General Irfan Manan Khan, Manager Marketing TDC, Imran Ali Ghouri and other were present at the ceremony. Under the agreement, RCCI and TDC will develop a liaison and close cooperation aiming to bring awareness for prevention,

control of diabetes and provide service to the business community associated with the Rawalpindi chamber. TDC offered special discounts for RCCI members including consultation fee, lab tests, diabetes education and other medical facilities. On the occasion, Nasir Mirza said that Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce has also signed MoUs with various hospitals for the convenience of its members so that they can get quality health care and treatment facilities at affordable rates. CEO TDC Tahir Abbasi said that the number of diabetics in Pakistan is increasing rapidly. Medical camps will also be conducted in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce to raise awareness about diabetes.

## 7986 brick kilns converted to ZigZag technology

SHAHEEN HANIF

RAWALPINDI: Vice chairman of Parks and Horticulture Authority Rawalpindi Malik Abid Hussain has said that zigzag technology introduced in brick kilns in Punjab has lessened the amount of air pollution by 70 to 80 percent.

The Punjab government has, so far, converted 7986 brick kilns from traditional fixed chimney bulls trench kiln to zigzag technology which reduced carbon emission by 60 percent coupled with other benefits.

He said this while talking to the concerned staff during the inspection of Rawal Park and Allama Iqbal Park Murree Road here on Tuesday. He said the new technology has reduced coal consumption by 20 percent, carbon emissions by 60 percent. "It produces more A-grade bricks and the production of bricks also enhanced by 80 per cent," he added.



"By removing these toxic and injurious gases from the air, the Punjab government has made significant progress in making the Prime Minister's Clean and Green Pakistan program a success, for which Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Bazardar and his team deserve congratulations," he mentioned. Malik Abid Hussain said the government was working tirelessly for the complete elimination of air, water and land

pollution. All the concerned agencies of the provincial government were fulfilling their responsibilities for a clean and green Pakistan. "We are delighted to learn the benefits of converting the kilns to ZigZag technology," he said. Thanks to this technology, he said, the daily production of kiln owners has increased by more than 80 percent and the coal used for cooking bricks is completely burned inside

the kilns, which has reduced the emissions of black and toxic fumes by more than 60 percent. He said the Punjab government was transferring all other kilns to the same technology. Agencies were also working hard to increase the forest areas. He hoped that these collective efforts would surely help in making the Prime Minister's Clean and Green Pakistan program a hundred percent success.

## Mehfil-e-Naat held at Punjab Arts Council

Speaking on the occasion, Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that the Council continued to run online programs in the days of Corona keeping in view all the SOPs

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: In connection with the holy month of Ramadan ul Mubarak, a Mehfil-e-Naat was organized under the auspices of Punjab Arts Council here on Tuesday.

Mehfil-e-Naat was organized online in view of the Corona epidemic. Hafiz Mohsin Ali Bhatti acted as the anchor of the event. Leading Naat Kahwan Hafiz Mo-



hammad Rizwan Tariq Naqshbandi, Mohammad Waris Rashid, Mohammad Adil Saleem and Professor Syed Asad Ali presented Naat. Speaking on the occasion, Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that the Council continued to run online programs in the days of Corona keeping in view all the SOPs. He said that through these programs artists were provided with a platform which is commendable.

## IHC extends suspension of 23 lawyers' licenses

ISLAMABAD: A larger bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday further extended the suspension of licenses of 23 lawyers on misconduct case in IHC building attack case.

The court also suspended the license of former president district bar association Riasat Ali Azad. A larger bench headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case pertaining to misconduct committed by lawyers during attack on IHC building. President District Bar Association Fareed Kaif and others appeared before the court.

The court instructed the senior lawyers to prepare a list of lawyers who were involved in the incident of vandalizing the high court building during a violent protest.

President DBA requested the court to ignore the matter, adding that all this happened in sudden.

He said that the lawyers were ready to apologize on the incident to this the chief justice said that this was not a matter to seek apology.

Fareed Kaif contended that the whole legal fraternity had become a show before the people of country, adding that it was a mistake and they admit it. - APP

## AIOU uploads result on the website

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has uploaded assignments marks on its website (www.aiou.edu.pk) for matriculation and intermediate programs offered in autumn 2020 semester.

The students, enrolled in these programs, are instructed to verify their marks on the website so that any discrepancy may be resolved in time. Moreover, admission verification process for spring 2020 semester has been completed for both these programs and currently the process of mailing of books is in progress.

According to the Director Admissions, the process of admission confirmation has been expedited on the special directives of Prof Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum and concerned department is working ceaselessly to achieve this objective.

Moreover, admission confirmation process for BA programs will be initiated the next week and it will be completed before the commencement of the study period in the second week of June, 2021. - DNA

## 2 pro-claimed offenders arrested

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Police claimed to have arrested two pro-claimed offenders from different areas of the city, informed the police spokesman here on Tuesday.

During course of action, Saddar Barooni police conducted a raid and arrested Ismail wanted by police from 2020.

Similarly, Chuntra police arrested Mudassar Khan, the notorious criminal wanted by police in case of kidnapping for ransom. He was wanted by the Chontra police from the year 2020.

Police have registered separate cases against both of them and started investigation.

City Police Officer CPO Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the performance of police team adding, such anti-social elements must be punished according to law.

## IESCO issues power suspension programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 06:00 am to 10:00 am, CM Pak Zong, Rahara, Bahria Enclave, PHA, ISI, Park Enclave, Chatta, Comsat University, Mureed, Al-Qasim Mill, Bhikri Feeders and surrounding areas.

## Man found murdered in Attock

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: A man was found murdered in his house in Dar-Ul-Islam Colony in the limits of Attock Police Station Tuesday.

According to a police spokesman, 60-year-old Younas Umer seemed to be strangled to death with his hands and legs tied with a rope. During initial investigations, no marks of torture were found on his body. The incident did not appear to be an act of robbery as nothing had been stolen from the house, the spokesman said.

The victim's body was shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital for autopsy and was later handed over to his heirs for burial. The Attock Police registered a murder case against unknown.



## Vaccine diplomacy

**T**HE government's decision to restrict inbound travel on border entry points from both Afghanistan and Iran is the right decision. It comes at a time when it is important to be as vigilant as possible since the past two days saw very minor relief in some areas in terms of both the positivity rate and the total number of infections.

Notably, even Pakistani citizens and others who travel through the borders will undergo scrutiny and testing to ensure that the transmission of cases from outside the country remains minimal.

The virus is mutating quickly. There are so many mutations that are more dangerous or easily transmissible, compared to the original Covid-19 strain that started this pandemic. With so many variants rapidly spreading across the globe it was important for the government to restrict movement to a degree along all entry and exit points of the country. This however, should include airports as well.

Of course, there are always exceptions to the rule. The government understands this as well, as evidenced by the decision to continue trading activity with both states. Supply lines are already choked, and any additional disruptions could cause serious problems such as price increases and more shortages.

Ultimately, the only solution is vaccinations at speed, because the constant evolution of the virus might make the efficacy of the inoculations questionable over time. The government expects over 15 million more vaccines over the next two months—May and June. We were still short at least 200 million doses however.

