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PM Imran Khan vows to continue the jihad against corrupt mafias

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Sehr & Iftar Timings
Ramadan Kareem

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:32 am	07:00 pm
FAISALABAD	03:40 am	06:56 pm
LAHORE	03:34 am	06:51 pm
KARACHI	04:24 am	07:08 pm
SARGODHA	03:39 am	06:59 pm

CITY	SEHR	IFTAR
ISLAMABAD	03:22 am	07:10 pm
FAISALABAD	03:30 am	07:06 pm
LAHORE	03:24 am	07:01 pm
KARACHI	04:14 am	07:18 pm
SARGODHA	03:29 am	07:09 pm

PM vows to continue jihad against mafias

The Prime Minister expressed the optimism that his struggle against corrupt mafia will succeed

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

EDITORIAL ON PAGE 5

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has reiterated his position regarding his firm stance vis-vis all kinds of mafias active in the country. During his live telephone inquiries by the public on Tuesday, Prime Minister Imran Khan said that he would defeat the corrupt mafias. He said that all mafias including the sugar mafia did not want a rule of law in the country. But the premier vowed to defeat these forces. He said it was Jihad to bring the powerful under the rule of law and he promised to wage a war against corrupt mafias and showed his determination to win this war against them. He said the sugar mafia would never want the rule of law in the country. The Prime Minister expressed the optimism that his struggle against corrupt mafia and for the establishment of rule of law will succeed, which will turn Pakistan into a great nation. He asked the people to stand by his struggle which is aimed at bringing the powerful under the law. The Prime Minister said those who plundered the nation over the last thirty years do not want supremacy of the constitution and law in the country. He said mafias in different sectors including in the sugar do not want the institutions to function. Imran Khan said the present government believes in the rule of law and it is not interfering in the matters of country's judiciary and the National Accountability Bureau. The Prime Minister said he has also waged

PM wants not to tarnish honour of parents: Farrukh

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Tuesday said the Protection of Parents Ordinance 2021, has been promulgated as Prime Minister Imran Khan wants that the honour and respect of parents should not be tarnished. In a tweet tagging copy of the Protection of Parents Ordinance 2021, he said this law provides protection against forcible eviction of parents by their children. The minister said parental eviction is punishable by up to a year in prison, a fine or both.

a war against the land grabbers and noose has been tightened against them. He said twenty one thousand acres of land valuing twenty seven billion rupees has so far been recovered. When asked about the price hike, the Prime Minister said he has brought Shaukat Tarin as the Finance Minister with the responsibility to bring down the prices of essential commodities and take the economy towards growth.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: PML N President and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shabbaz Sharif in a meeting with Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei, at the Palestine House, on Tuesday. - DNA

Pakistan condemns Israeli air strikes

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan strongly condemns the air strikes by Israel in Gaza that resulted in deaths and injuries to so many innocent Palestinians including children. This is yet another reprehensible action during the holy month of Ramadan, following the increased restrictions on the fundamental freedoms of Palestinians,

Continued on Page 06

Qureshi urges world to condemn Israel

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Tuesday has strongly condemned the Israeli violence against innocent and unarmed Palestinians and urged the international community to mobilize its efforts to get stopped the Israeli atrocities against Palestinians and their forced evictions from their homes.

Continued on Page 06

FM Qureshi talks to Turkish counterpart

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Referring to his telephonic conversation with his Turkey counterpart, the Foreign Minister said Mevlut Cavusoglu is in Saudi Arabia and during talks with the Saudi Foreign Minister today, he will propose an emergency ministerial level meeting of the OIC in order to effectively raise voice of Muslim Ummah on the Palestinian issue. He has also emphatically stated that there is no change in Pakistan's historic and principled position on Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

Briefs

Only rice achieved from PM's KSA visit

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday while declaring Prime Minister Imran Khan an enemy of the people, questioned what he achieved during his visit to Saudi Arabia apart from receiving 19,000 bags of rice in terms of Zakat and Fitra. According to a statement issued from the Bilawal House, he said that the expenses of the prime minister's Saudi Arabia visit should be compared with the price of rice bags received in the form of Zakat. "If Imran Khan's 22-year struggle was to make a nuclear power worthy of the Saudi King's zakat rice, then I pray that Almighty God will not help anyone in such a struggle," Bilawal said. The PPP chairman said that people must hold Imran Khan accountable, who went to Saudi Arabia for Umrah after raising chicken price to more than Rs 500 per kg.

Maryam slams Israeli attacks

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz has condemned the attacks on Palestinians by Israeli forces and expressed solidarity with the Palestinian people. In her tweet Maryam Nawaz said "I stand with Palestine. How can the world allow Israel to get away with such heinous crimes against humanity?". She also urged the United Nations and other world powers to call Israel out on its tyranny. "It is a human tragedy that warrants a human response above religious divide", she added.

Action against judges who 'helped' Sharifs needed

Fawad explained the Hudaibiya Paper Mills' case in a series of tweets uploaded on Tuesday

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Tuesday demanded the Supreme Court of Pakistan to hold those judges accountable who 'helped' the Sharif family escape punishment in Hudaibiya Paper Mills' case. Explaining the case in a series of tweets uploaded on Tuesday, Fawad said when the Sharif family challenged action by the authorities in the case in the Lahore High Court,

the latter pronounced a split decision. "From there, the case went to the court of referee judge who closed the Hudaibiya Mills' case once and for all in 2014," the federal minister said, and added that interestingly trial of the case was held not on a single day despite the fact that a lot of investigation had already been done. "And later, it emerged from the Panama leaks that the judge who had ordered the closure of the case, himself owned assets abroad. Unfortunately, no action has been taken against that judge as well,"



Fawad regretted. See Also: NAB urged to put Shehbaz's name on ECL "Now some new facts have come to light in this case, and we hope that courts will also hold those judges accountable who pronounced 'unfair' decisions despite proofs. It was time that all those who 'connived' with the Sharif family should be made to pay for their deeds. Pakistan's future is linked to the rule of law," the information minister said. He said that the case involved financial embezzlement of Rs1242 million; which was a bigger scan-

dal than that of Panama offshore companies of the Sharif family, and which first came to light in 2001 when the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) had filed a reference against the family in Hudaibiya papers. The minister further said both sons of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Hassan and Hussain Nawaz, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shehbaz were all central characters in the scam.

Continued on Page 06

Eid likely to be on Friday

ISLAMABAD: The Meteorological Department on Tuesday said Eid-ul-Fitr is likely to be observed in the country on Friday, as there are "no chances" of the moon being sighted on Wednesday. If the moon is not sighted on Wednesday - Ramadan 29 - then the holy month would be observed for 30 days, and the festival of Eid would be celebrated on May 14 - Friday. The met said the new moon of Shawwal would be born on crossing conjunction point at "00:01 PST on 12-05-2021." - DNA

NCOC guidelines for Eid prayers

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) issued on Tuesday health guidelines for Eidul Fitr prayers to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. According to the NCOC, Eid prayers should be offered in open places under Covid-19 protocols. In case prayers are offered indoors, windows and doors of mosques be kept open for adequate ventilation. In order to avoid crowding, more congregations should be held at the same time. The NCOC said that Eid sermon should be brief and comprehensive with minors under 15 years of age, elderly citizens and those suffering from some illness be stopped from attending congregational prayers. It has made mask wearing mandatory for every worshiper who have been advised to bring their own prayer mats. The NCOC said the places where Eid prayers will be offered should have multiple entry and exit points with effective thermal scanners. Six-feet distance between rows of worshippers be ensured and they should avoid handshaking or hugs after Eid prayers. It stressed the need for strict enforcement of SOPs to contain the spread of the coronavirus.

ذرا سی لاپرواہی زندگی کو کہاں لے آئی

صرف

عید گھر پر ہی منائیں | صابن سے ہاتھ بار بار دھوئیں | ہاتھ ملانے، گلہ ملنے سے گریز کریں | ماسک ضرور استعمال کریں | عید کی نمازیں سماجی فاصلہ برقرار رکھیں | بزرگ اور بچہ گھر پر ہی عید کی نماز کا اہتمام کریں

نیشنل کمانڈ اینڈ آپریشن سنٹر حکومت پاکستان

گھر رہیں، محفوظ رہیں

PID(I) 6193/20

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Briefs

7 killed in different incidents

FAISALABAD: Seven people including 2 women were killed in different incidents in and around the city during the last 24 hours. Police said on Tuesday that Alam Sher, resident of Chak No.237-RB Khaddian Waraichan killed his wife Asim Bibi (35) with a blow of axes on the suspicion of illicit relations with a youth of the same locality. In another incident, 65-year-old Anayat and his son Ansar (24) residents of Chak No.97-GB were shot dead on Jail Road by their rivals when they were returning back after meeting their close relative Asim in Central Jail. Meanwhile, 28-year-old Muhammad Zafar, 32-year-old Naseem Bibi, 16-year-old Ehtisham Amir and 85-year-old Rani Bibi were killed in separate road accidents in Faisalabad. Police were investigating. — APP

Coronavirus claims 29 more lives in KPK

PESHAWAR: Coronavirus claimed 29 more lives in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the last 24 hours and the death toll from Corona in the province has risen to 3644, an official of the health department said on Tuesday. During a media briefing, he said, 495 more people infected with coronavirus in 24 hours and thus the number of active cases in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is 9,666. He said the total number of corona cases in the province has reached 124,979. However, he said, another 547 people recovered from Corona in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in 24 hours and the total number of patients recovering from Corona in the province has reached 111,669. He said 5,326 diagnostic tests were conducted in one day in the province and with this the total number of diagnostic tests reached 16651129. He said, in the last 24 hours, 59 new cases were reported in Mardan, 47 in Upper Dir, 46 in Mohmand, 39 in Peshawar and Kurram 39 and 33 in Nowshera. — APP

Rescue 1122 ambulances deployed at Bacha Khan Int'l Airport

PESHAWAR: Rescue 1122 has decided to deploy its fully equipped ambulances at Bacha Khan International Airport to deal with any emergency and provide first hand healthcare facilities to the people coming from abroad, Director General Rescue 1122 Dr. Khatir Ahmad said here on Tuesday. Talking to media in Bacha Khan International Airport, he said that Rescue 1122 medical personnel deployed on corona virus prevention and safety measures. He said, ambulances and medical team will be present in the premises of Bacha Khan International Airport and Corona virus symptoms or suspects need to be safely transported to hospital in ambulance. The decision has been taken to ensure the safety of foreign and domestic passengers coming through Bach Khan International Airport, Dr Khatir Ahmed said. He said, Rescue 1122 ambulances to provide services in other emergencies as well. — APP

93,359 people have been vaccinated

DNA

FAISALABAD: As many as 93,359 people so far have been vaccinated against corona at the Corona Vaccination Centers in Faisalabad district, out of which 75,643 were given the first dose and 17,716 were given the second dose. According to the District Health officer Dr. Ata ul Moenun the process of vaccinating the registered persons was going on uninterruptedly at 17 centers and implementation of Corona SOPs is also being ensured at the centers. He told that along with vaccination of 50,60 and 70 years vaccination of individuals of more than 40 years of age is also being continued.

PM's Saudia visit gives new impetus to bilateral relations

He said Youm-e-Palestine (Palestine Day) would be observed across the country on coming Friday to express solidarity with Palestinian cause

SHUJAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's recent visit to Saudi Arabia has given a new impetus and dimension to bilateral relations of two brotherly countries, said Special Representative to the Prime Minister for Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday. Talking to media, Ashrafi, who is also Chairman PUC said Saudi leadership, people and the media gave much importance to PM's visit.

Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman has accepted the invitation to visit Pakistan. The most important leaders of the Arab Islamic world would visit Pakistan during the year 2021. He said the establishment of Pak Saudi Supreme Co-ordination Council, agreements in various fields would strengthen religious, trade, economic and social ties. The Prime Minister during his meetings with the leadership of Saudi Arabia, Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Rabita-e-Alam-e-Islami and Imams of the Holy Mosques



discussed taking practical steps for resolving the issues of Islamophobia, blasphemy on a permanent basis. Pakistan was expanding co-

operation with Saudi Arabia in various fields including trade, economy, media and defense. During the visit, the support to oppressed Kashmiris and Palestinians were reiterated besides condemning atrocities and brutalities against both Kashmiris and Palestinians and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation was asked to take immediate action in this regard. He said all rumor regarding Pak Saudi relations were foiled by PM's recent visit to Saudi Arabia. Rumors were constantly circulating to sour Pak-Saudi relations for more than a

year. Efforts are still under way by targeting welfare activities of Markaz Malik Salman despite very successful visit of the premier. He said Youm-e-Palestine (Palestine Day) would be observed across the country on coming Friday to express solidarity with Palestinian cause. The day will be observed on the appeal of Pakistan Ulema Council (PUC) as the entire Pakistani nation as well as government were with the Palestinian people against Israeli atrocities. Israeli brutalities against Palestinians would be condemned.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Health Dr. Yasmeen Rashid offering dua after sapling plant during Clean and Green Pakistan Campaign. — DNA

DC Faisalabad stresses Covid SOPs implementation

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visited various areas to check the implementation of lockdown/ Corona SOPs and taken action against violators and handed over them to police. He also arrested some persons travels on motorcycles and cars without face mask. Apprising of the dangers of corona virus, he said to co-operate with the district administration in the preventive measures

to reduce the ongoing threat of Corona. Stressing on the need of strict implementation of corona SOPs, he ordered the Assistant Commissioners and other administrative officers to ensure implementation of government guidelines in all cases where there is no room for negligence. He said that in exceptional circumstances, it is always necessary to take extraordinary measures and taking precautionary measures is the only effective way to deal with the corona virus.

