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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Kingdom of Morocco whole-heartedly supports Palestinians

Detailed News On Page-01

China ready for deeper co-op with Pakistan

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UN Chief urged to help resolve Kashmir issue

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Briefs

CPEC: new dimension to Pak-China ties

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Friday said the multi-billion dollars China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project had given a new dimension to Pakistan-China ties. Extending heartfelt greetings to the two nations on the 70th anniversary of establishment of their diplomatic relations, Fawad, in a video message, said he felt proud of the ties, which were based on love and mutual respect, and had roots in the hearts of two peoples.

Pak support to Kashmir will continue

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's National Security Advisor Dr Moeed Yusuf on Friday said Pakistan would continue to do everything to ensure Kashmiris achieve their aspirations. The National Security Advisor in a series of tweets on his official Twitter handle expressed solidarity with Kashmiris and paid tribute to the martyred Kashmiri leader of the freedom movement Mirwaiz Maulvi Muhammad Farooq.

Zardari greets China on 70 years of friendship

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: President Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP) Asif Ali Zardari has felicitated both nations, Pakistan and China, on completing 70 years of friendship. He said that the foundation of this friendship was laid by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as the foreign minister of Pakistan, Asif Zardari said.

Holiday Notice

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

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World opinion changing on Israel: Imran

Pakistan marks Palestine Day to show solidarity with victims of Gaza massacre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said that it is the voice of the thousands of people across the world that will turn the tide in the Palestinian crisis. "We now have the power of the social media. The public opinion is shifting," he said, in a video message broadcast on television. He paid tribute to the nation for raising their voices for the Palestinian cause in protests today and the way they called out the oppression Palestinians are facing. "Ever since Israel was created, Pakistan always had the same stance in line with our leader Quaid-e-Azam, that is with a gross injustice towards Palestinians," he said. He said Pakistan had always stood side by side with Palestinians. "I was at Masjid-e-Nabvi when I found out that when people were praying on the night of the 27th [of Ramadan, at Al-Aqsa mosque], the Israeli police attacked them," said the prime minister, adding that he also learnt, regrettably, of how Palestinians are being evicted from their homes.

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1100 MW Nuclear Power Plant inaugurated

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurated Karachi Nuclear Power Plant Unit 2 (K-2) on Friday. He unveiled the plaque in Islamabad at a virtual ceremony simultaneously held in Karachi and Beijing as well. The 1,100 MW K-2 Nuclear Power Plant is a state-of-the-art Generation III nuclear power plant equipped with state-of-the-art safety and security arrangements. Addressing the ceremony, the Prime Minister said he is happy to inaugurate K-2 Nuclear Power Plant, established with the Chinese cooperation, on the special occasion of 70th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic ties. He said the plan will provide 1100 megawatts of clean energy to Pakistan, which is of vital importance for Pakistan that has been facing adverse impacts global warming.



ISLAMABAD: European Union Ambassador Androulla Kaminara hosted a lunch attended by EU & other Ambassadors to thank and bid goodbye to MOFA DG Europe Aamir Shouket. - DNA

Alvi, Xi resolve to intensify relations

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan and China observe 70th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations on Friday, President Dr Arif Alvi and Chinese President Xi Jinping vowed to deepen bilateral cooperation and achieve high quality development of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Both the leaders exchanged congratulatory letters to each other wherein they extended greetings to each other on behalf of their respective governments and people. "On this historic occasion, we reaffirm our



commitment to further elevate Pakistan-China friendship to new heights and build Closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future in the new era," President Alvi said in his letter to President Xi Jinping. He also conveyed his best wishes for the Chinese president's good health and happiness, and continued pro-growth and prosperity of the people of China. In his letter, Xi Jinping said China and Pakistan were all-weather strategic cooperative partners that stood firmly by each other on issues of core interests and major concerns.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Federal Education Minister Shafqat Mahmood presenting a souvenir to Ambassador of Republic of Korea Suh Sangpyo. - DNA