Much like when the Prime Minister went on a diplomatic mission to secure debt relief, it is time to try a similar tack now, when our need is greatest. The government must launch a communication campaign for wealthy countries to support the fight against Covid, and look to donate extra vaccines. Countries such as the US have seen a steady drop in the demand for vaccination; currently they have more than they immediately need. Developing states must band together on this cause and try and procure more vaccines as soon as possible.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

ABC CERTIFIED

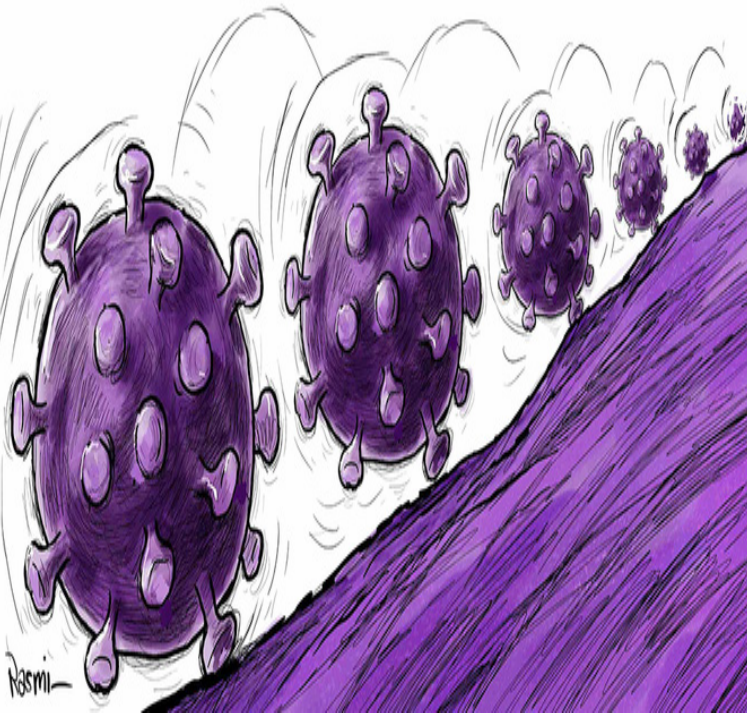
Vol: 01 Issue: 344

Email: [dailyisbpost@gmail.com](mailto:dailyisbpost@gmail.com)

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad

India...



## Pensions and salaries

**A**FTER the parliament of Pakistan approved the 18th Amendment in 2010, there was some hope that with the abolition of several federal ministries the burden of pensions and salaries at the federal level would reduce. After a decade or so, we see most of the federal ministries are still in place, though with slightly different names and nomenclature. According to reports, Pakistan's total pension and salary bills are likely to exceed its total general revenue on an annual basis over five to seven years. As these bills will spiral out of hand by the end of the decade, Pakistan will end up requesting international donors for more and more loans rather than retiring them. Such loans do not come without conditions so perhaps it is better to tackle this problem sooner rather than later. Since the Ministry of Finance is now busy with another budget-making exercise, it appears to be the right time to initiate an action plan in this matter.

Rather than the pension and salary budget going down, during the past 12 years it has increased rapidly. In 2008-09, pensions and salaries consumed 24 percent of the total general revenue and now they stand at 43 percent of the collected revenue. If you look at it in terms of compound rate it has gone up by 80 percent and in nominal terms the increase is over 140 percent. A couple of steps may be suggested. First, the loss-making public-sector enterprises (PSEs) need a comprehensive strategy to come out of their losses.

It is noteworthy that the pensions and salary budget is not only a problem at the federal level, the provinces are also facing a similar problem. The provinces too have displayed remarkable alacrity in their hiring, hiking their expenditure up to 56 percent of total revenue receipts. All federating units must act judiciously in their hiring, otherwise a time may come soon when they will have no resources left for their development requirements and expenditure. Governments at both the federal and the provincial levels must initiate a thorough reform process to curtail non-development expenses. Contributory pension funds may be a viable solution that some other countries have successfully implemented. Similarly, a separate pension fund for the armed forces may also be considered.

## China's Xinjiang & baseless Western propaganda

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani



There have been allegations of coercion against Muslims but Chinese officials have repeatedly denied the allegations. The United States has banned several high ranking Chinese officials in Xinjiang and shelter deviant Uyghur Muslims leaders in the United States. On the other hand the United States had invaded the Islamic world – Iraq and caused devastation in Afghanistan

**D**UE to their vested interest, the Western media seems keen in ignoring facts and falsely accusing China's poverty and anti-terrorism policies in Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region so as to contain China and on the other hand trying to sabotage its growing social & economic cooperation with the world especially Islamic world. I am wondering if the readers surprisingly not aware with facts and figures and not having firsthand accounts. I'm traveling to China and specially Xinjiang since 1993 and an eye witness to the growing socio economic developments while attending Urumqi's International Trade fairs and Kashgar's BRI conferences apart from interacting with various peoples from different walks of life during last more than 2 decades. I feel to pen down few lines about Xinjiang-China. China's Western Xinjiang Region is known for the world's fifth largest cotton growing region, and now that the Corona pandemic has begun, it has become increasingly regular to use cloth and paper instead of plastic due to environmental hazards, so China is not only beating the world in garments but on the other hand it is also supplying raw materials to the world for number of manufacturing items.

Apart from other parts of China, only Xinjiang is seven times bigger than Britain, three times bigger than France and ten times bigger than Australia and New Zealand. It is the fifth largest cotton producing region in the world. China has invested more than 2.3 trillion dollars in the development & strengthening the economy of Xinjiang

over a period of time and is connecting it to the world through CPEC. The western media has started propaganda regarding the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang that China is taking forced labor from the Uyghur Muslims under harsh environment. European countries are now looking for justifications to boycott Chinese cotton using Uyghur Muslims as an excuse for the action. Uyghur Muslims have lived here for centuries and have been living within the Chinese system. The fact remains that more than half a million people from various ethnic minority groups in Xinjiang are engaged in plucking cotton on a scale far greater than previously thought. The Xinjiang region produces cotton more than 20% of the world and 84% of China.

The Chinese government has invited Muslim scholars, rulers and leaders of major religious political parties to come and observe Xinjiang in person, but since the world is now dominated by the western media, the whole world is looking at Xinjiang from the West's point of view. Now China after regular visits of SCO's member countries diplomats apart from Western countries also plans to take a delegation of experts, religious scholars and journalists from the Islamic world to Xinjiang to see and learn about the issue on their own.

China currently has excellent relations with the Islamic world. On one hand agreements are being made with Iran and Turkey whereas on the other hand Pakistan is connected to the world through CPEC. Chinese efforts are underway to reduce tension within the Islamic world and as a gesture of goodwill,

Chinese Foreign Minister Mr. Wang Ji recently visited the Middle East where he held talks with officials from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Iraq and Kurdish region of Northern Iraq that is why China's plans have brought Turkey and the northern Kurds closer together.

That is why the western world has intensified its unilateral propaganda against China, justifying the Chinese authorities continued surveillance of Uyghur Muslims. There have been allegations of coercion against Muslims but Chinese officials have repeatedly denied the allegations. The United States has banned several high ranking Chinese officials in Xinjiang and shelter deviant Uyghur Muslims leaders in the United States. On the other hand the United States had invaded the Islamic world – Iraq and caused devastation in Afghanistan where millions of Muslims had been massacred with their homes, mosques and madrassas bombed.

The US has threatens to ban cotton buyers from buying cotton in Xinjiang. They accuse China for forced labor and keep threatening to ban cotton companies. However the way China is investing in Asia and the Middle East will pave the way for its plans to be successful and to bring the Islamic world close to China by connecting them through economic corridors so as to negate the propaganda being made against China.

– *The writer is a senior media consultant and Secretary General, Pakistan-China Friendship Association Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province – Pakistan. His email is [syed.gilani@gmail.com](mailto:syed.gilani@gmail.com)*

## Future of next generation under digital imperialism

Zahra Ali Khan Qazalbash



The most economically challenged in our society are most vulnerable in this crisis, and the wealthier households are most likely to endure it without losing too much ground

AS the world grapples with responding to current crisis, in the midst of global COVID-19 pandemic, we are first-hand reflecting in real-time on how systems undergo large-scale transformations & Paradigm shifts, how government, cities, businesses, schools, and communities adapt and make fundamental changes to existing ways of studying and working. As Pakistan sees yet another surge in the rise of the novel corona virus cases, the Government has further adopted stay-at-home orders to curtail the pandemic. The disruption to most people's lives has been drastic and abrupt, and perhaps one of the most disturbing shift was the education sector move to a virtual setting. Prior to the spread of COVID-19, we had been reflecting on how difficult it is to change a system keeping in view the fact that systems usually prefer the status quo and more often than not necessitate it for a crisis to transform. We are certainly watching this play out today—many countries including Pakistan, have been impervious to respond to the global pandemic despite considerable data and advice available from experts on what measures should be taken and regarded as priority—and have only leapt into action once the magnitude of the virus was apparent.