He appealed to the people to follow SOPs and support government steps by practicing Stay Home Stay Safe, protect yourself and others from corona, because the less interaction with each others would less the spread of the epidemic. Deputy Commissioner informed that 22 more shopping malls and a restaurant was sealed while various individuals without face masks were arrested and fined Rs. 48000 for violating lockdown / Corona SOPs across the district yesterday. In the last 57

days, 1825 shopping malls and plazas, restaurants, wedding halls, private schools, offices and bus stands were sealed and fined Rs. 2.9 million. According to the details, during checking apart from sealing 1332 shopping malls and plazas, 329 restaurants, 44 marriage halls, 113 private schools, two private schools, a bus stand, four grocery shops and closing 120 passenger vehicles, more than 550 people have been arrested for roaming the streets and public places without face masks.

10 shopkeepers held, 25 shops sealed

MAHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: The district administration arrested 10 shopkeepers and sealed 25 shops for violating lockdown here on Tuesday. According to official sources, Assistant Commissioner Sargodha Umer Daraz Gondal along with police and other officials visited bazaars and markets and sealed more than 25 shops and arrested 10 shopkeepers for violating corona related SOPs. Meanwhile, six butchers were also arrested for selling meat at exorbitant prices. Talking on the occasion, the Assistant Commissioner Sargodha Umer Daraz Gondal said that implementation of corona related SOPs would be ensured at every cost and stern action would be taken against the violators without any discrimination.

KP Govt decides to celebrate eid with simplicity under SOPs

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government has decided to celebrate eid ul fitr with simplicity under SOPs due to third wave of the coronavirus pandemic. While welcoming the announcement of religious and political leaders to celebrate eid with simplicity in the wake of third wave of coronavirus that was declared pandemic globally, the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has directed all the provincial ministers, advisers, special assistants, members Provincial Assembly and PTI leaders to celebrate eid ul fitr with simplicity. He also directed them to avoid meeting with people in residences, guest houses

and others public places and strictly follow anti coronavirus SOPs during eid holidays. The Chief Minister underlined the need of proactive role of all segments of the society to counter the fatal infection. The Chief Minister is personally supervising the situation regarding implementation of SOPs and directed all Ministers, advisers, special assistants and MPAs to strictly follow SOPs during eid holidays. The Chief Minister has paid a surprise visit to University Road, Cantonment, City, GT Road in Peshawar the other day and expressed anguish over poor sanitation at Pabbi bazar in Nowshera. — APP



KARACHI: Large number of protestors gathered on the call of Jamaat e Islami to protest against the Israeli fascism against innocent Palestinians. Protectors asked Muslim leaders to come forward & play their part for the Palestine. — DNA

Sindh Govt. urged to allow shops to open

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) has appealed Sindh Government to have mercy on the perturbed shopkeepers and small traders of Karachi by allowing them to open up businesses during last two days before Eid from Iftar to Sehri so that they could be able to recover some of the grave losses suffered by them due to stiff curbs imposed to contain further spread of COVID-19 pandemic. "Keeping in view the not so bad number of COVID-19 cases in Karachi, we believe that there is some room available to allow shopkeepers in Karachi to open up their businesses at least on Wednesday and Thursday from

with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) during these days. "Instead of completely shutting down businesses, the government should allow them to keep on running their businesses from Iftar to Sehri during the last two days before Eid which would obviously fragment the public and discourage overcrowding as all the markets in the city will be simultaneously operational, besides ensuring social distancing all the time, which is one of the key elements required for containing further spread of coronavirus", he added. Keeping in view the overall situation and grievances suffered by small traders and shopkeepers, Chairman BMG hoped that the Sindh government, which has always played the lead role in efficiently rescuing the public

from time to time, would provide the desperately needed relief to local businesses this time as well by relaxing the curbs for just two days from Iftar to Sehri so that the businesses could be saved from further disaster. "Keeping in view the COVID statistics and forecasts, if the government feels that the loss of precious lives was unlikely then they should provide relief for two days", he added. President KCCI Shariq Vohra stated that it is high time that the Sindh government, being the peoples' government, has to come forward to minimize the hardships being faced by the distressed citizens and the business community of Karachi by ordering to lift restrictions on opening up businesses on Wednesday and Thursday from Iftar to Sehri.

"Due to harsh curbs imposed in an extraordinary situation, uncertainty prevails and people have become hopeless hence, the Sindh government will have to take steps to deal with the situation by providing relief to Karachiites during the last two days before Eid", he added. Chairman of KCCI's Special Committee for Small Traders Majeed Memon pointed out that many shopkeepers are already going through terrible crises due to limited business activities since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic hence, the government must look into the possibility of providing them relief for just two days before Eid by allowing them to carry on businesses from Iftar to Sehri otherwise many businesses will not be able to survive and wipeout forever.

Continents of different operational units of police including dolphin squad, elite force, traffic police and police response unit were part of the flag march. The march passed through different roads and markets of the city including Mall Road, Hall Road, Canal Road, Dharampura, Sadr, Joray Pull, Chungi, Ring Road, Bedian Road, Bhatta Chowk and other areas of the city. CCPO Ghulam Mahmood Dogar said the purpose of flag march and other security arrangements was to create awareness among citizens to follow corona SOPs for the safety of their own life. It was a matter of satisfaction that most of the citizens have started wearing masks in response to continuous awareness campaign of police, he added. — APP

Security plan for Eidul Fitr finalized

LAHORE: The capital city police on Tuesday chalked out a comprehensive security plan for Eidul Fitr in wake of coronavirus to maintain law and order and ensure safety of citizens. Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations wing) Lahore Sajid Kiani while giving details of the security plan said that more than 7,000 policemen would perform duty on the eve and Eidul Fitr day. Six SPs, 35 DSPs, 83 SHO/Inspectors and more than 373 sub ordinates would be on duty on Eid. Sajid Kiani said that there were more than 5,000 mosques in the city which had been categorized according to their sensitivity in different categories. There were 218 mosques of category "A", 775 mosques of category "B" and 4, 046 masajid of category "C" which would be provided foolproof security on Eid congregation. The DIG Operations said that implementation on government directions regarding coronavirus preventive measures would be ensured through enforcement teams in collaboration with mosques committees and citizens. Policemen of special security unit (SSU), anti riot force (ARF), dolphin squad and police response unit would be highly alert on their places of postings and ensure complete checking of citizens. Dolphin Squad and PRU teams would conduct patrolling. The DIG Operations said that search and sweep operations, snap checking, biometric verification and all other preventive measures would be adopted to restrain from any untoward situation. Metal detectors and walk through gates along with CCTV cameras would be used for checking and monitoring purposes. — APP

PHP starts special SOPs awareness campaign

FAISALABAD: Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) police launched a special public awareness campaign for implementation on anti-corona SOPs in true letter and spirit in Faisalabad region. PHP spokesman said Tuesday that on direction of SSP Patrolling Mirza Anjum Kamal, DSP Patrolling Malik Muhammad Amin along with Incharge Mobile Education Unit PHP Sub Inspector Rizwan Bhatti visited various PHP posts and directed the patrolling Jawans to act upon government SOPs strictly. They interacted with the general public traveling on various roads and convinced them to follow preventive measures and ensure implementation of corona SOPs in toto. They distributed informative pamphlets among the road users and said that use of face-masks and social distance were imperative to defeat the coronavirus as it was most easy way to save themselves. — APP

Customs foil smuggling bid of electronic items worth millions

KARACHI: Pakistan Customs authorities on Tuesday claimed foiling a smuggling bid of electronic items worth Rs. 9.4 million and arrested two accused from Karachi airport. According to Customs spokesman, two accused passengers at international arrival lounge of Jinnah International Airport, who were traveling from Dubai to Karachi, were checked and searched over suspicion. During checking the Customs officials recovered 16 Apple iPhones, 8 mak-box, 2 PlayStations and 36 Rado watches. The value of the recovered items was Rs. 9.4 million. A case had been registered and accused Muhammad Sufyan and Wasi Haider were taken into custody. Further investigations were underway. — APP

Flag March held to implement Covid SOPs

LAHORE: The capital city police flag marched in different areas of the provincial capitol to monitor law and order and implementation of corona SOPs. Capital City Police Officer Lahore Ghulam Mahmood Dogar along with Commissioner Lahore Muhammad Usman led the flag march. DIG Operations Sajid Kiani, CTO Lahore Syed Hammad Abid and other senior police officers also participated in the flag march. Contingents of different operational units of police including dolphin squad, elite force, traffic police and police response unit were part of the flag march. The march passed through different roads and markets of the city including Mall Road, Hall Road, Canal Road, Dharampura, Sadr, Joray Pull, Chungi, Ring Road, Bedian Road, Bhatta Chowk and other areas of the city. CCPO Ghulam Mahmood Dogar said the purpose of flag march and other security arrangements was to create awareness among citizens to follow corona SOPs for the safety of their own life. It was a matter of satisfaction that most of the citizens have started wearing masks in response to continuous awareness campaign of police, he added. — APP

Briefs

Police to start online registration for tenants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police would start an online registration for tenants after Eid-ul-Fitr, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman announced on Tuesday. He made the decision while holding an online 'Khuli Kutcheri' (open court) here at Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) office, where a citizen submit his submission for online registration of the tenants. The IGP appreciated his recommendation and directed the officials concerned to start work on the proposal so that it could be started at the earliest. "The capital police was using its available resources to facilitate the dwellers," he said. It may be mention here that Islamabad police had already introduced an online traffic appointment system, FIR alert system and traffic update alert system to the convenience of the citizens.

CAA takes notice of 'fake' Covid tests

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has noted with "grave concern" that passengers travelling to Pakistan, especially from Gulf states, have tested positive for the coronavirus upon arrival despite being in possession of negative PCR test results. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has noted with "grave concern" that passengers travelling to Pakistan — especially from Gulf states — have tested positive for the coronavirus upon arrival despite being in possession of negative PCR test results. "Upon conducting an investigation into the issue, it has been found that passengers travelled to Pakistan using fake PCR negative test results and endangered not only passengers travelling with them, but also undermined the intense efforts being made at the national level to curb the spread of Covid-19," the CAA said in a notification dated May 10. "The onus of contributing towards this national cause does not fall on the authority alone but is a responsibility that has to be shared by all concerned stakeholders including airline operators," it said. The authority directed all airlines operating to and from Pakistan to ensure that all passengers travelling to the country possess test results from government approved labs and that no test results be accepted without a valid QR code.

NGOs to spread awareness in Ramadan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Recently, leading NGOs in Pakistan namely: Shaikat Khanum Hospital, Rizq and Care Foundation joined the TikTok hashtags Ramadan Spirit and Blessed Ramadan to leverage the TikTok interactive community in gauging support for significant causes to the Pakistani community. As part of its efforts to inspire and encourage a new generation to have a positive impact on the planet and those around them, TikTok has launched two hashtags i.e. Ramadan Spirit and Blessed Ramadan driven by a full-slate of content highlighting social solidarity and the true value of giving back. This Ramadan initiative by TikTok has resonated with a massive audience garnering over 2.4 billion views for Blessed Ramadan and 210 million views for RamadanSpirit to date, featuring a diverse spectrum of community service programmes including, Shaikat Khanum Hospital - Zakat and donation drive for cancer patients, Rizq NGO - Donation for Hunger-Free Pakistan, Care Foundation - Sponsorship education of underprivileged children, along with the local community content on the need of empathy, kindness and true spirit of Ramadan.

T5 being constructed to meet increasing demand of energy

T5 is one of the 10 mega projects WAPDA is implementing to double the existing hydel generation with addition of more than 9000 MW to the National Grid in just eight years from year 2022 to 2028-29 in phased manner

ISLAMABAD: In the wake of awarding the contract for civil works of the 1530 MW-Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project (T5) last week, the Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd) Tuesday visited site of the project located at Tarbela Dam to review on ground the preparedness level for mobilization of the contractor to the site and start of construction work on the project, scheduled to be commenced in July this year. During the visit, the WAPDA chairman had a detailed round of

nel No. 5 (T5), sites of the Power House and Switch Yard and Intake of the Power House, therein, he was briefed about mobilization of the contractor and timelines for over-implementation of the project. WAPDA Member (Water) Abdul Zahir Khan Durrani, Member (Power) Jamil Akhtar, Authority's Advisor Nasir Hanif, project management and representatives of the consultants were also there during the visit. Speaking on the occasion, the chairman said T5 is yet another landmark project, being constructed by WAPDA under its least-cost energy generation plan to meet in-

creasing demand of energy in the country through indigenous clean and green hydel electricity. T5 is one of the 10 mega projects WAPDA is implementing to double the existing hydel generation with addition of more than 9000 MW to the National Grid in just eight years from year 2022 to 2028-29 in phased manner. The addition of this cheap electricity will help stabilize the power tariff by decreasing reliance on import of expensive fuel for thermal power generation, he added. Underlining the importance of timely completion of the hydro-

power projects for national economy, WAPDA Chairman directed T5 project management to strictly adhere to the timelines set for completion of the project with no compromise on the stipulated standards of construction work. It is worth mentioning here that T5 Project is being constructed on Tunnel No. 5 of Tarbela Dam with approved PC-I of US\$ 807 million. World Bank is providing US\$ 390 million, while Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to the tune of US\$ 300 million. Continuous monetary assistance by the international financial institu-

tions to WAPDA for construction of hydropower projects reflects their trust in WAPDA's financial strength. Cumulative generation capacity of T5 Project stands at 1530 MW with three generating units of 510 MW each. The project, scheduled to commence electricity generation by mid-2024, will provide 1.347 billion units of low-cost hydel electricity on the average per annum to the National Grid. Installed power generation capacity at Tarbela Dam will increase from 4888 MW to 6418 MW on completion of T5 Project. — Agencies

Eid prayer at 7.30 a.m. in Faisal Mosque

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Eid-ul-Fitr prayer would be offered at 7.30 a.m. in Faisal Mosque, said Dawah Academy of International Islamic University Islamabad. Prof Dr Muhammad Tahir Hakeem from the Faculty of Shariah and Law will deliver Khutaba-e-Eid-ul-Fitr, said a press release. All necessary measures have been taken by the management of Faisal Mosque to strictly follow standard operating procedures issued by the government to prevent Covid-19's third surge.