Korea to provide \$ 4mn to preserve Buddhist heritage

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo called upon the Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division, and for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood in Islamabad. Shafqat Mahmood was accompanied by his core teams from both of the Ministries under his portfolio. Suh Sangpyo discussed with Shafqat Mahmood the rich Buddhist heritage that exists in Pakistan and the need for its preservation and promotion to the world. Ambassador Suh Sangpyo

"The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, Suh Sangpyo meets Minister Shafqat Mahmood; both sides discuss enhancement of mutual cooperation as well"

stated that through the interest and commitment of the Government of the Republic of Korea, the National Cultural Heritage Administration of the Republic of Korea is in the process of signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the National

Heritage and Cultural Division of the Government of Pakistan for an initial grant of USD 4 Million that will focus upon the preservation of Gandhara Buddhist Heritage. Suh Sangpyo also shared with Shafqat Mahmood that only 1500 Pakistani gradu-

ate students are currently studying in the Republic of Korea and he sees this as an opportunity to increase the educational collaboration and student to student exchanges between both countries in the fields of IT, engineering and similar skills based educational programs that can ultimately benefit Pakistan and increase further avenues for employment for its youth.

The Ambassador of the Republic of Korea hoped that this meeting would prove to be instrumental in further enhancing cultural and educational cooperation between the Government of Korea and the Government of Pakistan.

Pakistan welcomes Israel-Hamas truce

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Pakistan has welcomed the ceasefire between Israel and Hamas, which rules Gaza, hoping it may lead to peace in Palestine. "This is the power of collective, unified action. This is the effort of every person and every nation, together for a just cause," Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi wrote on the Twitter. "May this ceasefire be the first step towards peace in Palestine," he added. The ceasefire announcement came after 11 days of deadly Israeli airstrikes that drew retaliatory rockets fired by Hamas fighters towards Israel. More than 240 people were killed and thousands more injured in the fighting.

Pak, Japan think tanks vow to deepen ties

Ambassador of Japan Matsuda terms contacts at intellectual level a significant development

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Developing intellectual exchange between two countries by facilitating exchange of sophisticated information and various perspectives through experts will contribute to mutual understanding. From this viewpoint, the Embassy of Japan has always been committed to promoting think-tank cooperation between Japan and Pakistan. In this context, we welcome that the Institute of Developing Economies (IDE-JETRO) in Japan and the Pakistan Institute of



Development Economics (PIDE) held the first on-line workshop. Starting from the opening remarks and mutual introductions by FUKAO Kyoji, the President of IDE-JETRO and Nadeem Ul Haque, the

Continued on Page 06

7 killed as rally bombed

DNA

CHAMAN: A bomb blast on Friday at a pro-Palestinian rally killed at least seven people and injured 14 in Balochistan's Chaman city, officials said, the latest violence to hit the area. Senior local police official Ahmad Mohiuddin said explosives were packed into a motorbike parked near the vehicle of a religious leader taking part in the rally. Pictures from the scene showed broken glass, rubble, and bloodstains. "It was an improvised explosive device which went off as participants began to disperse," added Tariq Mengal, a senior local administration official. No group has claimed responsibility.

'BBC interview with Diana was deceitful act'

NEWS DESK

LONDON: BBC journalist Martin Bashir used "deceitful behavior" to secure an interview with Princess Diana in 1995, an independent investigation found. The interview - the first time Princess Diana made public and candid comments about her failed marriage - was watched by millions of people worldwide and shook the British monarchy. "Mr Bashir acted inappropriately and in serious breach of the 1993 edition of the (BBC's) Producers' Guidelines on straight dealing," the report said. It also concluded that the British broadcaster had fallen short of "the high standards of integrity and transparency."