To address schools closure, the first and foremost thing for consideration is the variable effect. School system is generally regarded as uniform but in reality schools are widely different in

their operations and their impact on students, just as students themselves are very different from one another. As a matter of fact, students come from different socio-economic backgrounds and have very different resources, opportunities, and support outside of school. Now that entire learning lives, as well as actual physical lives, are outside educational institutions, those differences and disparities have come into vivid view. Some students have been fine during this crisis because of having the privilege of high-quality learning opportunities coupled with advanced tech-equipments available to them, other students thus far, are still struggling to have an access to anything of quality because of minimal to no resources, and consequently seem to be at an enormous setback.

Science, Technology, education and mathematics have always had a critical standing and known poor fate in Pakistan, all the more during these unprecedented times as they must include or be taken accompanying 'laboratory' and 'experimentation' and. The importance of giving the skills and knowledge to students within STEM for them to be at the forefront cannot be emphasised enough nor should ever be undermined or played down as it has been within the country for over decades. Both the federal and provincial governments should pay attention to the problems of engineers. According to current statistics, more than a hundred thousand engineers are unemployed in Pakistan. STEM subjects underpin the world we live in and directly impact many areas of the society including Robotics, Electronics, Aerospace, Biomedical science, Ecology, Genetic engineering, Data science, Marine biology, Civil and Mechanical engineering. Artificial intelligence professionals, software developers and food technologists all work in STEM disciplines and should be highly rewarded with the opportunity to be part of cutting-edge developments, research projects, discovery of scientific breakthroughs and solutions to societal problems, such as the public health crisis we are currently facing. For example, Technology allowed China to build two hospital facilities for corona virus patients in just 10 days and allowed airdrop test kits onto cruise ships. It allowed the Johns Hopkins Center for Systems Science and Engineering to build a corona virus mapping tool. This dashboard kept millions abreast of the latest data from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other sources, to visualise how the virus is spreading around the world. The South Korean molecular biotech company Seegene started developing test kits before the country had even confirmed its first case of COVID-19. In addition, the development of self-driving cars has started an interesting debate on the morals and ethics of autonomous vehicles. The most economically challenged in our society are most vulnerable in this crisis, and the wealthier households are most likely to endure it without losing too much ground. Prior to the pandemic, we were already experiencing a learning crisis that is likely to be made more severe by prolonged school closures. 40% of the children of the total population of Pakistan particularly in the peripheral regions of Gilgit-Baltistan, Balochistan and the tribal districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, have been out

of schools or had no access to any kind of education. Identifying which children are vulnerable to disproportionate learning loss should be a matter of great concern to the Government. Without targeted, evidenced interventions, the gap between rich and poor children—which will have widened considerably during the months of school closure—will continue to grow. Addressing learning loss and implementing large-scale catch-up programs in the remote areas and marginalised communities should be a top priority. Moreover, on part of students, they must find themselves responsible for adhering to intervention. Now more than ever, the Realisation and understanding of the fact that Education is "necessity" to Pakistan and not an option should be the front and center of every individual's mind. Additionally, the ways in which students and educators respond to Internet related environments also prompts consideration towards Gender-digital divide. A research carried out by a non-profit organization known as Media Matters for Democracy published its most recent findings on women's access to the internet in a report titled Women Disconnected: Feminist Case Studies on the Gender Digital Divide Amidst Covid-19. As many as, 215 women across Pakistan were interviewed, including tribal districts, it has been noted that six out of ten women faced some form of restriction from their families when accessing the internet, including for carrying out simple tasks such as attending online classes or plain discussions post lectures with male counterparts via standard method of learning and teaching for many during the pandemic i.e. Zoom, Microsoft teams, or communicating on WhatsApp.

In addition, when it comes to cultural attitudes, many Pakistanis in the rural areas continue to regard women's access to the internet with suspicion, and more than half of the respondents mention concerns from family members. Another survey on marginalised communities of KPK and Punjab found a quarter of the girls in education feeling unsafe at school, with some having been sexually harassed by teachers, or pressured for sex for grades or even to sit for an exam, and have been subject to corporal punishment. Not only in educational institutions that happens, but also within joint families due to less awareness & frustrations. Meanwhile the digital stark made 4 in 10 girls become victim of cyber harassment and assault. Women and girls disproportionately share the burden and care of family members and relatives. This affects not only whether they can attend school but also the time and energy they can devote to schoolwork. Economic shock during COVID-19 leapt into significant increase in school fees, extra costs such as buying tech-equipments, overpriced books and transport, and the need to work to boost family income have forced many girls into child marriages, to drop out of school or preventing them from getting an education. Child marriage also means girls have early and frequent pregnancies, which accounts to higher rates of girls dropping out of school. A study by the World Bank says that child marriage will cost developing countries trillions of dollars by 2030. Given the high rate of child marriage before 18 years of age in Pakistan which is 6th highest in the world

(UN women report), it is important for the Government to ascertain in peripheral regions the cost of little to no education facilities, child marriage and early pregnancies, and its adverse impact on the economy which is all the more rampant during COVID-19 pandemic due to numerous reasons including deeply entrenched customs, poverty, lack of awareness and/or access to education, and lack of security. In humanitarian emergencies, including natural disasters, increased poverty for families and lack of employment opportunities means girls are at higher risk of early marriage or ending up in prostitution.

If potential risks related to design and delivery of Educational activities are not thought through and safety (both in-person or online) is ensured, it is likely that any intervention can go very wrong. The challenge is not only to scale up education but also ensuring that it is SAFE and effective.

If done well & timely check-and-balance is made, educational reforms and activities can grant a routine that gives young people a sense of steadiness amid a hurried change. Addressing barriers mentioned above would be a significant part of helping children's process of education and adjust to their shift of external environment and develop new strategies for coping. The safety and public health information usually addressed through educational activities can demystify the crisis and help children feel more in control of their environment, to be able to make informed choices from a far better range of options. During long-lasting crises, education fosters hope for a better future, an important feature of supporting natural resilience.

Nevertheless, minimal to no access to technology and broadband facility could be an obstacle in the quest to achieve resilience. While "Digital Pakistan" was an initiative taken by the Government and intended to be a long-term and effective project, a year after its launch there is very little evidence of a time-bound plan to realise its objectives. Thus there is a need to bridge the digital divide by investing in digital infrastructure. It is worth remembering here that access to technology and internet alone isn't a panacea for future crises—but the risks of technology further exacerbating inequities must also be addressed. We are a nation still at risk and certainly do not require another paradigm shift to look at our goals and aspirations for education that sum up phrases like "No Child Left Behind," "Every Student Succeeds," and "All Means All". What seems clear is that we need to respond rapidly and robustly from both a technological and educational perspective to cyber education which creates a myriad of challenges for both students and teachers and to figure out how to build a system that has the capacity to deliver on the promise of equity and excellence in education for all students, and all means all. Both novice and experienced computer users alike must be offered trainings to master the use of internet tools, while also working to overcome conceptual misunderstandings about the technology and its root metaphors. We have that opportunity now and hope we do not fail to take advantage of it in a misguided rush to restore the status quo.

– *Email: [zahra.ali.khan@outlook.com](mailto:zahra.ali.khan@outlook.com)*



## Briefs

## Shahid Afridi receives MCC's lifetime membership

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has received an honorary lifetime membership from the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC). Boom Boom took to Twitter and shared his full-time member card, thanking MCC for the recognition. "A big honour to receive MCC lifetime membership. I want to thank the most prestigious cricket club in the world for the respect and recognition," he wrote. "I would continue to play my part in promotion of this wonderful sport both on and off the cricket field," he added.

## EU regulator examines Sinovac vaccine

## WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Medicine Agency (EMA) announced Tuesday that it had started the review of COVID-19 vaccines developed by the pharma company Sinovac. The EU drugs agency's human medicine committee began the rolling review of the Chinese jab based on preliminary results from laboratory and clinical studies, the EMA wrote in a press release. The EU regulator will assess if the Chinese jab's benefits outweigh the risks, and the vaccine's compliance with EU standards on medicine effectiveness, safety and quality. The rolling review, which was requested by the producer, is meant to prepare and eventually shorten the ordinary authorization if the pharma company officially applies for an EU marketing license. However, the EMA said it could not predict a timeline for completing the assessment.