Weather to remain pleasant during Eid: PMD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Tuesday predicted that the weather would remain pleasant in Rawalpindi and Islamabad during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays as more rains likely in the next three days. "Rain would likely continue for the next three days as clouds with moisture are present on the horizon in patches", said an official of the PMD told APP in a Telephonic conversation. Good news for the citizens of the twin cities Rawalpindi and Islamabad was that the rainfall would continue in Rawalpindi and Islamabad after small breaks.

The official of the PMD claimed that the weather would remain clear during the day and turn rainy in the evenings, PMD official predicted. The official also mentions that the rain is expected in upper Punjab, northern Baluchistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. It is pertinent to mention here the heavy rain accompanied by gusty winds lashed the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Monday bringing a pleasant change in the weather, however inundating low lying areas. The temperature in the twin cities rose to 35°C over the past few days but after rain it dropped down to 20°C. — APP

Qadri condemns Israeli atrocities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Dr Noor-ul-Haq Qadri has strongly condemned recent Israeli attacks on unarmed Palestinians and termed it a human tragedy. Addressing a virtual Conference on the latest situation in Al-Quds hosted by Turkey today (Tuesday), he said Pakistan will continue its moral, political and diplomatic support to the Palestinian people. The Minister said inhuman atrocities against unarmed Palestinians and disrespect of Al-Aqsa Mosque are unacceptable and such kind of attacks is repugnant to religious freedom. He urged United Nations Security Council and human rights bodies to take immediate action and realize the seriousness of the issue. The conference was attended by more than 100 delegates from 60 Muslim countries.

IRSA releases 176,400 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 176,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 189,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1408.49 feet, which was 24.49 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 65,400 and 60,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1110.75 feet, which was 70.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 57,200 and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

Hot, dry weather likely to persist

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Tuesday forecast that hot and dry weather was likely to prevail in most plain areas of the country during next 24 hours.

Rain-wind-thunderstorm was expected at isolated places in Pothohar region, upper Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Upper Sindh, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, the Pakistan Meteorological Department said. Maximum temperatures (in °C) recorded on Tuesday were: Sibbi, Shaheed Benazirabad, Dadu and Mohenjo-Daro 44, and Rahim Yar Khan, Bahawalnagar, Padidan and Jacobabad 43. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Dr. Sania Nishtar, SAPM on poverty alleviation reviews Iftar distribution operations. — DNA

PML-N responsible for economic mess: Fayyaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Provincial Minister Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan on Tuesday said that the top corrupt leadership of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) is responsible for the economic mess and inflation in the country. Talking to a private news channel, he said the national exchequer was mercilessly plundered by the PML-N leaders in the past, adding that PML-N only established their property abroad at the expense of the innocent people.



While criticizing Sharif brothers, he said that Hudabiya Paper Mill case would expose the corruption of the Sharif family, adding, those who plundered the economic rights of the nation are reaching their logical end. He said that the public is

well aware of those who ruthlessly looted the national exchequer, and no false propaganda can mislead them anymore. He said the corrupt leadership of PML-N is now giving clarifications to gain public sympathies but no compromise will be made on corruption's ongoing cases. Replying to a query, he said the core objective of Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI) government is economic stability and overcome the burden of inflation while objective of Saudi Arabia's visit was to defend cooperation and bring more stability in the economy.

Ministry likely to decide putting Shehbaz's name on ECL today

DNA

LAHORE: The Interior Ministry is expected to make a final decision regarding inclusion of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif's name on the Exit Control List (ECL) today (Wednesday). According to sources, the interior ministry has received a formal application of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) seeking to include Shehbaz Sharif's name on the ECL. An important meeting will be held tomorrow (Wednesday) to make

final decision in this regard. Earlier today, the anti-graft watchdog had decided to move Supreme Court (SC) against Lahore High Court's (LHC) decision of granting bail to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and opposition leader in National Assembly (NA) Shehbaz Sharif in money laundering case. The prosecution team has started preparation in this regard. On Monday, the anti-graft watchdog's Lahore chapter in a letter to NAB Headquarters had recommended to place the name of PML-N president Shehbaz Sharif on the Exit Control List (ECL), in money laundering case

including co-accused. A letter recommending putting the name of Shehbaz Sharif, the main accused in the money laundering reference, and all the other co-accused on the ECL had come to light. In the letter it was recommended to challenge the Lahore High Court's decision against including the names of the accused in the ECL, in the Supreme Court. The letter stated that a reference based on solid evidence against the accused was filed before the Lahore Accountability Court on August 20, 2020, on which court proceedings were underway.

Raza Rabbani condemns Israeli aggression

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former Senate chairman Raza Rabbani on Tuesday strongly condemned Israeli attacks on the Gaza Strip, residential area of Jerusalem, and Al-Aqsa Mosque. Raza Rabbani said the brutal attacks of Israel had taken the lives of dozens of Palestinians including innocent children. He said the Israeli forces were committing genocide of Palestinians. He said the silence of the Western world on the brutal attacks depicted their dual standards regarding human rights and religious freedom. Referring to a picture of an arrested young Palestinian girl which went viral, Raza Rabbani said the morale of the Palestinian nation was high as could be seen on the smiling face of the young girl. Raza Rabbani questioned why the Western parliaments were silent on the issue. He said the Muslim world and the PTI government just paid lip-service in this regard. The Muslim countries should have pressed Israel through United Nations Security Council, he said. He was of the view that the Muslim countries should play their due role in mobilizing the human rights organizations and economic sanctions on Israel. He said today the developing nations needed a leader like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

CDA facilitating citizens during holidays

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) administration is trying to provide services to the citizens despite the Eid holidays and lockdown. Due to heavy rains last night, the worst traffic jam was caused due to accumulation of water on Kashmir Chowk. The concerned departments of the department took immediate action to remove the waterlogging on the said road and restored the flow of traffic on the road. The project was also started in a few minutes. In order to provide best facilities to the citizens during lockdown and Eid holidays, the Authority has been cancelled the holidays of these departments including sanitation, environment, road maintenance, street lights, city sewerage, water supply, provided facilities to the citizens and the city has also set up a central control room to deal with complaints and problems. It should be noted that despite the lockdown and Eid holidays, the officers and staff of the relevant departments of CDA are on duty day and night to serve the city.

Double shifts in centres after Eid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal authorities have decided to continue double shifts in COVID-19 vaccination centres after Eidul Fitr from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. The health authorities have decided to extend the time of COVID-19 vaccination centres that will work in double shifts from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm. The decision was taken in view of hot weather as it could cause difficulties to the citizens to arrive at the vaccination centres.

The double shifts will facilitate citizens to get COVID-19 jobs in the evening hours besides expediting the vaccination process. Earlier in the day, NCO chief Asad Umar announced that citizens aged 40 years and above can walk into any vaccination centre from tomorrow (Wednesday) to get a Covid-19 jab. Taking to Twitter, the planning and development minister said: "Starting tomorrow the 12th of May all 40 plus who have registered will be able to walk into any vaccination centre of their choice and get vaccinated."

RCCI welcomes inquiry report on Ring Road

"We are happy that the Prime Minister has taken a personal interest in this matter and we hope that the project will be completed during his tenure"

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has welcomed the completion of the inquiry report of the Rawalpindi Ring Road project and alleged cost increase and changes in the plan. In a statement, President RCCI Nasir Mirza said, "We demand that immediate action be taken against the elements for whom these alleged changes have been made and that those involved be brought to justice and that the project not be further delayed." Referring to the press conference of SAPM to CM Punjab, Ms Fir-

dous Ashiq Awan, he said, "We are happy that the Prime Minister has taken a personal interest in this matter and we hope that the project will be completed during his tenure." He said that if the Chamber of Commerce and the business community had already been kept on board and involved in the process, the project would not have faced this situation. He said that the business community believes that the Ring Road project will be a game changer for Rawalpindi. It is an important project for the development of Rawalpindi and it should be completed as soon as possible. He suggested that a committee be formed on

the platform of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce to liaise with the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) and the Commissioner's Office and implement the suggestions of the stakeholders to remove the obstacles in the completion of the project. He said that the main objective of the project is to create new industry, relocation of markets, solve traffic problems and promote cottage industry. Earlier on Monday, a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) and the Ladies Lounge aiming to create opportunities for women entrepreneurs. Under the agreement, RCCI and

Ladies Lounge will engage in close cooperation to facilitate and empower women members of RCCI for the platform to connect in Business-to-Business (B2B) and Business-to-Consumer (B2C) meetings. The MOU document was signed by Chamber President Mohamud Nasir Mirza and CEO Ms Saba Haider on the behalf of Ladies Lounge. The signing ceremony was held at Chamber House while Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahraiz A Malik, members of the executive committee, women convener Noreen Ghaffar and others were also present on the occasion. RCCI President Nasir Mirza said

that creating opportunities and providing a platform to empower women in entrepreneurship had always been Chamber's priority. "The main purpose of this MOU was to provide women a platform to improve their networking and excel in the field of entrepreneurship," he said. CEO Saba Haider in her remarks added that the main purpose of Ladies Lounge is to create an empowering community for women by building a platform to connect. The lounge provides a dedicated space for the display corners for women entrepreneurs and also offers get together, events & indoor & outdoor activities.

Briefs

Gang that robbed people after offering car lift busted

ISLAMABAD: The Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police on Tuesday arrested three members of a gang who used to offer people lift on their car at barren places of the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad and then rob them. The accused Muhammad Sajjad and Muhammad Ilyas of Sahiwal district, Punjab, and Karamat Ali of Sheikhpura district alighted the victims from the car after nicking their jewellery and cash and fled away, a police spokesperson said. A team constituted by Senior Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Atta ur-Rehman under the supervision of Deputy Superintendent of Police CIA Hakim Khan busted the suspects during surprise checking in the city. Earlier, the police arrested three women of the same gang and recovered gold ornaments and a vehicle used in the crime from their possession. — APP

182 fresh Covid cases reported in capital

ISLAMABAD: National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) on Tuesday said that 182 new cases of Coronavirus were reported from the federal capital during the last 24 hours. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 226 cases were reported on Monday while 290 cases were reported on Sunday. He said so far 78,382 cases were reported from the federal capital while 716 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 67,433 patients had been recovered completely. Commenting on the present Corona situation across the country, an official of the Ministry of National Health Services said that the government had taken appropriate measures and tightened restrictions to curb the COVID-19 disease as the virus was continuing to spread fast in the country. He said the government was closely monitoring the third wave and it may lock down more areas if other interventions did not work in the next few days. He said the prime minister had also engaged the armed forces to ensure that standard operating procedures (SOPs) were being followed in locked-down areas which had a high positivity ratio. He said the NCOC had access to data from all districts and reviewed it on a daily basis. — APP

DRAP seeks opinion on generic medicines

ISLAMABAD: Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Tuesday decided to take initiative on the issue of registration of a generic basis for all single-ingredient drugs in consultation with relevant stakeholders. In this regard DRAP's Division of Pharmaceutical Evaluation and Registration has sought an opinion from stakeholders on generic medicines, an official of DRAP said. He said that DRAP's initiative on this matter is in compliance with the law for generic medicines like the Drugs Act 1976 and rules framed there under which is part of the DRAP Act 2012 under Schedule-VI. After the 18th amendment sale of therapeutic drugs is the responsibility of provincial governments and assurance of sale under the physical presence of a qualified pharmacist is also the responsibility of provincial governments, he added. He said that DRAP has conveyed the grievance of the masses that was submitted through the Prime Minister Implementation Delivery Unit (PIMU) Portal by requesting the provincial governments to develop a mechanism for prescription of generic medicines in coordination with the Healthcare Commission, Pakistan Medical Association (PMS), Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA), Pakistan Chemists and Druggists Association and others deemed fit by the provincial governments. — APP

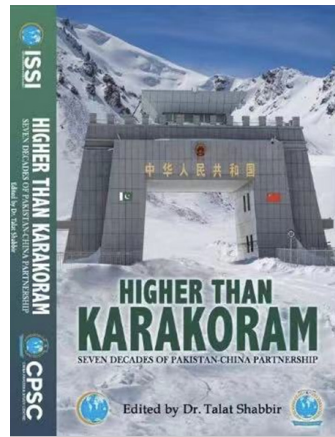
CPSC to launch book on 70 yrs. of Pakistan-China partnership

Book covers various dimensions of the bilateral relations ranging from trade, defense, maritime cooperation, opportunities in technological industry and artificial intelligence, culture and tourism, CPEC and Post-Covid-19 cooperation between the two countries

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Second edited book by China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC), Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) titled, "Higher than Karakoram-Seven Decades of Pakistan China Partnership" is set to be launched on May 20. According to a Gwadar's report, it covers various dimensions of the bilateral relations ranging from trade, defense, maritime cooperation, opportunities in technological industry and ar-

tificial intelligence, culture and tourism, CPEC and Post-Covid-19 cooperation between the two countries. Dr. Talat Shabbir, the editor of the book and Director of China-Pakistan Study Centre at ISSI said, "Since inception of diplomatic ties, Pak-China continued to deepen all-inclusive relations. This book enables readers to have a clear picture of this unique relationship". Shabbir previously launched his book "Creating shared futures, Pakistan-China: A Journey of Trust and Friendship" in April.