## US to approve Pfizer for children

## WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The US Food and Drug Administration will approve Pfizer/BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine for children ages 12 to 15 next week, according to a report on Tuesday. The FDA is currently reviewing scientific data provided by US pharmaceutical firm Pfizer about the vaccine, and it is set to amend its emergency use authorization by early next week, a government official told CNN. Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech announced on March 31 its coronavirus vaccine BNT162b2 demonstrated 100% efficacy and robust antibody responses among 12 to 15 years of age in a Phase 3 trial that included 2,260 adolescents. Another American pharma firm Moderna has also been testing vaccines in children as young as 6 months. They are expected to ask the FDA for approval in infants and children later this year.

## Lockdown urged as India's...

## From Page 01

Congress MP Gandhi said on Twitter, referring to the Government of India. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is reluctant to impose a national lockdown due to the economic fall out, yet several states have imposed various social restrictions.

The surge in cases of the highly infectious Indian variant of Covid-19 has swamped the health system, drained supplies of medical oxygen vital for survival for those infected, and seen patients dying in ambulances and carparks outside hospitals. Rows of funeral pyres in parks and carparks cremate the overflow of corpses. India has postponed exams for trainee doctors and nurses in a desperate effort to fight the infections sweeping across the world's second-most populous country. Modi has been criticised for not moving sooner to limit the latest wave of infections and for letting millions of largely unmasked people attend religious festivals and crowded political rallies during March and April.

## India's IPL cricket suspended indefinitely over coronavirus

"The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021"

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League, the world's richest Twenty20 cricket tournament, was suspended on Tuesday and its players sent home as India battles a massive surge in coronavirus cases. The move, which follows growing controversy over the competition, comes a day after two players - Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier - tested positive, forcing a match to be postponed. "The Indian Premier League Governing Council and Board of Control for Cricket in India in an emergency meeting has unanimously decided to postpone (the) IPL 2021 season, with immediate effect," a statement from organisers said. "The BCCI does not want to compromise on the safety of the players, support staff and the other participants involved in organising the IPL," it added.

India, which has reported more than 20 million cases so far, with just over 222,000 deaths, is also due to host the Twenty20 World Cup in October and November. The high-paying IPL, which was taking place in biosecure "bubble" conditions, attracts many of the world's top cricketers, including players from Australia, England and South Africa. BCCI Vice-President Raviv Shukla to AFP that the governing body would "make the arrangements" for the IPL's international players to leave India. "About the foreign players, as we have said, we will try and ensure all of them

get to their homes," he said. The IPL has been running since early April, even as India's health care system has been overwhelmed by a vicious second wave of virus cases. This prompted criticism from some who said it was inappropriate, given the suffering in the country, while others defended it as a welcome distraction. Eight teams have been playing behind closed doors in six cities including New Delhi and Mumbai, both badly hit by the pandemic. "These are difficult times, especially in India and while we have tried to bring in some positivity and cheer, howev-

er, it is imperative that the tournament is now suspended and everyone goes back to their families and loved ones in these trying times," the statement said. "The BCCI will do everything in its powers to arrange for the secure and safe passage of all the participants in IPL 2021." Australian players Adam Zampa, Andrew Tye and Kane Richardson had already left their IPL teams before their country imposed a ban on arrivals from India. The Australian Cricket Board has said it is in daily contact with the remaining Australian players. The English Cricket Board has also said it was talking with staff and players in India. The huge surge in cases has overwhelmed hospitals in major cities and led to severe shortages of oxygen, beds and critical medical supplies. - APP



KUALA LUMPUR: Pakistani High Commissioner to Malaysia Anma Baloch called on Dato Kamarudin Jaffar Deputy Foreign Minister of Malaysia to discuss enhancement of bilateral cooperation in diverse areas to actualize the Strategic Level Partnership between the two fraternal countries. - DAN

## PCB unveils parental support policy

## DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board on Tuesday announced its Parental Support Policy targeted to motivate and champion professional cricketers in their journey to parenthood - throughout pregnancy and even after childbirth when they return to play and are required to balance their parental responsibilities with the demands of their crick-

eting career.

Under the newly introduced policy, women and men players have been granted various rights that they are respectively entitled to avail during the pregnancy and upon the birth of their child. Included within the policy is the option for women cricketers to transfer to a non-playing role until commencement of their maternity leave leading up to the birth of their child. Women cricketers are also

entitled to take up to 12 months of paid maternity leave and will be guaranteed a contract extension for the following year, in line with their existing contractual arrangements as a player's right to pursue the game on a professional level should not be limited because of their pregnancy or responsibilities as a new parent. Upon conclusion of the maternity leave, the player

will be reintegrated into cricketing activities and provided adequate medical and physical support in respect of their post-childbirth rehabilitation. Similarly, if a woman player is required to travel for cricketing activities, the PCB will support the player by allowing her to travel with a support person of her choice to assist in caring for her infant child, with the travel and accommodation costs to be shared equally.

## English FA launches Super League probe

## SPORTS DESK

LONDON: The English Football Association (FA) said Monday that it has formally kicked off an investigation into six English clubs over their involvement in the breakaway European Super League. "Last week, we started an official inquiry into the formation of the European Super League and the involvement of the six English clubs. We wrote to all of the clubs to formally request all relevant information and evidence regarding their participation," the FA said in a statement. On April 19, 12 European football clubs - including England's Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham Hotspur - said in a joint statement that they had decided to establish the European Super League. It was an alternative mid-week tournament that FIFA and UEFA and national member associations do not recognize. The FA also said that necessary steps would be taken once they have the required information. "Throughout this period, we [the FA] have been in ongoing discussions with the [UK] government, the Premier League and UEFA. In particular, we have been discussing legislation with the government that would allow us to prevent any similar threat in the future so that we can protect the English football pyramid," it added.

## G7 diplomats discuss Myanmar coup

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The foreign ministers of G7 countries are discussing a range of "critical global issues" including the coup in Myanmar, an official statement said on Tuesday. The G7 Foreign and Development Ministers Meeting in London is the first major in-person diplomatic gathering since the beginning of the coronavirus pandemic, and the first gathering of G7 Foreign Ministers since 2019. The press release said British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab "will lead discussions on pressing geopolitical issues that threaten

to undermine democracy, freedoms and human rights" such as relations with Russia, China, and Iran, as well as the crisis in Myanmar, the violence in Ethiopia, and the ongoing civil war in Syria. Raab will urge G7 nations to take stronger action against Myanmar's military junta, it added. "This includes expanding targeted sanctions against individuals and entities connected to the junta; support for arms embargoes, and increased humanitarian assistance for the most vulnerable in the country." Pro-democracy protests have taken place in cities and towns across the Southeast Asian country since the Feb. 1 military takeover.

## Egypt buys 30 Rafale fighter jets

CAIRO: Egypt's military has confirmed it ordered 30 Rafale jets from French defence firm Dassault Aviation to shore up "national security". The order, which follows the 2015 purchase of 24 Rafale jets, will be financed through a 10-year loan, the military said in a statement late Monday. Investigative site Disclose had reported earlier Monday that the order was part of a secret mega-defence deal worth almost four billion euros (\$4.8 billion).

Egypt is the world's third biggest arms importer after Saudi Arabia and India, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. Its arms purchases grew by 136 percent over the last decade and it has diversified its sourcing beyond the United States, buying military equipment from France, Germany and Russia, the institute said in a report released earlier this year. The new Rafale deal "reinforces the strategic and military partnership between France and Egypt," French Defence Minister Florence Parly said in a statement on Tuesday. "This contract illustrates the strategic nature of the partnership that France maintains with Egypt, while our two countries are resolutely committed to the fight against terrorism and are working for stability in their regional environment," the statement added. - APP

## Amb. Sajjad calls on Health Minister

## DNA

MINSK: Today, Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan held a meeting with Belarusian Deputy Minister of Health Mr. Aleksandr Tarasenko and discussed bilateral cooperation in health sciences, pharmaceutical products and vaccination for Covid-19. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Anatoli Hrushkousky, Head of Foreign Affairs Department of the Ministry.



## Taliban attacks not affecting troop withdrawal

The Taliban has vowed reprisal for Washington's choice not to meet that date. As Kirby spoke to reporters on Monday, Afghan security forces were fighting back widescale Taliban attacks in southern Helmand province

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A United States Pentagon official says "small harassing attacks" by the Taliban in Afghanistan have not had a significant impact on the ongoing US and NATO troop withdrawal from the country. The statement from Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby came shortly after the US officially began its troop withdrawal on Saturday. "What we've seen are some small harassing attacks over the course of the weekend that have not had any significant impact, certainly not on our people or our resources there and bases," Kirby told reporters on Monday. "We've seen nothing thus far that has affected the drawdown,

or had any significant impact on the mission at hand in Afghanistan," he said. President Joe Biden announced on April 13 that all US troops - which at the time numbered as many as 3,500 - will leave Afghanistan by September 11. Officials soon after announced that the approximately 7,000 troops in the country as part of a NATO coalition would also leave. Biden has said the US withdrawal would not be "conditions-based", meaning the pullout is meant to continue regardless of developments on the ground. In recent weeks, the Taliban has stepped up its attacks against the US-backed Afghan government, raising the prospect of attacks on US forces. Meanwhile, fighting in the first quarter of 2021 saw 573 Afghan

civilians killed and 1,210 wounded, a 29-percent increase from the previous year, according to the United Nations. Kirby said the US military will maintain its ability to respond to attacks throughout the pullout, telling reporters that General Austin Miller, the US commander in Afghanistan, "certainly has at his disposal response options to make sure that he's protecting our troops and our people". One incident, an attack on a military airfield in Kandahar used by US forces, was previously dismissed by a US spokesman as "ineffective indirect fire" that resulted in no injuries. On Saturday, as its forces began the withdrawal, the US military launched a "precision strike" against the source of that fire, officials said. More than 100 Afghan security

forces personnel have been killed in recent weeks as fighting between the Taliban and Afghan government forces has raged in the wake of the US announcement. The fighting has particularly seen an uptick since May 1 - the initial deadline reached between former US President Donald Trump and the Taliban for the US troop withdrawal. The Taliban has vowed reprisal for Washington's choice not to meet that date. As Kirby spoke to reporters on Monday, Afghan security forces were fighting back widescale Taliban attacks in southern Helmand province. The attacks included three major offensives and targeted checkpoints around the outskirts of Lashkar Gah. Afghan security forces launched air strikes and deployed elite commando forces

to the area to push back the fighters, but the clashes were continuing on Tuesday, Attaullah Afghan, the head of Helmand's provincial council, told Reuters. Hundreds of families had been displaced by the fighting, he added. The US withdrawal comes amid wider concerns the Afghan forces are ill-equipped to continue the fight against the Taliban group, which was removed from power after foreign forces invaded nearly 20 years ago but still controls large swaths of the country. While President Hamid Karzai has said the government is "ready" to continue the fight following the withdrawal, at least one top US military official has questioned whether Afghan forces will be able to hold the territory they currently control.

## Turkey test-fires HISAR-A missile

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey has successfully test-fired indigenously produced HISAR-A missile in the central province of Aksaray, the National Defense Ministry said on Tuesday. During the test, conducted on Monday, the missiles successfully hit the target drone, the ministry said on Twitter. The ministry also shared pictures of the missile system as well as the moment, when it went into the air. HISAR missiles are defense weapons developed to protect military bases, ports, facilities, and troops against air-based threats. They meet the needs of the Turkish Armed Forces by providing them a low and medium-altitude air defense security system.

The components of the HISAR-A missile, like radar, command, and control, and fire control were developed by Aselsan. The Roketsan was responsible for the development of the missile system. Both of them are Turkish defense equipment manufacturers. The missile system is effective against invading aircraft, helicopters, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles, and air-to-air missiles.

## Electoral reforms...

## From Page 01

He said work is underway on Biometric and E-voting. Referring to the ECP's decision of recounting of votes in the by-election in NA-249 Karachi, the Minister said re-polling should be held in the constituency because the winning candidate will be getting only five percent votes. Speaking about the Covid situation in the country, the Information Minister said the Covid SOPs are not being implemented in letter and spirit in Karachi, and the Sindh Government should look into it. He said the Cabinet has approved the Sindh Government's request for deployment of the army for ensuring implementation of the SOPs. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the Cabinet approved 90-day remission to jail prisoners on the occasion of Eid ul Fitr. However, this remission will not be applicable to the prisoners of heinous crimes. He said the facility of succession certificates through NADRA is also being provided to overseas Pakistanis, and in the first phase, desks are being opened in twenty-four embassies. He said the Cabinet has approved issuance of a commemorative coin to pay tribute to NED University Karachi on 100 years of its establishment. The Minister said the Cabinet also approved to waive off 10 percent withholding tax on private sector bids in Railways.

## NCOC forms...

## From Page 01

"All tourist resorts, formal and informal picnic spots, public parks, shopping malls; all hotels and restaurants in/around tourist/ picnic spots to remain closed," it said. "Travel nodes leading to tourist spots [will also remain] closed; focus on [the areas of] Murree, Galiyat, Swat-Kalam, Sea View/beaches and the Northern Areas [will remain]," stated the statement.

## NA-249: ECP accepts vote...

## From Page 01

He said the issue of Form 46 was problematic and should be investigated as no presiding officer had issued it at any polling station, except one. The procedure was not followed as per the law and we were officially told a difference of 683 votes, he said. The PML-N's counsel said the matter of Form 45 and 46 shows interference and demanded a recount in the whole constituency. "This matter should be fully investigated as the whole process has become suspicious." On the other hand, PPP lawyer Latif Khosa argued that no complaint was lodged with the RO or the Election Commission during or after the polling and the RO is not bound to accept the recount request. "They didn't provide evidence and just said that there are doubts," he said. Khosa said this application is absolutely "unjustified."



## Briefs

## Madrid voters go to polls after bitter campaign

OVIEDO: After an abnormally tense election campaign, the polls opened in Madrid on Tuesday for voters to choose the next government of Spain's powerful capital region.

Isabel Ayuso, the incumbent from the right-wing Popular Party and one of Spain's most outspoken lockdown critics, is set to secure the most seats.

With the surprise entry of Podemos leader Pablo Iglesias into the race, Ayuso has framed the vote as a choice between "freedom or communism."

Iglesias chose to leave his post as Spain's deputy prime minister to battle the right-wing forces that he sees threatening the Spanish democracy as a whole.

This ideological battle has played out dramatically in recent weeks, as Madrid became a stage for Spain's increasingly polarized political scene. This was evident at the first major rally for the far-right party Vox, where anti-fascist protesters ended up clashing with police in their attempts to disrupt the speeches. It later emerged that one of the arrested protesters had financial ties to Podemos. — APP

## Philippine president gets 1st dose of Covid vaccine

## FOREIGN DESK

JAKARTA: The Philippine president received his first dose of coronavirus vaccine on Monday evening. Rodrigo Duterte got China's Sinopharm jab, which was aired live on the official Face-book account of the country's COVID-19 task force.

Speaking after the inoculation, Duterte said he aims to encourage people to receive their shots to stop the spread of corona-virus.

"I feel good and I had been expecting this shot for a long time," he said. According to a statement by Office of the Presidential Spokesperson, Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go said Sinopharm is the only vaccine approved by the presidential medical team. The Sinopharm vaccine has yet to be issued emergency use authorization by the country's Food and Drug Administration, but a compassionate use permit for 10,000 Sinopharm vaccine doses purchased by the Presidential Security Group was issued earlier. Duterte has repeatedly said that he is more inclined to use vaccines from China and Russia.

## UK, India to start FTA talks

## DNA

LONDON: Britain and India will begin formal free trade deal talks later this year, the UK government said Tuesday, after they agreed an initial package to boost bilateral trade and investment. With its massive population and growing economy, India has been high on London's list of trade deal targets since Britain left the European Union last year.

Under a post-Brexit "Global Britain" strategy, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government is pivoting its foreign policy priorities towards the Asia-Pacific region, signing trade deals with countries including Japan and Singapore.