Pakistani Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haq said, "To attain common destiny, it is imperative that academic institutes of China and Pakistan carry out candid and concerted research on bilateral ties. This book is a valuable addition." For advancing scholarly contributions on Pak-China relations, this book plays an important role in enhancing the understanding of bilateral relations in global dynamics, said Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nong Rong. Ambassador Masood Khalid's chapter on China-Pak Relations in Changing

Geo Political Environment in CPSC's book stresses that by consolidating their time-tested bonds, Pakistan and China can strive together to build shared future for mankind. CPSC has been tasked with carrying out dedicated research and analysis of China's policies, and their impact on Pakistan and the region. It is also engaged in national and international outreach to promote better understanding of Pak-China relations, develop linkages with think-tanks in China and advance people to people contacts, the report added.



ISLAMABAD: May 11 – A view of Bari Imam Shrine closed for precaution against the spread of the coronavirus.

Virus impact increases trend of online food delivery

ISLAMABAD: As virus pandemic gripped the world, the trend of digital grocery app downloads and online food delivery services are flourishing elsewhere globe including Pakistan as consumers can now easily order their food items online within their shortest time possible.

The rise of digital technology not in other countries but in Pakistan too has now transformed the food delivery process and reshaped the market business. Instead of going to the restaurant, customers are now placing their orders via restaurant apps and online websites. Restaurants are ensuring transparency and convenience in their services. Once the order had been placed online, the restaurant fulfills it by ensuring the food is delivered to the customer's home, according to a private news channel report. "During Covid-19 and restriction in Ramazan, food delivery has remained our most popular business, an online delivery service app holder added. More and more people especially home based women appear to be opening their own online businesses and offering huge variety of food items to their customers, said a citizen. Customers have a wide range of choices to choose their own choice food items and shopping for food, customers are now more specific. While some want the reassurance of experience, others are more concerned about affordability and speed of delivery, said a renowned online grocery store worker.

The changing consumer preferences have also contributed to the growth of online food services, said another owner of a restaurant in capital city. A youngster while commenting said that the growth of delivery platforms has the new option to deliver food easier and more convenient for customers and restaurants, adding, using mobile apps, websites, and text messages, more customers are persuaded to try the order. According to another works who is working with a local food-delivery company said that the demand for online food businesses has seen tremendous increase especially during the month of Ramazan it witnessed a huge demand. "This is great business opportunity for stay-at-home with fast-fooding in Ramazan and easily earn anywhere between through their kitchen and restaurants", said another citizen. No doubt the virus has disrupted the restaurant's hospitality industry, with supply chains breaking down and food businesses facing declining demand due to store closings and lock down measures but the online app downloading a new trend among citizens, said a IT expert. — APP

Pakistan's exports to Saudi Arabia increased

The overall exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at \$365.240 million during July-March (2020-21) against exports of \$352.620 million during July-March (2019-20), showing growth of 3.57 percent, SBP data revealed

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's exports of goods and services to Saudi Arabia has witnessed an increase of 3.57 percent during the first nine months of financial year (2020-21) compared to the corresponding period of last year, State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported. The overall exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at \$365.240 million during July-March (2020-21) against exports of \$352.620 million during July-March (2019-20), showing growth

of 3.57 percent, SBP data revealed. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the exports to Saudi Arabia during March 2021 also increased by 11.26 percent, from \$34.667 million against the exports of \$38.573 million. On month-on-month basis, the exports to Saudi Arabia However decreased by 23.70 percent during March 2021 when compared to the exports of \$50.559 million in February 2021, the SBP data revealed.

Overall Pakistan's exports to all countries witnessed increase of 2.29 percent in nine months, from \$18.280 billion to \$18.699 billion, the SBP data revealed. On the other hand, the imports from Saudi Arabia into the country during the period under review were recorded at \$1600.956 million against \$1103.846 million last year, showing increase of 45.03 percent in nine months of this year. Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the imports from Saudi Arabia during March

2021 rose by 225 percent, from \$64.690 million last year to \$210.287 million. On month-on-month basis, the import from Saudi Arabia also increased by 6.90 percent during March 2021 when compared to the import of \$196.704 million in February 2021, the State Bank of Pakistan data revealed. The overall imports into the all countries increased by 9.43 percent, from \$34.136 billion to \$37.356 billion, according to the data. — APP

Many shops sealed on SOPs violation

ABBOTTABAD: District administrations and police of the Hazara Division on Tuesday took strict action against the violators of coronavirus standard operating procedures and sealed dozens of shops, besides imposing heavy fines and making arrests. About 15 shopkeepers were found violating SOPs in the Abbottabad district and their shops were sealed. To ensure the complete lockdown and enforcement of SOPs in Abbottabad

city, Deputy Commissioner Capt (R) Nadeem Nasir along with TMO Muhammad Afzal, AC Mujtaba Bharwana, ATS Aisha Tahir, TMA staff and police raided Band Koh Bazaar, Rehman Plaza and Gami Adda, arrested several shopkeepers for violating the ban on businesses and customers without face masks. Qalandar Abad Police also imposed fines and impounded many vehicles that were contravening lockdown and SOPs. — APP

Modi regime poses threat to global security: Report

ISLAMABAD: The arrest of two persons with 7 kg of natural uranium by Maharashtra police has authenticated that Modi-led Indian regime is a threat to global security.

A report released by Kashmir Media Service said the nuclear and defense experts are of the opinion that the seizure of 7 kg of uranium of extremely pure grade from two persons in Mumbai, India, is, enough to make a bomb. The incident has raised questions about the safety of radioactive material in India. The experts pointed out that the lame-duck response has also exposed the double standards of the global community towards the safety of the fissile material in India and will equally be responsible if an untoward happens in future. International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) owes an explanation over arrest of

Pakistan wants a peaceful resolution of Kashmir issue: Afridi

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Committee Chairman Shehryar Khan Afridi Tuesday said Pakistan had a clear stance over Kashmir issue as it wants a peaceful settlement of the disputed territory in the light of United Nations resolutions. Talking to a private news channel, he said there was no room for dialogue with India until it reverts article 370 and 35-A in Jammu and Kashmir and stop war crimes against the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. He said Pakistan had a principled stance that dialogue with India was only possible when Kashmir was on the top of agenda. Pakistan had become the voice of Kashmiris across the globe that was frustrating India, he said, adding now India wanted to hold negotiations with Pakistan for the sake of face saving as its aggressive policies had badly tarnished its image in the world. He proposed the opposition parties to play their active role in resolving the Kashmir dispute instead of criticizing Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government. — Staff Report

the persons with uranium in Mumbai as the experts feared that Hindu terrorists can use this material for making nuclear bombs.

They demanded that India's nuclear programmer should immediately be sealed unless country's flawed mechanism about protection of

uranium is thoroughly reviewed. "This is the only way to protect the world from the growing threats stemming from uranium theft incident in India," said a fissile material expert adding that since 1994, 11 cases pertaining to the seizure of high quality uranium has been reported in India. The experts urged the United Nations Security Council to ask for an investigation into incidents of uranium theft in India as in the past even Indian politicians have been found involved in the smuggling of highly radioactive uranium. They maintained that Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that continues to keep Pakistan in its grey list in the name of far less serious charge like money laundering needs to put India in the black list to effectively monitor money trails of uranium transactions in India. — APP

CSAP announces essay contest

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Students Association Pakistan (CSAP) has announced an Essay competition for the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Pak-China diplomatic relations.

All Pakistani students in China or graduates who studied in China, Pakistan Students, Chinese students in Pakistan or Chinese Students who studied in Pakistan are eligible for the contest, said in a statement issued here on Tuesday.

Topics for the competition are included "celebrating the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Pak-China Diplomatic relations and 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China.

Last date for the submission of entries are May 21. The results of the competition would be announced on June 1.

The essay must be related to the topics and it should be no less than 800 words. It can be written in either Chinese or Urdu or English. The winners will be given awards laptop, OPPO mobile Phone and headset for each language.

Waseem Ahmad becomes new IRW CEO

ISLAMABAD: First Asian and Pakistani Waseem Ahmad has been appointed as new chief executive officer (CEO) of the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW).

Waseem is currently the Director of IRW's International Programmes Division, managing the design and delivery of the organisation's global humanitarian and development work. Last year this work provided vital support to 9.5 million people in more than 40 countries – including life-saving aid for people affected by humanitarian crises; transformative water and education programmes; innovative projects helping communities cope with the devastating effects of climate change; and responding to the global Covid-19 pandemic, said a press release. Waseem has been part of the Islamic Relief family for 15 years, having first joined as a Programme Officer in Balochistan, Pakistan. He has also served as Head of Programme Funding and Partnerships, a role that involved strengthening relationships with major institutional partners – including the UK Department for International Development, USAID and UN agencies – to respond to major crises across the globe, including droughts and famine in East Africa, Pakistan earthquake and Indian Ocean tsunami. — APP



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For further information please contact the following.

Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Well done Mr. Prime Minister

P RIME Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday May 11, 2021 talked to people live on the national hook up. The Prime Minister not only listened to complaints and issues of the people from within the country but he chose to entertain a number of calls from the overseas Pakistanis as well. People shared with the prime minister their woes and grievances which had not been addressed by the quarters concerned. Most of the calls that emanated from abroad, related to qabza groups and land grabbers. The poor overseas Pakistanis had purchased a piece of land with the hard earned money but influential people in Pakistani grabbed their land forcibly. The prime minister not only ordered immediate action but assured the overseas Pakistanis that even in future the government will extend maximum possible help to them. Then, overseas Pakistani also complained about the nonchalance attitude of the Pakistani missions abroad. A caller from German particularly shared his ordeal as to how he had been literally humiliated by the Embassy staff. The prime minister again ordered immediate action.

It was pointed out a few days ago in this newspaper that our missions abroad by and large exercise slackness in addressing problems of Diaspora. Some instances were also quoted in this regard. But now when the prime minister has taken personal interest in this matter therefore it is hoped that issues will be settled. As announced by the prime minister, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs shall establish a helpline just like the PM portal, where overseas Pakistanis could lodge their complaints.

The prime minister also listened to complaints regarding housing issues. There is no doubt that the procedure to get loans from banks is a cumbersome process. And especially if you happen to be a poor folk then your problems are multiplied.

The prime minister rightly said that he would do his best to net all mafias, especially the sugar mafias. He assured people shall soon reap benefits of people friendly policies of the incumbent government. He said Shaukat Tareen's main task was to bring down prices and improve the growth rate. Let us hope the new finance minister is able to live up to the expectations because the price hike has really taken a heavy toll on the hapless people of Pakistan.

Summing up, the prime minister's interaction with people has really paid the dividends and thus this practice should continue. People have rightly demanded to not only increase the duration of this interaction but frequency as well so that more and more callers are entertained.

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Complying with FATF

IN order to comply with the remaining three conditions out of 27 benchmarks set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the government will introduce new rules. These will include provisions on forfeiture, management and auction of properties and assets relating to Anti-Money Laundering (AML) cases and transfer of investigations and prosecution of AML cases from police and provincial anti-corruption establishments (ACEs) to special agencies.

The remaining three benchmarks include ensuring that investigations identify persons acting on behalf of banned entities and demonstrating that anti-terrorism sanctions are effective and harmful to the banned entities.

Pakistan has actively worked on several initiatives to comply with the FATF. We have been making an aggressive diplomatic effort to comply with the conditions and have shown improving compliance on two out of 40 recommendations of the FATF on the effectiveness of anti-money laundering and combating financing terror (AML/CFT) systems. These efforts have included improving investigations to detect terrorism funding and handling the deficiencies in anti-money laundering restrictions.

Since September, Pakistan has passed three important laws—the Anti-Terrorism Act (Amendment), 2020, Anti-Money Laundering (Second Amendment), 2020, and the Islamabad Capital Territory Waqf Properties Act. All of these were passed despite opposition and have a significant impact. But still, this effort was not enough, as Pakistan remained on the grey list.

Even if they are political in nature, constant efforts, reviews and then further suggestions are bad for the Pakistani economy. Every time FATF rejects a request, it is detrimental to our international image. Whether FATF is playing fair or not is another matter—the government must make sure that it leaves no room for complaint on its end.

The new rules being considered must be referred to professionals and experts to ensure that they will comply with the last three remaining benchmarks. They will also require proper debate and consultation in the parliament—it is hoped the government explores all these avenues to ensure that these new rules are sufficient to comply with the requirements.

Iran's Presidential Election: A reality check

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Despite Western routine propaganda and fake media campaigns it hopes that the upcoming Iranian 13th Presidential election would be more momentous, simply because it will be held in much more different circumstances

ELECTIONEERING is getting "momentum" in Islamic Republic of Iran because of upcoming 13th Presidential Election to be held on June 18, 2021. It would be one of Iran's most "significant" elections that could determine Iran's future "directions" of foreign, economic and military policies in the region and beyond. However, the elections in 1997, 2005, and 2013 yielded surprising results, signaling unexpected changes but this time it seems that there will be no surprise and presidential election will be closely "contested" between reformists and hardliners. Furthermore, Iranians will be voting in "four different elections" on June 18. Presidential elections and balloting for local councils will be held across the country while there will be by-elections for parliament and the Assembly of Experts, a group of clerics that theoretically chooses the next Supreme Leader which has further enhanced its strategic orientation, utility and importance too. There will also be various by-elections for Iranian parliament, which lost some of its members to COVID-19 and others due to the rejection of credentials for some successful candidates after last year's election. In the Tehran constituency, there is one vacant seat. Unfor-

tunately, the Assembly of Experts (AEs) has also lost a few members since its last election in March 2016. This by-election is crucial for Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and those who aspire to succeed him.

Officially, Iran has opened registration for potential candidates in the country's June presidential election. Registration will end on May 15, 2021. The Guardian Council (GC) will announce a final list of candidates by May 27, and a 20 day campaign begins the following day. Several candidates have already officially announced their presidential bids, while others have only signaled that they would be seeking to contest. Mostly, presidential candidates must be outstanding political and religious figures. Every candidate must have Iranian origin, a national of the Islamic Republic, prudent and capable of taking on leadership duties, holder of at least master degree, with minimum age 40, and also be religious with a strong belief in the Islamic Republic's principles and its official religion.