UK International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said India and Britain would start negotiations on an agreement "in the autumn", following the announcement of a preliminary "Enhanced Trade Partnership" deal. "We want to get these negotiations completed as soon as possible," she told Sky News during a round of broadcast interviews touting the partnership package worth £1 billion (\$1.4 billion, 1.2 billion euros). "Of course, FTAs (Free Trade Agreements) take longer, this is the immediate gains that we can get for both countries, driving jobs here in Britain and in India," Truss added.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan met with the Ambassadors of OIC countries on May 03, 2021 and discussed with them issues related to Islamophobia. He briefed the ambassadors about Pakistan govt efforts regarding highlighting the issue at the global level. — DNA

## Hatred behind Armenia's destructions in Karabakh

The country's war-torn Aghdam region is seen as a glaring example displaying Armenia's hatred and enmity. Known as Hiroshimo of the Caucasus, Aghdam shocks delegations from various countries with notorious scenes of destruction

## DNA

BAKU: Armenia has destroyed and vandalized Azerbaijani territories it held under three-decades-long occupation following the first Karabakh War in the early 1990s. The scale of destruction in Azerbaijan's formerly-occupied territories is shocking and suggests deep hatred and animosity against Azerbaijani people, with many experts describing these mass destructions as genocide.

The country's war-torn Aghdam region is seen as a glaring example displaying Armenia's hatred and enmity. Known as Hiroshimo of the Caucasus, Aghdam shocks delegations from various countries with notorious scenes of destruction. Sharing his views about the current situation in Aghdam,

Russian political analyst and military expert Igor Korotchenko said that the scale of Armenian destructions in Aghdam speaks of genocide. "Such a scale of destruction in modern human history was only in the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which were subjected to atomic bombing. And now Aghdam. Therefore, it will obviously take decades to rebuild and restore everything. Of course, this is a war crime, a crime against humanity. Because this kind of destruction is not even vandalism or barbarism, it is something worse. This is genocide," Korotchenko said in an interview with Day.az after his visit to Aghdam on May 1.

He noted that those who saw today's Aghdam have the feeling that an atomic bomb was dropped on the city. Aghdam is reminiscent of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

"The Armenians, of course, did not detonate an atomic bomb, they detonated a bomb of hatred towards the Azerbaijani people here. The scale of the destruction is terrifying. Currently, there is no place in the world where the consequences of vandalism, hatred and enmity are clearly demonstrated," he added. It should be noted that the situation in other liberated cities and villages is no different than from Aghdam. The recent discovery of a mass grave of victims of the Armenian-committed massacre in Kalbajar region's Bashlybel village in April 1993 is yet another example of Armenian vandalism, suggesting that it is worth expecting the discovery of other mass graves in Karabakh given that thousands of people are still missing since the first Karabakh war. Korotchenko noted that

when crossing the line that used to separate the occupied territories from the one that was under the control of Azerbaijan, there were continuous minefields along the road to the left and right. "On the way, there were signs with the words 'Caution, mines!', warning that the area around was mined. Unfortunately, the situation with mines is exactly the same on other territories that returned to Azerbaijan's control following the results of the Second Karabakh war," he said. The expert described it as the main humanitarian problem today. "At the same time, Armenia refuses to provide maps of minefields, thereby endangering the lives of not only Russian peacekeepers and Azerbaijani citizens. The mines are already undermining the Armenians, that is,

the civilians living in Azerbaijan's Karabakh," he said. Korotchenko believes that the problem must be solved immediately, it is not even of a military-political, but of a humanitarian nature. "Obviously, the problem must be put to the vote of the UN Security Council, in view of the fact that Armenia does not want to provide maps of minefields. A special resolution must be adopted, forcing Armenia to provide Azerbaijan with maps of minefields. By the way, we expect the same from the European Parliament and France, who actively support Armenia, but do not say anything about the problem associated with Armenian mines," he stressed.

The expert reiterated that it is necessary to exert political pressure on Armenia, including from Russia, other countries and the UN Security Council, so that Armenia would provide maps of minefields. "Armenia has them, but the Armenian side refuses to do so, which deserves only unequivocal condemnation. There can be no justification for this," Korotchenko said. Armenia has spent around billion dollars on mining the occupied areas and has been refusing to provide Azerbaijan maps of mines planted in territories it had occupied. Earlier in late April, delegations from France and Israel visited liberated territories, including Aghdam and the second largest city Ganja subjected to Armenia's missile attacks during the war. Commenting on the situation she had witnessed French lawyer Eliza Arfi said the world community must know about Armenian-committed atrocities in Azerbaijan.

## Rocket barrage targets Iraqi base

## FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: Six rockets were fired towards Iraq's Balad airbase north of Baghdad, lightly wounding a foreign contractor working for a US company.

Three rockets initially fell in an area where US company Sallyport — the contractor that maintains F-16 aircraft purchased by Iraq from the US — is located, an Iraqi security official said, requesting anonymity.

An employee of Sallyport was lightly wounded, according to the official. Three other rockets were fired about 15 minutes later and fell near the base without hitting it.

Pentagon spokesperson Commander Jessica McNulty said no US or coalition troops were assigned at Balad, but noted that American contractors worked there. Citing initial reports, McNulty said there were no US casualties or damage.

It was the second attack targeting US interests in less than 24 hours after two rockets on Sunday targeted an airbase at Baghdad Airport housing US-led coalition troops. Sunday's attack did not cause casualties. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either attack.

## Lebanon and Israel talks resume

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanon and Israel are resuming US-mediated talks regarding a dispute over their Mediterranean Sea border that has held up hydrocarbon exploration in the potentially gas-rich area. The talks, between countries still technically at war, kicked off at the UN base in the town of Naqura in southern Lebanon, the National News Agency reported on Tuesday.

Lebanon and Israel took part in indirect talks to discuss demarcation last year. But they stalled after Lebanon demanded a larger area, including part of the Karish gas field, where Israel has given exploration rights to a Greek firm.

The talks last year were supposed to discuss a Lebanese demand for 860sq km (330 square miles) of territory in the disputed maritime area, according to a map sent to the United Nations in 2011. However, Lebanon then said the map was based on erroneous calculations and demanded 1,430sq km (552 square miles) more further south, including part of Karish.

## 7 on trial for 2014 attack on Saudi convoy

PARIS: Seven men went on trial on Tuesday in Paris for the spectacular 2014 attack on a Saudi prince's convoy that saw them make off with bundles of cash, jewellery and diplomatic papers. Abdul Aziz Bin Fahd, the youngest son of the former King Fahd, left his suite at the plush George V hotel - owned by a fellow prince, Alwaleed bin Talal - in the evening of August 17, heading to Le Bourget airport north of Paris.

He was later followed by his official motorcade of around a dozen cars led by a Mercedes Viano van, which was forced to a halt by two stolen BMWs just as it entered the access ramp for the motorway leading to the airport.

In a heist worthy of a Hollywood action scene, armed men wearing balaclavas stormed and hijacked the Mercedes, threw out its passengers and drove off. No shots were fired and nobody was harmed.

The prince himself was already airborne as the heist unfolded, headed for Ibiza in Spain, Le Parisien daily reported. The stolen lot included 250,000 euros (\$300,000 at current rates) in cash, another \$300,000 in cash, luxury watches and Saudi diplomatic documents. Investigators suspected the assailants had inside help since they appeared to know exactly which car to target in the robbery. The cars were later found torched in a small town northeast of Paris. — APP



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee received delegation of Azerbaijani women entrepreneurs. Ambassador exchanged views for establishing cooperation with Pakistani women entrepreneurs through B2B meetings and visits to respective countries. — DNA

## Mexico metro collap kills 23

## FOREIGN DESK

MEXICO CITY: At least 23 people have been killed and 65 hospitalised when a rail overpass collapsed in Mexico City, sending a train crashing down onto cars below.

Rescue efforts for potential survivors were briefly paused at the overpass of the metro's 12 line shortly after the accident on Monday night, with authorities saying there was a risk that more train parts and debris could slam down onto the road. Mexico City Mayor Claudia Sheinbaum said a crane was being transported to the site to stabilise the train carriages so rescuers could resume their work.

Sheinbaum said seven of the people transported to hospital were in a "grave condition" and undergoing surgery. "There are unfortunately children among the dead," Sheinbaum said, without specifying how many. "A support beam gave way" just as the train passed over it, she added.

A video on local channel Milenio TV showed the structure plummeting onto a stream of cars near Olivos station in the southeast of the city at about 10:30pm local time (03:30 GMT on Tuesday), sending up clouds of dust and rubble.

Other images showed at least two train carriages precariously hanging from the damaged overpass as emergency fire and medical crews initially used ladders to access the carriages. A crane was working to hold up one subway car left dangling on the collapsed section so that emergency workers could enter to check a car that was crushed to see if anyone was still trapped.

Friends and relatives of victims of the metro bridge collapse waited for news of their loved ones early Tuesday, but many feared the worst. "My brother is still under the rubble," one man said. Police kept people away from the immediate site of the disaster where rescue teams were working.

## Experts urge Pak to modernize its livestock industry

## DNA

BEIJING: A webinar on Chinese and Pakistani animal husbandry and fishery cooperation was held to achieve future targets in this sector, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro.

Leading experts and companies in livestock and fishery sectors from both countries discussed bilateral cooperation in the educational and industrial programmes in this regard, and possible measures to enact such cooperation. Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, pointed out "multiple challenges" in tapping the rich repertoire of livestock and fishery resources in Pakistan. He urged Pakistan to modernise its livestock and fishery industries by upgrading infrastructure and building a substantial supply chain through joint enterprises with China, technology transfer and talent cultivation.

The challenges are echoed by Dr Muhammad Akram, President,

Fisheries Development Board, Ministry of Pakistan National Food Security and Research (MNFSR), and Dr Khurshid Ahmad, Animal Husbandry Commissioner, MNFSR.

According to Dr Ahmad, Pakistan is home to 208 million food animals with an annual milk yield

capacity, and with joint research efforts in genetic improvement and other animal and fishery sciences. Experts and businesses discussed current and future cooperation in the research, industry, and trade developments in the two sectors. In terms of the livestock sector, Li Jinhui, Deputy Secretary Gen-

to enhance its beef and mutton exports."

Despite huge potential of exports, Pakistan's livestock division is plagued by animal diseases, notably the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), an infectious and sometimes fatal viral disease that affects cattle and goats etc., accord-

kistani universities and companies to develop the buffalo industry through semen and embryo cooperation. But FMD poses a serious threat to the effort.

Shen Jin, Deputy General Manager of QYH Biotech Co., Ltd., cited FMD-free zones as an effective countermeasure against FMD. Under the MoU on combatting FMD signed between China and Pakistan in 2019, China will help Pakistan establish FMD-free zones in Punjab and Balochistan to ensure the health of the food animals. Further measures include building animal vaccine plants and establishing a certification system. According to Dr He Cheng, Professor at College of Veterinary Medicine, China Agricultural University, said that the FMD free zones will boost Pakistan's meat exports up to \$12-15 billion.

In addition to FMD-free zones, Dr Masood Rabbani, Professor at University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, sees great potential in academic and research cooperation such as genetic research in buffaloes and talents cultivation.



exceeding 60 million tons and an annual production of 20 billion poultry eggs.

He said, the quality and yields of such livestock and fishery products can be further improved with Chinese technologies to build ca-

eral of China Animal Agriculture Association and President of China Broiler Alliance, said, "China is the largest importer of beef and a major importer of mutton and chicken. This presents enormous opportunities to Pakistan

ing to Zhang Baozhong, Chairman of China Overseas Ports Holding Company. The concern of FMD was shared by Chen Yiyi, CEO of China's Royal Group. Mr Chen displayed strong interest in working with Pa-



**Briefs**

**CAA issues SOPs for int'l inbound flights**

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on Tuesday has issued operational standard operating procedures (SOPs) for international inbound passenger flight. As per the guidelines, the health officers have been directed to carry out Rapid Antigen Testing of all passengers on arrival at airports in Pakistan. Negative cases will undergo 10 days self quarantine at home with stringent Trace, Test & Quarantine (TTQ) protocols while positive cases will be shifted by Provincial / District Administration to self paid facility for 10 days quarantine with TTQ of contacts (if any). 2nd RT PCR test will be conducted on eighth day of quarantine period. In case of negative result, passenger will be allowed to proceed home. However, in case of positive result, passenger will either undergo additional quarantine period or will be shifted to hospital as per advice of health authorities. The development came after Pakistan reported 161 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 837,523. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 18,310. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) 3,377 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Punjab remains the worst-hit province in terms of deaths and cases followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

**'PML-N exposed after escaping reform talks'**

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Information Firdous Ashiq Awan on Tuesday said that politics of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has been exposed after it escaped from talks on electoral reforms. Firdous Ashiq Awan, in a statement, said that PML-N has always supported the rigged system because it was the first party to introduce money and rigging in the electoral process of the country. She further said that PML-N is used to do politics through corrupt practices.

**Less than 4,000 cases reported after a month**

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan reported 3,377 new coronavirus infections, taking the total caseload to 834,146 countrywide, according to the data provided by National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Tuesday. The country last reported 3,953 new coronavirus infections on April 5. At least 161 new deaths have taken the country's death toll to 18,310. Most deaths in the country were reported in Punjab followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The positivity rate of coronavirus cases stands at 8.9%. The number of active cases stands at 86,151, with the nationwide recoveries rising to 733,062. Punjab remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic both in terms of cases reported as well as deaths followed by Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan. To date, 306,929 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Punjab, 308,529 in Sindh, 286,521 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 22,664 in Balochistan, 76,492 in Islamabad, 17,397 in Azad Kashmir, and 5,330 in Gilgit-Baltistan.

**Azerbaijani graduate marries Pakistani student in Baku**

Rector of Baku Higher Oil School Elmar Gasimov and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Pakistan to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee acted as witnesses at the wedding ceremony of the citizens of the two friendly countries

**NEWS DESK**

BAKU: Two students of Baku Higher Oil School (BHOS) got married in the Baku "ASAN service" center No.5. Elvin Ismailov, a graduate of the BHOS Petroleum Engineering Department, married a third-year student of the same department Masume Rizji, who is originally from Pakistan. Rector of Baku Higher Oil School Elmar Gasimov and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Pakistan to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee acted as witnesses at the wedding ceremony of the citizens of the two friendly countries. The rector and the ambassador congratulated the young people and wished them a happy family life based on warm and strong relations, similar to those that exist between the two countries. The newlyweds were presented with gifts. Although the wedding ceremony was held in accord-



ance with the traditions of both countries, a small number of close relatives of the couple attended it, according to the quarantine rules. Elvin Ismailov and Masume Rizji lived in the Baku Higher Oil School (BHOS) Student House during their study at the university. During the same period, they met and fell in love. On Elmar Gasimov's instructions, all necessary conditions have been created for young people at the Baku Higher Oil School (BHOS) Student House so that they could continue living there. Elvin Ismailov says that the support provided to our country by Pakistan during the war was an example for them. It was these fraternal ties between the two countries that encouraged them to quickly formalize the marriage relationship. Note that before the wedding ceremony, the families of the young people met each other via the Internet and blessed them.

**Daily vaccinations cross 150,000 mark**

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's daily vaccinations crossed the 150,000 mark for the first time when people aged 40 years and above started getting jobs, he added. Addressing a press conference earlier, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan said the government has signed deals for 30 million vaccine doses. He said 19 million doses will be received by June this year, clarifying that the government is not relying on donations but 90 per cent of the doses are being purchased. The SAPM said that local packaging of single dose CanSino vaccine is about to begin in the country. Three million doses of this vaccine will be prepared at the National Institute of Health per month, he added.

**Cabinet approves 90-day remission to prisoners**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal cabinet on Tuesday granted approval for giving a 90-day remission to the inmates of prisons on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr. According to details, the remission would not be applicable to inmates facing terrorism and murder charges and those who are facing corruption cases. After approval by the cabinet and prime minister, it would now be sent to President Arif Alvi for final approval. The cabinet was briefed on the situation with respect to the coronavirus in the country, authorities' efforts to make people comply with the standard operating procedures (SOPs), and the medical facilities being provided to the patients. The cabinet gave approval to the appointment of member production at Heavy Industries, Taxila. Similarly, it gave a green signal to the issuance of a coin on the occasion of the centennial celebrations of the University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore. Likewise, it also approved making the national policy clear on the present economic situation of the country. The federal cabinet also gave approval to considerably commute sentences of prisoners on the eve of Eidul Fitr. The 30-day commutation which is normally announced on the eve of Eid has now been enhanced to 90 days. It also approved the deployment of Pakistan Army personnel along with police to make people comply with the SOPs.