According to its "unique" historical, traditional, religious and cultural "hangover" Iranian political "polity" divides candidates into two "distinctive" categories which include "conservatives" or "hard-liners" and reformists. The conservatives want to expand Iran's nuclear program and confront the world, moderates who hold onto the status quo and reformists who want to change the theocracy from within. Historical analysis of Iranian political system reveals that "radical candidates" have not been "accommodated" by its system and various important organs of the "ultimate discretion" mainly office by the Guardian Council (GC) comprising of a 12 member panel that vets and approves candidates under the watch of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The collapse of nuclear deal provided political/electoral comparative advantage to hard-liners which even secured majority in the Iran's parliament.

It is believed that in case of hard-liner or a conservative candidate victory in the upcoming election especially someone with a military background, there is a likelihood of "intensification" of the standoff with the West. On its part, prominent reformist leaders have been striving hard to form a political coalition to unite a single banner. But many reformists have termed the body undemocratic, signaling stay away from such unity efforts. Moreover, some other reformist leaders have also shown interest in running for the presidency but it remains unclear if the Guardian Council will approve their candidature. Conversely, the reformist camp has various subgroups consisting of radicals and pragmatists orientations. Incumbent president Rouhani has always been labeled as a pragmatist, who was roped in by the camp in 2013 to contest polls. There have been serious differences between Rouhani and radical reformist politicians to the point that they have regretted backing him for two terms in office, which has further added to their woes. On the contrary, conservatives, also face a similar struggle with many contenders in the presidential election race. But it seems hardliners may be in the driving seat in the upcoming presidential election 2021 because of so many complex

and complicated internal and external reasons. Undoubtedly, there are some new faces have now joined the race, hoping to spring a surprise but their chances of victory are limited. It hopes that a close electoral contest between conservatives and reformists will further strengthen process of politicization and democratization in Iran during which potential winner may have the support of non-traditional political polity. In this context, both camps have their own strengths and weakness which may also play an important role in the upcoming presidential election. Critical analysis upheld that conservatives always struggled to pick a consensus candidate, something which used to help the reformists.

But it seems that constant economic meltdown of Rouhani's regime because of the severe US socio-economic sanctions, high inflation, price hikes, limited new jobs and declining state's space to assist and rescue the people from the deep seas of poverty may spoil the chances of a reformist to win the electoral race of presidency on June 18. Moreover, reformists or moderates defeat in the parliamentary elections of 2020 would also be a stumbling block for the victory of any reformist candidate to win the election this time. However, as consensus evades in both camps to decide about candidates, many familiar and unfamiliar names have joined the fray to invite attention and seek candidacy. Despite Western routine propaganda and fake media campaigns it hopes that the upcoming Iranian 13th Presidential election would be more momentous, simply because it will be held in much more different circumstances. The ongoing human sage of deadly coronavirus pandemic will require the Iranian government to put into place new SOPs to protect voters from Covid-19. Economic challenges will be decider. Although Rouhani's regime desires to reach a break through on the JCPOA but these efforts seem to be difficult making the next presidential election even more important as it will produce the next Iranian government that will lead the efforts to lift socio-economic sanctions. Several possible candidates have emerged from Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard (RG). They include Mohsen Rezaei, an outspoken former top commander; Hossein Dehghan, an adviser to Khamenei; Rostam Ghasemi, a former oil minister; and Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, the speaker of Iran's parliament known for his support of a bloody crackdown on students in 1999. A young generation of Guard leaders is in the mix as well, led by 53 year-old Saeed Mohammad, who once headed the paramilitary force's Khatam al-Anbiya Construction Headquarters, which is one of Iran's biggest business conglomerates. Outside of the Guard, hard-line judiciary Chief Ebrahim Raisi has had his name mentioned as well. Raisi ran unsuccessfully against Rouhani in 2017 despite winning 15.8 million votes, but the cleric remains popular among many as he's led a publicized anti-corruption push. Former parliament speaker and special China envoy Ali Larjani also has been suggested as a candidate. Iran's 2020 parliamentary vote witnessed only a 42.5 percent turnout, the lowest ever since 1979. Official surveys suggest June's vote may see only a 39-40 percent

turnout. Iran's 2017 presidential election saw a 73 percent turnout. Statistical analysis of Iranian population upholds that roughly 35 percent of the Iranian population lives in rural areas where village councils play a crucial role in people's daily lives due to which a high turnout up to 70 percent is expected in the upcoming elections.

Moreover, 20 percent of the Iranian population lives in smaller towns where council turnout has usually been around 60 percent. The politicization of these populations occurred in the midst of the December 2017 to January 2018 protests. In bigger cities and in provincial capitals people have mostly voted according to political and social preferences there will likely be very low turnout, which could guarantee an easy victory for the hardliner camp, especially for city council members. In Tehran, this means the politically influential post of Tehran mayor could change hands soon. This post has been a launching pad for national office in the past; Mahmoud Ahmadinejad ran successfully for president in 2005 after having served as Tehran mayor. It means that geographical presentations of Iran will play an important role in the upcoming elections to be held on June 18, 2021.

It seems that Saeed Mohammad, the former head of IRGC's construction wing Khatam al-Anbiya would be dark horse in the upcoming presidential election. Like former Iran President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who pulled a big upset in 2005, Mohammad has also emerged as a dark horse who could upset the plans of other relatively stronger and more popular contenders. Being prominent regional expert on Iran & GCC I guess presidential election campaign will be contested on economic sanctions, the nuclear deal, and the ongoing economic crisis. The reformists will blame the national economic meltdown because of the US sanctions which left no choice for them to protect the economic interests of the people. On the other hand hardliner held mismanagement and inefficiency of the government for constant economic poor performance. Opening of national economy resulting from sanctions relief and the revival of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) has the potential to mitigate the hardliners justifications. On the contrary, it seems that the fundamentalist camp is in no rush to facilitate either of those two things while the Rouhani team is pushing the Biden administration to act on them as soon as possible.

Rapidly emerging socio-economic strategic deals in the region and beyond (China-Iran Strategic Deal for US\$ 400 billion, opening of new trade routes with Pakistan, along with promising socio-economic integration/partnership under flagship project of the BRI & CPEC), bright prospects of regional geopolitical reconciliation (Iran-Saudi sincere efforts for diplomatic diffuse) and last but not least geostrategic realignment especially on the US-Iran nuclear deal etc. all indicate strategic importance of upcoming Presidential Election of Iran. Let us hope that democracy will not be compromised because of any invisible concession or contradiction. Let Iranian people decide their fates through ballots in which every vote counts and matters.

Turkey in 200+ hours

Zainab Gilani



Our trip wasn't all about Istanbul and I believe that other parts of Turkey were equally rewarding, and included a visit to Kusadasi where we booked an excursion to the ancient city of Ephesus

TURKEY, my third foreign destination, after Holy Cities of Makkah & Medina and Beijing, began on the 15th of March from Istanbul. I visited Kusadasi, Izmir, Konya, Antalya and lastly Cappadocia. I managed to fully utilize my luggage allowance and the flight to Istanbul was really smooth. Passing over the high mountain ranges of Iran and Eastern Turkey, I enjoyed an aerial view of Van Lake. Turkey at first glance is the perfect blend of ancient culture, religious belief and lively modernity that encapsulates the ambiance of the nation.

I had heard so much about Turkey from my late grandfather who traveled Turkey more than six times under RCD (Regional Cooperation for Development) Pakistan Iran & Turkey joint hands for developmental activities this was decades ago & my

father about its culture, heritage that it seemed like déjà vu after just spending a day in the captivating Istanbul felt like a great mix of people and cultures, which is exclusive to the city and is difficult to be seen elsewhere. Most of the people I came across seemed in good spirits and kind except for a few rude cab drivers and I would not blame them as they offer rides to tourists of all kinds. Although March is the start of the spring time yet it was really cold over there.

Turkey is an arguable contender for the title of 'most fascinating country' at the cross roads of Asia and Europe. I believe travel experiences can become truly unforgettable owing to the country's rich history, remarkable and mesmerizing natural landmarks and exuberant cities. I was deeply charmed by what Turkey had to offer and I tried my best to capture my vacation but for the first time in my life I felt limited going by the camera because I wanted to feel completely present for the beauty of this amazing city. On the very first day we got on board the highly praised 'Bosphorus

Cruise'. It turned out to be a memorable experience yet I was a bit scared (case in point, the famous Hollywood's Titanic), I loved the diverse feel of the city including both the European and the Asian sides.

Next on the travel agenda was the Dolmabahce palace, which I expected to be another version of the Topkapi Palace, but to my amazement, it was much bigger. It is the biggest palace in Turkey with 285 rooms, 46 halls, and 6hamam (baths). If you perceive the exterior to be extensively detailed then you have not experienced the inside of this beautiful palace. The interior of Dolmabahce has been designed by the same architect as that of the Opera Palace in Paris, giving its structure a contrasting look, which is European in essence. The Palace is simply stunning owing to its ornateness and sheer magnitude. I remember having to strain my neck to take this picture. Taking photographs and videos is strictly prohibited inside the Palace, but I secretly managed to snap a few (Guilty!!).

We were lucky enough to have our accommodations always in each destination at the central locations. In Istanbul we stayed right in front of the Taksim Square, next to the famed 'Istiklal Street' this gave us the opportunity to experience the unique energy and spirit of Istanbul at its most organic. Long stretch of shops with every product imaginable, cafes and restaurants, live music, bars, cinemas and much more but I believe that my trip would not have been complete without boarding on those beautiful ruby red trams, wandering in the street having a juicy doner kebab wrapped in lavish was everything.

We also visited the iconic Hagia Sophia. This structure is considered the epitome of Byzantine architecture and is said to have "changed the history of architecture." All these comments came true when I saw it for myself. I also came across the much celebrated Grand Bazaar and fell in love with it. This short visit was fun as I got a chance to meet a lot of interesting people who were willing to chat, help and drink and even offered me tea. It's the city of lights and colors at the crossroads of Asia and Europe that reminded me of rich historical importance of the city of Istanbul which

I heard from my father adding further that his grandfather, Syed Sultan Muhammad Shah, was a member of save Khalafat Movement. This movement was established by Moulana Shaukat Ali to save the Ottoman Empire, people of undivided subcontinent were very keen to play their role to save the Ottoman Empire and showed their gesture of good will with Turkish people by putting their limited means of lives on risk as they were under the British Raj in India. Although, the Ottoman Empire could not succeed at that time but the gesture of the people of this part of the Indian subcontinent is still recognized in the memory of Turkish people and their elders still cherish the memories of brotherhood like a valuable gem.

Our trip wasn't all about Istanbul and I believe that other parts of Turkey were equally rewarding, and included a visit to Kusadasi where we booked an excursion to the ancient city of Ephesus, which is located on Turkey's western coast near Selcuk. There, we toured the Library of Celsus, which was originally built to serve as a monumental tomb for Celsus, a Greek philosopher, but later became the largest library of the ancient world. The builders here used an optical illusion to make the building look large. Another quirk of the building is that the outside shows a two-story building but inside the reading area is surrounded by three floors.

Another incredible structure in Ephesus is the theatre which was built during the reign of Lysimachos during the 3rd century BC. It was used for plays, political and religious discussions. Gladiators fought in this arena and walking through the ancient city of Ephesus was truly extraordinary. The site is so well preserved that it's easy to imagine today how they lived there in the past. Up in the hills around 4 miles away from Ephesus in the House of Virgin Mary, it's a small chapel in Bulbul mountain, built on foundations of a humble dwelling where Hazrat Maryam RA was believed to have spent her last days. I left a prayer in the form of a burning candle, as it was customary to the place. I be-

lieve that you don't have to belong to a particular religion to appreciate this serene setting. Kusadasi will always have a very special place in my heart because I celebrated my birthday on the edge of the Aegean Sea; it was a memorable moment for me.

Next, we embarked to discover Antalya, a city overflowing with history, culture, flowers and friendly faces. It was pretty inspiring to walk over the same roman walkway, which Hadrian once took. I witnessed the deep grooves created by the countless carts that must have passed through the city gate. Our guide told us about its history and that it was made for Hadrian namesake, when he visited the city in 130AD. Throughout my trip I was super excited to visit Konya, regarded as the heart of Turkey, a city of a million souls and an endless prairie. Then, we made our way to the tomb of Hazrat Molana Rumi, who was a mystic, a Sufi saint who loved all religions and whose own religion was love. I would not be amazed if you lose yourself like I did as in trance and dance, sometimes spinning like tops for hours on end. This is Turkey's second most-visited tourist attraction after the Topkapi Palace. Here you join the awe-struck, the curious and the fervent walls that are embroidered with calligraphy and the ceilings give a beautiful kaleidoscopic effect. Moulana Rumi's tomb is covered in a vastly embroidered cloth of gold and seems to radiate light, peace and mercy. Some people weep here silently, some laugh out loud, people who meditate for hours on end, and people who hurry through. And vivid formations made by nature's force chipping away for thousands of years, it was well worth it. I loved the cave hotel's hospitality and amazing food.

On the last day what I saw made me stand transfixed, for the first time in my life watching little flurries of snow falling, with perfect synchronization making a thick comforter on the roofs. I would not have experienced it if I weren't in Cappadocia at that time. It was one of the best moments of my life! We missed our hot air balloon ride due to snow but I guess the view of Cappadocia's unsymmetrical caves covered with snow made up for it. Nevertheless, a hot air-balloon ride still remains on my bucket list. From Cappadocia, I flew back home with a backpack full of wondrous memories and incredible experiences, which I will always cherish. I can not wait to go visit again to the home of breathtaking architecture, some of the warmest and most genuinely hospitable people I have come across in my life. I miss you Turkey!

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Briefs

Bulgaria president dissolves parliament

SOFIA: Bulgaria's president dissolved parliament on Tuesday and called a new general election for July 11, after a vote last month failed to produce a government coalition. Long-time conservative premier Boyko Borisov's party came first in the April 4 poll, but in a badly fragmented legislature it failed to find partners to govern. It was the first time in the Balkan country's post-communist history that no parties were able to reach a compromise to form a cabinet. Borisov's GERB party scored 27 percent of the vote last month, giving it 75 seats in the 240-seat legislature. The election followed massive anti-government protests last year that accused Borisov, who has ruled the EU member state virtually uninterrupted for almost a decade, of favouring and protecting oligarchs. - APP

Buffon to quit Juventus at end of season

ROME: Gianluigi Buffon said Tuesday that he will bring the curtain down on his time at Juventus after nearly two decades at the end of the season, but will look to prolong his trophy-filled career elsewhere at the age of 43. Former Italy captain Buffon is an iconic figure in Italian football, one of the stars of the Azzurri's 2006 World Cup triumph who racked up a record 176 caps for his country. However he has been behind Wojciech Szczesny in the goalkeeper pecking order since returning to Juve from a short spell at Paris Saint-Germain in 2019 and has made just 12 appearances in all competitions this season. "My future is clear, at the end of the season I'm leaving Juve, and then I will either find something that stimulates me or I will quit the game," he said in an interview with BeIN Sport. "I have both given and received everything at Juventus, but we have come to the end of a cycle and it's only right that I put an end to any confusion (over his future)." - APP

Pakistan condemns Israeli...

From Page 01

and the attacks in and outside Al-Aqsa Mosque. A statement from Foreign Office said the indiscriminate use of force by Israeli forces against defenceless Palestinians, causing death and injuries, defies all humanitarian norms and human rights laws. Pakistan calls upon the international community to put an end to the blatant use of force and flagrant violation of human rights of the Palestinian people. Establishment of a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine, on the basis of internationally agreed parameters, the pre-1967 borders, and with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, is the only sustainable guarantee for peace in the region.

PM vows to continue jihad...

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He said he has kept the petrol prices and diesel lower as we realize that no more burden can be put on the masses. He said prices of electricity has direct impact on the inflation. The Prime Minister said the previous government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) signed expensive agreements, putting a huge burden of capacity payments. He said these payments were around 180 billion rupees in 2013, which swelled to 484 billion rupees in 2018 and now this amount is standing at 900 billion rupees. He said under the international agreements, government is bound to procure electricity even if it does not require so. He said we convinced the Independent Power Producers and managed to reduce the amount of capacity payment to the tune of 132 billion rupees. Similarly, the Prime Minister said we imported LNG from Qatar on cheaper rates, saving 300 million dollars annually.

Pak-Uzbek implement trans Afghan logistics project

The implementation of the specified transit transportation of Uzbek goods is the implementation of trans-Afghan transport and logistics projects initiated by the President of Uzbekistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan together with Pakistani transport company "Best Trans Pvt. Ltd." and Uzbek freight forwarding company "Asad Trans" for the first time implemented pilot trans-Afghan logistics project for the direct delivery of Uzbek export goods to Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan. As the joint action of the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad with the support of the Ministry of Commerce of Pakistan, the partners of "Asad Trans" and "Best Trans Pvt. Ltd." since January of this year began working on a project for direct delivery (through Afghanistan) of Uzbek goods to Pakistani cities according to the "supplier's warehouse - importer's warehouse" scheme. The implementation of the specified transit transportation of Uzbek goods is the implementation of trans-Afghan transport and logistics projects initiated by the President of Uzbekistan. Successful implementation of the project provides to significantly reduce the cost of transportation of Uzbek goods, including shipping at Uzbek-Afghan border, and subsequently



at Afghan-Pakistani border in accordance with TIR CARNET Convention dated on 1975, members of which are Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. On April 11 this year a cargo vehicle with Uzbek license plates safely crossed the Afghan transit route in two days and reached the Torkham checkpoint in Peshawar.

After the completion of customs clearance, the truck will reach the importer in Faisalabad. The vehicle transports from Uzbekistan processed leather products (wet blue) for Pakistani leather factories. Further, have been planned regular direct delivery of Uzbek export goods (coal, mineral fertilizers and textiles) to



the Pakistani cities Lahore, Karachi, Taxila and Faisalabad. Partners of "Best Trans Pvt. Ltd." and "Asad Trans" are planning to increase the number of freight vehicles up to 50 units by the end of the year to ensure the smooth circulation of goods by Uzbek trucks. According to the chairman of "Best Trans Pvt. Ltd." Mr. Ramiz Rabbani, the entry of the first Uzbek truck into the territory of Pakistan is a historical event, since before that, in the Uzbek-Pakistani economic relations, the delivery of Uzbek export goods directly to Pakistan through the freight transport of the Republic of Uzbekistan was not implemented. According to him, the expected signing between Uzbekistan and Pakistan of intergovernmental agreements on preferential and transit trade will be an impetus for the development of interregional freight circulation through the trans-Afghan route.

Iran, Afghanistan discuss Afghan peace process

DNA

KABUL: Iranian Foreign Minister's Special Envoy for Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian and President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani discussed the peace process of Afghanistan on Tuesday. Taherian met and held talks with President Ghani at the presidential palace on Tuesday, according to the Afghanistan presidential press office. They exchanged views on bilateral relations and regional issues. Earlier on Monday, Taherian in a meeting with the Chairman of Afghan Peace Council Abdullah Abdullah emphasized Iran's support for the Afghan peace process. He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran supports any efforts to ensure the end of the war and to secure the rights of all people.

Expressing regret over the recent events in Afghanistan, particularly the attack on students at Kabul's Sayed Al-Shuhada school, he added that the people of Afghanistan have made countless sacrifices over the past years, now it is the time to end the war and bloodshed in Afghanistan. Abdullah thanked Taherian for his presence in Kabul and thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its assistance to Afghanistan and its support for the peace process. Taherian also met with Afghan National Security Advisor Hamdullah Mohib to discuss bilateral relations, security issues, and peace, according to the press office of Afghanistan's National Security Advisor. The two sides stressed progress in the desired peace process in Afghanistan and timely efforts, according to the statement.

Shehroze becomes youngest Pakistani to summit Mt Everest

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A nineteen-year-old Pakistani became the youngest person from the country to summit the world's highest mountain, Mount Everest. A resident of Lahore, Shehroze Kashif summited Everest as part of the SST Expedition 2021. A passionate climber, Shehroze first started climbing at the age of 11, summiting the Makra Peak (3,885m). Moving on from there, he aced Musa ka Massalah (4,080m), aged 12, followed by the Chembra Peak (4,600m). This was followed by Minglik Sar Shimshal (6,050m) at age 13, the K2 Gondogoro La K2 Base Camp (5,585m) at age 14 and Khurdopin Pass (5,890m) at age 15. At 17 years of age, he climbed Broad peak (8,047m) earning the title 'The Broad Boy' and reached the peak of Khusar Gang-Alpine Style (6,050m) at 18 years of age. At the age of 19, he conquered Mount Everest, the world's highest peak at 8849m, becoming one of the youngest in the country to do so. Earlier in February, 23-year-old Asad Ali Memon, aiming to become the youngest Pakistani to attempt the speed ascend record, left the country to climb the Kilimanjaro. (Growing up in Larkana, he stumbled upon mountaineering while attending a workshop on extreme sports in Karachi. Memon has been on the go with his series of climbs for almost two years, earlier climbing Mount Elbrus in Russia (Europe's highest peak) and Mount Aconcagua in Argentina (highest South American peak). Kashif is only the sixth Pakistani scale the Mount Everest. Among them, Samina Baig is the only woman climber to achieve this milestone in 2013.



United extends Cavani contract

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Manchester United has agreed to a one-year contract extension with Uruguayan striker Edison Cavani until June 2022, announced the English Premier League side on Monday. Cavani, 34, joined the Red Devils on a free transfer last October after playing for French powerhouse Paris St-Germain for seven years. The forward has scored 15 goals this season, helping United reach the final of the Europa League and a likely second place in the Premier League. "From the very first moment that I arrived, I felt the confidence of the manager," said Cavani. "As a player, this belief gives you the perfect opportunity to play your best football and I want to thank him for that." Manchester United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer revealed that Cavani "is one of the last to leave the training ground and sets the tone for the upcoming youngsters with his approach to his profession every single day". "I have always wanted him to stay and experience the way our fans will respond to him as a player, and this means he will hopefully get that opportunity," added the Norwegian. Manchester United will host Leicester City on Tuesday before a clash with Liverpool at Old Trafford on Thursday.

Action against judges who 'helped'...

From Page 01

He further said that former finance minister Ishaq Dar assisted the Sharif family by opening fake benami bank accounts of a foreign currency. "And when Dar was caught by the NAB, he became an approver in the case and gave his detailed statement to the concerned officials," Fawad said, and added, "But later he went back on his own words on the pretext that the confession was extracted from him under duress." Fawad added that entire financial scam was very cunningly executed. "When NAB, Islamabad officials dug deeper into the scandal and checked the Hudaibiya Paper Mills' Private Limited record, it dawned upon them that Rs30.499 million and Rs612.273 million were shown as share deposits in the company's accounts of 1996-97 and 1997-98, respectively.

The investigators were stunned to find such huge amounts of cash inflow into the accounts of the company whose total volume before this 'investment' was merely Rs95.7 million and whose total losses amounted to Rs809.834 million. Therefore, the anti-corruption watchdog gave instructions for an inquiry into the new startling disclosures under the NAB Ordinance of 1999," the minister elaborated.

Qureshi urges world to condemn Israel

From Page 01

The foreign minister said Pakistan and Kashmiri people have totally rejected the illegal steps taken by India on the 5th August 2019. He said Pakistan has raised its voice on the matter at all the international forums. He said there is no ambiguity in Pakistan's stance on the lingering dispute. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said at present no talks are taking place with India. He however said talks can take place if India revisits its policy in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and provide relief to the people there. The minister has termed the recent visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Saudi Arabia as an extraordinary one saying its results will be visible in the coming days. He said an institutionalized mechanism has been put in place in order to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in different fields. He said a Saudi delegation of senior officials will visit Pakistan after Eid to build upon the discussion that took place in Jeddah. This will be followed by the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister. Responding to a question, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the Saudi visit defeated the designs of those elements who were trying to draw a wedge between the two fraternal countries.



ISLAMABAD: Following the successful sales launch of Malaysia's Proton Saga CBU, Malaysian High Commissioner Iqram Mohammad Ibrahim visited Islamabad showroom. He felt Very proud of overwhelming response to & sales performance of our affordable national car. - DNA

PSL took Pakistan cricket forward: Amir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani pacer Mohammad Amir believes the Pakistan Super League (PSL) has given an opportunity to the young players to showcase their talent and taking Pakistan cricket forward. "There are so many cricketers playing for Pakistan who have come via the PSL route. The PSL has taken Pakistan cricket forward and given an opportunity to young players in the country to showcase their talent. By performing in leagues such as the PSL, it makes things easier for players to perform in international cricket. "Our players get the chance to share a dressing room with some of the biggest names in cricket which is huge for their development. It's fantastic to see the PSL now being ranked amongst the best Twenty20

leagues in the world. The tournament gives players a chance to show what they can do in a major tournament and provides a platform to be seen around the world. Look at the likes of Haider Ali who have performed well in the PSL and are now being signed-up by Twenty20 teams around the world." Pakpassion.net quoted him as saying. Amir said cricketers need to play more first-class cricket before they were picked for the country. "Picking players who have played one or two first-class matches and then expecting them to do well is a huge risk. Get them to play 25-30 first-class matches and see what they are made of before picking them for Pakistan. We hope cricketers up after a couple of PSL matches or one first-class match and that is totally wrong. - APP

AI demands end to Israel's repression in al-Quds

These forced evictions are part of a continuing pattern in Sheikh Jarrah, they flagrantly violate international law and would amount to war crimes"

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Amnesty International has called for the cessation of the repeated, unwarranted and excessive force used by Israeli forces against Palestinian protesters in occupied East Jerusalem al-Quds, which is boiling over with anger over the planned expulsions of Palestinian families from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. "Evidence gathered by Amnesty International reveals a chilling pattern of Israeli forces using abusive and wanton force against largely peaceful Palestinian protesters in recent days. Some of those injured in the violence in East Jerusalem (al-Quds) include bystanders or worshippers making Ramadan prayers,"

Deputy Director for the Middle East and North Africa at Amnesty International, Saleh Higazi, said. He added, "The latest violence brings into sharp focus Israel's sustained campaign to expand illegal Israeli settlements and step up forced evictions of Palestinian residents - such as those in Sheikh Jarrah - to make way for Israeli settlers. These forced evictions are part of a continuing pattern in Sheikh Jarrah, they flagrantly violate international law and would amount to war crimes." The senior Amnesty International official further said the Tel Aviv regime must not be allowed to continue its rampage against Palestinians, who are simply defending their right to exist and protesting against

UN 'deeply concerned'

FOREIGN DESK

GENEVA: The UN human rights office (OHCHR) said on Tuesday that it is "deeply concerned" about the escalation of violence in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel, calling on security forces to respect the rights of journalists to report freely. Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights office, said that according to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, 915 Palestinians have been injured on May 7-10 in East Jerusalem. More than 200 were injured in the West Bank, "mostly by Israeli security forces," said Colville, condemning "all violence and all incitement to violence and ethnic division and provocations." The UN Rights Office official said that one Palestinian with Israeli citizenship was reportedly among those killed in Israel, while approximately 20 Israelis, most being members of security forces, have reportedly been injured as of May 10. Amid continued protests by Palestinians in solidarity with the residents of Sheikh Jarrah despite attacks by Israeli police, Colville said security forces had been using "unnecessary" and "disproportionate" force in the past days. "When the use of force is necessary, it should comply fully with international human rights standards," said Colville, urging Israeli security forces to "allow and ensure the exercise of freedom of expression,"

their forced displacement. "Mere expressions of concerns about Israel's utter disregard for its obligations under international law are not sufficient. There must be clear and strong denunciations of the flagrant violations, including forced displacement, the expansion of illegal settlements and the and the brutal repression of people protesting against such grave violations," Higazi said. He called on the United Nations Security Council members to convene an open session to discuss rising tensions in East Jerusalem al-Quds, and urged UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, Tor Wennesland, to brief member states. Tensions have escalated in Jerusalem al-Quds, the occupied West Bank and Gaza

throughout the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, amid the regime's planned forced expulsions of dozens of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, where Israeli settlers are looking to take over the properties of Palestinian families. The tensions reached boiling point on May 7, when more than 170 Palestinians were injured as Israeli forces stormed the al-Aqsa Mosque compound in dispersing worshippers along with protesters. In the latest escalation, the Israeli military has bombed several targets in Gaza, killing over 20 people, promoting the Palestinian resistance fighters there to fire a barrage of rockets into the occupied territories in retaliation for the regime's crimes.