**Govt committed to development of agriculture sector: Imran**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Tuesday said the present government, keeping in view vital role of agriculture in country's development and the prosperity of farmers, was committed to develop the sector on priority. Presiding over the National Coordination Committee (NCC) on Agriculture here, he said the agriculture sector was not given any special attention after 1960. Special assistants to PM Jamshed Iqbal Cheema and Dr Shehbaz Gill, Member Economic Advisory Council Abid Qayyum Sulehri and senior officers were in attendance. State Bank Governor Dr Reza Baqir, chief secretaries of Punjab, Sindh,



Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, and other relevant officers attended the meeting via video link. The prime minister, in view of the encouraging production of wheat, maize, rice, sugarcane and potato during the last two years, directed to formulate a clear road-map based on solid steps for the revival of different sectors of agriculture across the country under the new vision of agricultural development and ensure the provision of more facilities to farmers along with a conducive environment. Stressing for utilization of the

forum of NCC on Agriculture for immediate resolution of the issues coming in way of the agricultural development, and effective and timely decision making through continuous monitoring of development and consultation with all the stakeholders, he said the development of agriculture sector was now among the country's foremost priorities. The government in that respect would take all possible measures, the prime minister maintained. The meeting was briefed in detail about the implementation of a coordinated strategy formulated in consultation with all the stakeholders as well as short-term, medium-term and long-term roadmaps for the development of country's agriculture sector, revival of livestock and prosperity of farmers.

**PM's Saudia visit: Several Pak inmates to be released**

RIYADH: Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Lieutenant-General ret'd Bilal Akbar on Tuesday said that several Pakistani inmates would be released from the Kingdom's prisons during the upcoming visit of PM Imran Khan. Sharing details on the upcoming visit of the prime minister to Saudi Arabia, the ambassador said that a meeting would be held on inmates during the visit and the release of inmates would be expedited with the support of Saudi authorities. "Several inmates will be released and brought back to Pakistan," he said. Bilal Akbar further said that three MOUs would be signed during PM Imran Khan's for cooperation in three sectors between the two countries. The ambassador announced that a helpline would be established at the Pakistani embassy that would operate round

the clock to facilitate the countrymen living in the kingdom. "The overseas community could convey their issues on the helpline," he said adding that a community cooperation programme would be initiated which would address issues faced by them. It is pertinent to mention here that Prime Minister Imran Khan is likely to undertake a two-day visit to the KSA in May. Diplomatic sources relayed that Prime Minister Imran Khan is expected to travel to the Kingdom on May 7. His Saudi tour schedule is being finalised, they added. The sources said the prime minister will meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during the visit. Matters of mutual interest, bilateral cooperation, regional security and other issues will likely come under discussion in the meeting between the two. — DNA

**Pakistan will never abandon CPEC: Asim**

DNA

KARACHI: Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority has said that Pakistan will definitely pursue CPEC project as prime minister holds a very special vision regarding its accomplishment. Chairman CPECA Asim Saleem Bajwa was talking to the members of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Tuesday. Emphasizing the importance of the CPEC project, Mr Bajwa said the whole nation supported this project. He said Pakistan had suffered terrible human and infrastructure loss in the war against terror continued for the last 40 years. He said no

power on earth could make Pakistan to abandon this project. He said the prime minister had a very clear vision to realize this venture. He said Pakistan had started work on several projects in power generation, fiber optics and infrastructure sectors with the cooperation of China. We have been trying to enhance our bilateral relations with China since 1952, Bajwa said. He informed that work on a road project from Sukkur to Hyderabad would be started soon after which travel distance between Peshawar and Karachi would be reduced. He said new roads and routes from Gwadar would be completed in a time period of 2 and 3 years.



KARACHI: Chairman CPECA Asim Saleem Bajwa being presented a souvenir during his visit to Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry. — DNA

**Sino-Pak co-op in animal husbandry urged**

Leading experts and companies in livestock and fishery sectors from both countries discussed bilateral cooperation in the educational and industrial programmes in this regard, and possible measures to enact such cooperation

DNA

BEIJING: A webinar on Chinese and Pakistani animal husbandry and fishery cooperation was held to achieve future targets in this sector, according to a report published by Gwadar Pro. Leading experts and companies in livestock and fishery sectors from both countries discussed bilateral cooperation in the educational and industrial programmes in this regard, and possible measures to enact such cooperation. Syed Fakhar Imam, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, pointed out "multiple challenges" in tapping the rich repertoire of livestock and fishery resources in Pakistan. He urged Pakistan to modernise its livestock and fishery industries

by upgrading infrastructure and building a substantial supply chain through joint enterprises with China, technology transfer and talent cultivation. The challenges are echoed by Dr Muhammad Akram, President, Fisheries Development Board, Ministry of Pakistan National Food Security and Research (MNFSR), and Dr Khurshid Ahmad, Animal Husbandry Commissioner, MNFSR. According to Dr Ahmad, Pakistan is home to 208 million food animals with an annual milk yield exceeding 60 million tons and an annual production of 20 billion poultry eggs. He said, the quality and yields of such livestock and fishery products can be further improved with Chinese technologies to build capacity, and with joint research efforts in genetic improvement and other animal

and fishery sciences. Experts and businesses discussed current and future cooperation in the research, industry, and trade developments in the two sectors. In terms of the livestock sector, Li Jinhui, Deputy Secretary General of China Animal Agriculture Association and President of China Broiler Alliance, said, "China is the largest importer of beef and a major importer of mutton and chicken. This presents enormous opportunities to Pakistan to enhance its beef and mutton exports." Despite huge potential of exports, Pakistan's livestock division is plagued by animal diseases, notably the Foot-and-Mouth Disease (FMD), an infectious and sometimes fatal viral disease that affects cattle and goats etc., according to Zhang Baozhong, Chairman of China Overseas Ports Holding Company.

The concern of FMD was shared by Chen Yiyi, CEO of China's Royal Group. Mr Chen displayed strong interest in working with Pakistani universities and companies to develop the buffalo industry through semen and embryo cooperation. But FMD poses a serious threat to the effort. Shen Jin, Deputy General Manager of QYH Biotech Co., Ltd., cited FMD-free zones as an effective countermeasure against FMD. Under the MoU on combatting FMD signed between China and Pakistan in 2019, China will help Pakistan establish FMD-free zones in Punjab and Balochistan to ensure the health of the food animals. Further measures include building animal vaccine plants and establishing a certification system. According to Dr He Cheng, Professor at College of Veterinary Medicine,

China Agricultural University, said that the FMD free zones will boost Pakistan's meat exports up to \$12-15 billion. In addition to FMD-free zones, Dr Masood Rabbani, Professor at University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences, sees great potential in academic and research cooperation such as genetic research in buffaloes and talents cultivation. "Now we have (some) expertise available in the university, which can facilitate the private sector in adopting new technologies," said Dr Masood Rabbani. Dr Ahrar Khan, Ex-dean at Faculty of Veterinary Science of University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, introduced several MoUs and programmes between Chinese and Pakistani universities to cultivate animal sciences talents and collaborate on the pharmaceutical industry.

**Bahraini envoy lauds role of Pakistani immigrants**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bahrain to Pakistan, Muhammad Ibrahim Muhammad said on Tuesday that Pakistani immigrants were a huge strength to Bahrain as they were playing a significant role in the development of his country. They (immigrants) were being vaccinated against coronavirus, free of cost to ensure their safety against the pandemic, the envoy informed Kashmir Committee Chairman Shehryar Khan Afridi in a meeting here. Afridi said Pakistan, Bahrain shared historical ties and vowed to strengthen friendship between the two countries. Pakistan valued its strong diplomatic relations with Bahrain, he said and underlined the need to further enhance bilateral ties in various fields.