Briefs

Silk Road
int'l expo
kicks off

FOREIGN DESK

XI'AN: The Fifth Silk Road International Exposition opened Tuesday in Xi'an, capital of northwest China's Shaanxi Province, with deeper Belt and Road economic cooperation one of the hot topics on agenda.

Themed "Interconnection, Contribution and Shared Benefits," the expo has attracted more than 1,900 envoys and guests from 98 countries and regions such as Belgium, the Republic of Korea, Tajikistan and Zambia.

Vice Minister of Commerce Wang Shouwen said the total trade volume between China and the Belt and Road countries amounted to 9.2 trillion U.S. dollars from 2013 to 2020, and combined investment by Chinese enterprises in these countries had reached 136 billion U.S. dollars.

"Faced with the unprecedented challenges of COVID-19, trade between China and countries along the Belt and Road showed resilience and vitality, totaling 1.36 trillion U.S. dollars in 2020, up 1 percent year on year," Wang said.

The Belt and Road Initiative, proposed by China in 2013, aims to build trade and infrastructure networks connecting Asia with Europe and beyond along the ancient Silk Road trade routes for common development and prosperity.

Jordanian protestors call for expulsion of Israeli envoy

AMMAN: Around 2,000 people took part in a protest near the Israeli Embassy in Amman for the second day in a row to show solidarity with the Palestinian people.

During the protest, they chanted slogans demanding the expulsion of the Israeli ambassador Amir Weisbord over the events in Jerusalem and Al-Aqsa Mosque.

The stand took place in the courtyard of the Al-Kalouti Mosque, near the Israeli Embassy in Amman, amid a heavy security presence, Anadolu Agency reported on the ground.

Security forces initially tried to prevent holding a sit-in but re-allowed it to occur after the number of participants increased.

Tensions have run high in the Sheikh Jarrah area since last week as Israeli settlers swarmed in after an Israeli court ordered the eviction of Palestinian families.

Palestinians protesting in solidarity with the residents of Sheikh Jarrah have been targeted by Israeli forces.

Israel occupied East Jerusalem during the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and annexed the entire city in 1980 - a move that has never been recognized by the international community.

USCG fires warning shots at Iranian vessel

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The Pentagon has said a United States Coast Guard ship fired about 30 warning shots after 13 vessels from Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) came close to it and other US Navy vessels in the Strait of Hormuz - an account rejected by Tehran.

Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the warning shots were fired after the Iranian fast boats came as close as 137 metres (450 feet) of six US military vessels, including the USS Monterey, that were escorting the guided-missile submarine Georgia.

The US Coast Guard cutter Maui fired the warning shots from a 0.50-calibre machine gun before the Iranian vessels left, Kirby said, adding that the first round was fired when the Iranian boats got to within 300 yards (274 metres) of the US ships, and the second when they got within 150 yards (137 metres).

Qatar's emir visits Saudi Arabia as rift eases

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani has visited Saudi Arabia for the first time since the signing of a declaration with the kingdom and other Gulf states to ease a years-long rift.

Sheikh Tamim was welcomed on Monday at the airport by Saudi Prince Mohammed bin Salman (commonly known as MBS) in the Red Sea city of Jeddah. The two leaders then held talks at al-Salam Palace, where they discussed bilateral relations and "the means to enhance them in different fields", as well as regional and international developments, according to Qatar's state media.

Saudi Arabia, along with the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Egypt, broke off diplomatic and trade ties with Qatar in June 2017 over claims it was too close to Iran and backed headline groups, allegations Qatar



has always firmly denied. But in early 2021, the blockading countries agreed to restore ties with Qatar following a flurry of diplomatic activity by the administration of former US President Donald Trump.

Sheikh Tamim last travelled to the kingdom in January for a summit hosted by MBS in the desert city of al-

Ula, which concluded with a declaration to end the rift. Qatar, which is hosting the FIFA football World Cup

next year, emerged from the regional spat largely unscathed and resolute in the face of the assault. It rejected the quartet's demands, which included that it shut down the Al Jazeera news network and expel a small contingency of Turkish troops from its territory. The campaign achieved little in the face of forcing Qatar to change its policies and pushed the gas-rich nation in closer alliance with Turkey and Iran, while also continuing to strengthen its relationship with the United States.

Meanwhile, Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu also travelled to Saudi Arabia for a two-day visit as Ankara seeks to mend ties with Riyadh that hit an all-time low over the 2018 killing in Istanbul of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. The visit is being seen by a high-level Turkish official since the murder of Khashoggi by Saudi agents inside the kingdom's consulate.

Iran starts presidential election process

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iranian election officials have begun registering individuals hoping to contest the presidential vote slated for June 18, officially starting an electoral process that will climax on Election Day and end after all ballots have been counted.

The registration process started at 8:00 a.m. local time at the headquarters of the Interior Ministry in Tehran, with the presidential hopefuls having until Saturday to turn up at the venue and hand in their credentials. When the registrations are over, the documents will be delivered to the Constitutional Council, which is in charge of examining the credentials and deciding, based on constitutional requirements, which hopefuls are competent enough to run for president.

The vetting body will release a final list of approved presidential candidates on May 26-27, ending weeks of speculation about who will and

not cross the threshold. The election campaigns are expected to begin shortly after that list is out. Usually, campaigning includes such in-person activities as rallies, stump speeches, and meetings with supporters. This year, however, all campaigning will need to be in line with public health protocols amid the deadly coronavirus outbreak.

Many prospective candidates have already made their bids official, while others have only signaled their intention to run. Closely tracking the election-related developments over the past weeks, many media outlets have turned the spotlight on the unprecedented number of hopefuls seeking to join the race. The issue of individuals with military backgrounds running for president has become the subject of a heated debate inside the country, after the Constitutional Council offered a new interpretation of the law governing the required qualifications of presidential candidates.

Pakistan part of BRI Building Initiative for shared destiny

DNA

BEIJING: The conference of the 2nd Anniversary of the Silk Road Community Building Initiative was held here that was attended by Song Tao, Minister of the International Department Central Committee of CPC (IDCPC), according to a report published by Gwadar Pro.

Chen Zhou, Deputy Minister of IDCPC, Ahmed Farooq, Pakistani Minister Counselor to China, and ambassadors to China from Laos, Lebanon, Mongolia, Namibia and Nepal also participated in the event.

At the event, the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation (CFPA) announced that after their aid in 2020, they are planning to donate 10,000 Panda Packs which contain living materials to Pakistani children in 2021 under the Silk Road Community Building Initiative. Faqeer Primary School in Gwadar founded by CFPD, Chin-Pak Medical Corridor jointly initiated by Chinese



Medical Association (CMA) and Pakistani Medical Association (PMA), MoU signed by All-China Environment Federation (ACEF) and Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), the Panda Pack Project and other Pak-Chin cooperation under the Silk Road Community Building Initiative was mentioned as successful cases at the event. China NGO Network for International Exchanges

(CNIE) and China Foundation for Peace and Development (CFPD) jointly initiated the conference. The Silk Road Community Building Initiative launched in 2019, focusing on people-to-people exchanges and cooperation on people's livelihood, has led to more than 300 projects and established nearly 600 partnerships among NGOs in BRI countries. On Sep 6th 2019, the Silk

Road Community Building Initiative for China-Pakistan (Xinjiang & Balochistan) was launched in Urumqi. Farooq told Gwadar Pro after the event, "Pakistan is a part of the Silk Road Community Building Initiative. The conference today is a manifestation of the community of shared future. Mutual cooperation on people's livelihood benefits everyone, not just one person."

\$500mln Saudi support will help develop infrastructure

DNA

LAHORE: The kingdom of Saudi Arabia's commitment for provision of \$500 (Rs 75.50 b) million funds will help develop infrastructure, hydropower projects and water resources in Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Dr Ayesha Tahir, comprising Ms Mehwish and Ms Rea Haen President SAARC Chamber and Commerce Iftikhar Ali Malik said here on Tuesday that under one of the 7 MOUs signed between two Muslim broth-

erly countries Saudi Arabia will finance energy, infrastructure, water, transportation and communication projects in Pakistan.

He said as a result of successful visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Saudi Arabia also decided to allocate major chunk of 10 millions workers to hire from Pakistan it needed for the next 10 years in the light of Saudi Arabia's vision 2030 which he added will help prove ample job opportunities to Pakistanis besides earning foreign exchange. He said this decision is a major breakthrough for unemployed

skilled and unskilled Pakistani youths. He said Pakistan always affirmed its everlasting strong durable ties with Saudi Arabia as its most "important and bilateral partnership" working and seeking to develop closer and deep relations with Saudi Arabia, the largest country on the Arabian peninsula.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is on the rise for last few years and balance of trade is in favour of Saudi Arabia as Pakistan imports its most of oil from this country. He lamented that India Sau-

di Arabia bilateral trade stands at approximately more than \$30 b annually compared to Pakistan \$1.79 b in 2019 which is negligible and that needs to be improved considerably with active role of Pakistan private sector. He said Saudi crown prince Muhammad bin Salman is keen to further strengthen exiting relations between two countries besides broadening economic cooperation. He said Pak private sector must cash the Prime Minister Imran Khan visit and net all opportunities offered to Pakistan.

ISIL committed genocide against Yazidis

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: A United Nations team investigating atrocities in Iraq found "clear and compelling evidence" that ISIL "committed" genocide against the Yazidi minority in 2014, its head has said, adding that the armed group successfully developed chemical weapons and used mustard gas.

In a report to the UN Security Council on Monday, Karim Khan said the team had also concluded that ISIL committed war crimes against predominantly Shia unarmed cadets and personnel from the Tikrit Air Academy who were captured, tortured and subjected to mass killings in

June 2014. He said an ISIL video released in July 2015 showing the killings "constitutes a direct and public incitement to commit genocide against Shia Muslims". The UNSC voted unanimously in September 2017 to ask the UN to establish an investigative team to help Iraq preserve evidence and promote accountability for what "may amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide" committed by ISIL, in Iraq and the Levant region, which includes Syria. In his sixth report to the council, Khan said the Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by ISIL rapidly expanded the amount of evidence it has over the past six months.

EU suing AstraZeneca to get 90 mn vaccine doses

BRUSSELS: The EU executive is suing British-Swedish pharmaceutical group AstraZeneca to force it to deliver 90 million more doses of its Covid-19 vaccine before July, a spokesman said on Tuesday.

"We want the court to order the company to deliver 90 million additional doses, in addition to the 30 million already delivered in the first quarter," European Commission spokesman Stefan De Keersmaecker told a media conference.

The demand stems from a row between Brussels and AstraZeneca over a shortfall of tens of millions of vaccine doses the company was meant to have delivered to the EU since the beginning of the year.

The commission has launched two emergency legal actions against the company in a Belgian court, first to have the urgency of the issue recognised, and then to have a judge rule on whether the EU's case is well-founded.

The European Commission, backed by the 27 EU member states, argues that AstraZeneca has breached a contract stipulating it would deliver 300 million vaccine doses to the EU in the first half of this year.

AstraZeneca has responded that it is bound only by a "best reasonable efforts" to meet that target.

After citing production problems in its EU manufacture, and refusing to divert doses from British factories listed as suppliers in the EU contract, the company offered revised deliveries.

Instead of 120 million doses originally promised for the first three months of this year, it delivered 30 million. For the second quarter, when it was to have supplied 180 million doses, it vowed it would instead deliver 70 million. - APP

Covid antibodies last 8 months after infection

ROME: Antibodies against coronavirus remained in the blood of patients with Covid-19 for at least eight months after they were infected, Italian researchers said Tuesday.

They were present "regardless of the severity of the illness, the age of the patients or the presence of other pathologies," according to a statement from the San Raffaele hospital in Milan.

The researchers, working with Italy's ISS national health institute, studied 162 patients with symptomatic coronavirus who turned up at the emergency room during the country's first wave of infections last year.

Blood samples were taken in March and April and again at the end of November from those who survived. Some 29 patients died.

"The presence of neutralising antibodies, while reducing over time, was very persistent - eight months after diagnosis, there were only three patients who no longer showed positivity to the test," said the statement, issued jointly with the ISS. - APP

Erdogan discusses Palestine with Malaysia, Qatar

DNA

ANKARA: Turkey's president on Tuesday spoke to Malaysia's monarch and Qatar's ruler to discuss Israel's attacks on the Al-Aqsa Mosque and Palestinians.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held separate phone conversations with Malaysia's King Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah and Qatar's Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, according to a statement by Turkey's Communications Directorate. During talks with the Malaysian king, Erdogan stressed the importance of "banding together in the face of the oppression the Palestinians suffer due to Israel's attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque." "President Erdogan expressed his confidence that Turkey and Malaysia would act in close cooperation at all relevant platforms, particularly at the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation," said the statement.

In talks with the emir of Qatar, Erdogan "highlighted the importance of Turkey and Qatar's joint effort to mobilize regional countries and the international community against Israel's attacks against Al-Quds, the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Palestinians," it added, referring to another name for Jerusalem. Israeli forces have been relentless in their attacks on Palestinians since Friday when they injured more than 200 Palestinians at the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which is the third-holiest site in the world for Muslims, and in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood.

Heavily armed Israeli forces stormed the mosque twice on Monday, firing rubber-coated bullets, tear gas, and stun grenades at Palestinians, wounding more than 300.

Tensions have run high in the Sheikh Jarrah area since last week as Israeli settlers have swarmed in after an Israeli court ordered the eviction of Palestinian families.

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LARGEST CIRCULATED DIPLOMATIC MAGAZINE

Briefs

Pak-Iran goods train service restored

DNA

CHAGAI: The goods train service between Pakistan and Iran has been restored on Tuesday after remaining suspended for seven days. The train service was suspended last week after hailstorm and rain torrents had damaged the railway track, according to officials.

In an incident earlier, the train service was suspended as six bogies of a freight train, which was on its way from Zahedan to Quetta, was derailed near Yadgar Close Station owing to the bad railway track, a railway official said.

According to railway sources, at least one derailment incident always takes place in the summer season which makes the condition of ageing railway tracks more dilapidated. It is to be mentioned here that operations of a freight train between Pakistan, Iran, and Turkey was expected to resume in early 2021 but the service yet to be started owing to various unresolved issues. The rail service will connect Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul (ITI), minimizing the time period of cargo travel to these countries. The total length of the ITI project is 6500 km which covers 2600 km distance in Iran, 1950 km in Turkey, and 1990 km in Pakistan.

Eid in Saudi Arabia on Thursday

RIYADH: Eid-ul-Fitr will be celebrated on Thursday in Saudi Arabia, several Arab media outlets reported.

According to Saudi Gazette, the Shawwal crescent moon was not sighted, meaning Ramadan will last 30 days this year and Eid-ul-Fitr will fall on Thursday, May 13.

Astronomers had gathered at the Sumair and Tumar observatory for the sighting of the moon.

Chief Astronomer Abdulah Al Khudairi had said earlier that there is "little to no possibility" the Shawwal moon will be sighted. - APP

US wants Taliban, Kabul to jointly combat ISIS

WASHINGTON: The United States has urged the Taliban and the Afghan government to engage seriously in the ongoing peace process to prevent Islamic State militants from further aggravating an already tense situation in the war-ravaged country.

"We are still looking into what or who is responsible, but I would note that ISIS has been responsible for similar attacks on Shia communities in Kabul in the past," US State Department Spokesperson Ned Price told reporters in Washington on Monday.

Saturday's school attack in the Afghan capital that killed at least 80 people - most of them girl students - has earned strong condemnation from across the globe.

The president of the UN General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir, called the blast "an abhorrent and cowardly attack" while UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres emphasised that "those responsible for this heinous crime must be held accountable".

But the US went beyond a formal condemnation by showing interest in the Taliban's denial of involvement and by urging them to work with the Afghan government to bring peace to a country that has been involved in one war after another for almost half a century.

"We note the Taliban has denied involvement in the attack, and we welcome their announcement of a three-day ceasefire over the upcoming Eid holiday," Price said. - Agencies

At least nine dead in Russian school shooting

Twenty one other people, mostly children, were injured. A 19-year-old suspect was detained. The attack happened in the capital of the republic of Tatarstan, 820km (510 miles) east of Moscow

KAZAN: Seven children and two adults have been killed in a shooting at a school in the Russian city of Kazan, officials say. Twenty one other people, mostly children, were injured. A 19-year-old suspect was detained.

The attack happened in the capital of the republic of Tatarstan, 820km (510 miles) east of Moscow. Russian PM Mikhail Mishustin spoke of "great sorrow" while Tatarstan's leader Rustam Minnikhanov described the attack as a "major tragedy". "We are deeply saddened that this has happened," he said.

Responding to the shooting, Russian President Vladimir Putin said he would review the country's

gun control laws. School shootings are relatively rare in Russia. One of the last major incidents happened in Russian-annexed Crimea in 2018. Mr Minnikhanov confirmed the deaths of seven children - four boys and three girls - as well as a teacher and a female school worker at School No 175. It is believed the children were eighth graders (aged around 15). Eighteen children and three adults were being treated in hospitals for gunshot wounds, fractures and bruising, Mr Minnikhanov added.

The attack began at about 09:20 local time (06:20 GMT), a source in the emergency services told Russian news agency Tass.

The first signal from a panic button at the school was sent five minutes later. "Everyone started panicking and saying 'shut the doors'," a student who witnessed the attack told the Mediazona news website. "About a minute later the head teacher started yelling: 'We're shutting the doors!'"

"We got out about 15 minutes later, not out of the windows. I wanted to do that, but the teacher closed the window immediately and said no." Footage shared on social media shows some children jumping from windows to escape as well as injured people being evacuated. Russian TV reported that two of the children had died after jumping from a second-floor window.

Heavily armed police and emergency vehicles responded to the incident. A Kazan resident outside the school told Moscow Echo radio station that people there were hysterical. "Parents are crying, medics are giving out medicine," she said.

Reports initially said that there were two gunmen and that one of them had been killed. But officials later said there was only one suspect, named locally as Ilnaz Galyaviev. Russian investigators say he is a Kazan resident and it is believed he once studied at the school.

Mr Minnikhanov said the suspect was a registered firearm owner. According to Russian MP Alexander

Khinshteyn, the suspect received a firearms licence only recently, saying it was for a semi-automatic shotgun.

Officials did not comment on the possible motive for the attack although Mr Minnikhanov called the attacker a "terrorist".

The suspect went on social media before the attack, posting that he planned to kill a "huge number" of people before shooting himself. Screenshots of his account, now blocked, show him wearing a black mask with the word "god" written across it in red.

A video on social media captured a teenager lying on the ground apparently being detained outside the building. Authorities have called for

all schools in Tatarstan to be inspected and their security stepped up. A day of mourning will be held on Wednesday to honour the victims.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said President Putin had ordered the chief of Russia's National Guard to "work out as a matter of urgency new regulations on the types of weapon that can be in civilian circulation and that can be owned by the public".

The instruction was issued "given the type of firearm used by the shooter", Mr Peskov said. "The fact is that sometimes types of small arms are registered as hunting weapons, which in some countries are used as assault rifles," he explained.

Pakistan reports 113 more Covid deaths

DNA

ISLAMABAD: One hundred thirteen more deaths due to Coronavirus infection have been reported in the country during the last 24 hours. According to fresh statistics issued by the National Command and Operation Centre, 3,084 new positive cases surfaced after conducting the tests of 38,883 people. As per details 113 corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 95 of whom were under treatment in hospital and 18 out of the hospital in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC).

During the past 24 hours, most of the deaths have occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of the total 113 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours 49 of them had died who were under treatment on ventilators.

The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 7.93 percent. It may be mentioned here that the Covid positivity ratio was the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals.

Pakistan Navy starts ration distribution

DNA

QUETTA: Pakistan Navy has started distribution of rations in rural and urban areas of Panni Tehsil of Gwadar District on the coast of Balochistan.

According to official sources, On the special direction of Commander West Pakistan Navy under the supervision of Lieutenant Commander Furqan Shaukat ration bags were distributed among hundreds of deserving families in rural areas on the second day as well.

The ration bag contained flour, rice, lentils, spices, salt, leaves, dates, spirits, etc. So far, thousands of families have benefited from the Pakistan Navy's charitable work.

It is to be noted that in Gwadar City yesterday, under the supervision of Commanding Officer third PPF Protection Battalion Capt Abid Hussain, people of different areas of the city were provided by Pakistan Navy with the help of Mir Arshad Kalmati and other social personalities.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressing a media briefing at Foreign Office. - APP

At least 29 Palestinians killed in Israeli strikes

JERUSALEM: Israeli planes fired missiles in the Palestinian territory, while militants in Gaza launched rocket barrages into Israel for a second day on Tuesday, as the toll from the violence against Palestinians rose to at least 29, including nine children.

The most serious outbreak of fighting between armed factions in Hamas-run Gaza and Israel since 2019 began with confrontations between Palestinians and Israeli police at Al Asqa Mosque in Jerusalem on Monday.

Israeli-Palestinian tensions have been high in the holy city during Ramadan, with sporadic clashes and possible evictions of Palestinians from homes claimed by Jewish settlers in a long-running court case adding to the friction.

A Palestinian official said Egypt, Qatar and the United Nations were trying to stem the escalating violence, amid international concern that events could spiral out of control.

The Gaza health ministry said at least 29 Palestinians, including nine children, had been killed and 122 wounded by Israeli strikes in the enclave of two million people since Hamas on Monday fired rockets towards Jerusalem for the first time since 2014.

Israel disputed the account, saying it had killed at least 15 Hamas fighters and that a third of the more than 250 rockets launched by militants had fallen short, causing Palestinian civilian casualties.

In one Gaza neighbourhood, an Israeli missile exploded inside an apartment in a multi-story building, killing three Islamic Jihad members, an official from the militant group said.

Police said 31 people were hurt by rocket strikes in southern Israel, though the military said its air defences were intercepting around 90% of the cross-border launches.

Hamas said that in one five-minute barrage alone, it had fired 137 missiles at

Ashkelon and Ashdod, two coastal cities south of Tel Aviv, where live TV showed at least two homes on fire. The multiple launchings appeared to be an attempt to overwhelm Israel's Iron Dome anti-missile system. A school in Ashkelon was hit by a rocket, Israel's Magen David Adom ambulance service said. Classes had been cancelled in the area and the building was empty.

Israeli television news showed Israeli tanks massing on the Gaza border as officials said infantry and armour reinforcements were being dispatched. But military affairs commentators saw a ground operation in densely populated Gaza as unlikely.

In the northern Gaza town of Beit Hanoun, Abdel-Hamid Hamad, whose nephew Hussein, 11, was killed on Monday in what residents said was an Israeli air strike, told Reuters the boy was collecting wood to be used in construction when he was hit. - Agencies

OIC condemns tyranny of Israeli forces

NEW YORK: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) have unequivocally condemned the recent use of brutal force by the Israeli forces against Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and vowed to draw world community's attention to the atrocities.

At the an urgent meeting, held in New York following the attacks against worshippers around the Al-Aqsa Mosque as also the escalation of clashes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and Gaza, the OIC ambassadors called the assaults against Palestinians against all humanitarian norms and human rights laws.

Alarms were particularly raised that residents of Sheikh Jarrah who lived in that neighborhood for decades were facing the threat of forced eviction, diplomats said. Tensions in East Jerusalem have soared recently, with Palestinians complaining about oppressive Israeli restrictions during Ramadan. - DNA

NAB decides to move SC against Shehbaz' bail

DNA

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on Tuesday has decided to file an appeal in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, seeking suspension of bail granted to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif.

The opposition leader in the National Assembly was granted bail by the Lahore High Court in the month of April in a money laundering case. The prosecution team of the NAB has started preparation to file a plea in the apex court.

Meanwhile, the National Accountability Bureau Lahore office has written a letter to the NAB Headquarters in Islamabad pleading to place Shehbaz Sharif's name on the Exit Control List.

According to reports, the NAB Lahore wrote a letter to DG Operations NAB Headquarters on 28 April 2021 seeking to place the name of the main accused in money laundering reference PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and other accused in the ECL. The NAB is investigating

money laundering and assets beyond means case against Shehbaz Sharif. The sources said that a request has been sent to the NAB headquarters to challenge LHC ruling in the Supreme Court for not putting the accused's name on the ECL.

On last Saturday, PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif was not allowed to go abroad and was offloaded from a Doha-bound flight at Lahore International Airport in the wee hours. On Friday, the Lahore High Court had allowed the PML-N president to travel abroad for medical treatment for once and also ordered the removal of his name from the blacklist.

Shehbaz Sharif was set to leave for Doha from the Lahore Airport on a Doha-bound flight but he was offloaded by the FIA officials from the plane as his name was not yet removed from the blacklist.

Shehbaz, who is a cancer patient, argued with the FIA officials that he had been allowed to travel abroad by the LHC. However, the FIA officials said that he could not leave the country until his clearance update on the immigration system.

1100 Pakistani inmates to return from Saudi prisons: Sh Rasheed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Tuesday shared details regarding transfer of Pakistani inmates languishing in Saudi jails to the country.

Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed said that 1100 prisoners will be shifted to Pakistani jails from Saudi Arabia. He said that 30 others will not be brought back as 22 of them are blamed for their involvement in drug-related cases and eight others under murder charges.

He said that they have sought Rs 1 billion fund



from Prime Minister Imran Khan in order to ensure the return of 2005 inmates involved in petty crimes. "I have requested Prime Minister Imran Khan for a fund of Rs 1 billion, adding that if approved, hundreds of prisoners imprisoned since 2005 for petty crimes could be released," he said.

The interior minister said that after an agreement with Saudi Arabia, Pakistanis jailed in the Kingdom over petty crime could be transferred to the country.

It is pertinent to mention here that Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday assured that the federal government would resolve all issues of Pakistani expatriates in Saudi Arabia on a priority basis.

While addressing the gathering of the Pakistani community in a ceremony held in Jeddah in connection with Roshan Digital Account, the prime minister said that he knew about all problems being faced by the Pakistani expats in Saudi Arabia by the Pakistani embassy and assured that his government would resolve all issues on a priority basis.

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