Continued on Page 06

Morocco whole-heartedly supports Palestinians

Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita says His Majesty the King firmly opposes any attempt to change the legal and historic status of Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque and to undermine the tranquility of the populations of the holy places

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates, Nasser Bourita, reaffirmed at a meeting of the General Assembly of the United Nations, the unwavering commitment of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, to the Palestinian cause and to peace and stability in the Middle East. His Majesty the King firmly opposes any attempt to change the legal and historic status of Al-Quds and

Al-Aqsa Mosque and to undermine the tranquility of the populations of the holy places, in addition to the illegal eviction of residents of the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, said Bourita in an address on this occasion. Bourita stressed that His Majesty King Mohammed VI has always insisted on the imperative to refrain from any act likely to precipitate the region towards more tensions, given that the persistence of unilateral measures and acts contrary to legality and international law only widen the gap between the two parties and jeopardize the chances of



peace in the region. In this regard, the minister recalled that His Majesty King Mohammed VI underlines the need to preserve the Holy City as a common legacy of humanity, a land of encounter and a symbol of peaceful coexistence for the followers of the three monotheistic religions. Mr. Bourita mentioned in

this context Al-Quds Call, which was signed by His Majesty the King and His Holiness Pope Francis in Rabat on March 30, 2019. Referring to the current escalation, the minister deplored that "once again, and for the same reasons, serious acts of violence have been committed", which claimed several lives, destroyed civilian installations and triggered more suffering, which threatens regional and international peace and security. "The escalation of fighting and violence we are witnessing is the inevitable result of the stalemate in the peace process in the

region, exacerbated by the repeated violations against the Palestinian people, and the proliferation of hate speech by 'extremist organizations'," Mr. Bourita said. The minister recalled that Morocco reaffirms its full support for a just and fair peace based on international legality and the two-State solution approved by the international community, as there is no other alternative to a political solution favoring the creation of an independent, sovereign and viable Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967 and with

Briefs

PREM stages protest against Israeli aggression

LAHORE: The Pakistan Railways Employees (PREM) Union organised a protest rally on Friday to express solidarity with Palestine against Israeli occupation and atrocities. Earlier, protest gatherings were arranged at PR Carriage Shop, Locomotive Shop, PR General Store and Railway Headquarters and then finally a rally was held outside the Divisional Superintendent Office, Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore Ameer Zikrullah Mujahid, Chairman PREM Union Ziauddin Ansari, Central President Sheikh M Anwar and other leaders spoke on the occasion. Speakers condemned the Israeli terrorism in Palestine and killings of innocent people including women and children. They urged the United Nations to deploy a peace force in at Al Aqsa Mosque and Gaza. They asked the Muslim countries to get united for the common cause against Israel. The speakers said that global human rights bodies were sleeping on the barbaric Israeli attacks against innocent citizens of Gaza. The protesters were raising slogans against Israel and in favour of Palestine. The protesters also burnt Israeli flag at Boharwala Chowk to express their protest against the Israeli aggression. - APP

Sindh Assembly adopts resolution against Israel

KARACHI: Sindh Assembly passed a resolution condemning Israeli atrocities against Palestinians in Gaza and expressed grief over Shahadats of innocent Palestinians here on Friday. The resolution was tabled by Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah. Speaking on the resolution, the Chief Minister said that they condemned the atrocities of Israel against Palestinians. He said that today all Muslims stood shoulder to shoulder with their Palestinian brethren. He said that Masjid-e-Aqsa was attacked on the day of Jumat-ul-wida. Murad said that so far 235 innocent Palestinians had sacrificed their lives. He said that the decision of ceasefire was appreciated. He urged the federal government to give a strong message to the world as they stood by the government on the issue. MPA and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Parliamentary Leader in PA Bilal Ghaffar also condemned the atrocities in Palestine. MPA Nusrat Sehara Abbasi and other lawmakers also spoke on the resolution. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had emerged as a leader of Muslims. The PA, later, introduced the Sindh Protection of Journalists and Media Practitioners Bill 2021.

Anjuman Tajiran stages rally

FAISALABAD: Anjuman-e-Tajiran Faisalabad organized a rally to express solidarity with Palestinian people against Israeli atrocities, at Chowk Ghanta Ghar here on Friday. Khawaja Shahid Razaq Sikka President Anjum Tajiran, Secretary General Mahmood Alam Jutt and members of sub-traders' organizations of the eight bazaars around Clock Tower participated in the rally. The participants holding banners and placards chanted slogans against Israel and in favor of Palestine. Speaking on the occasion, businessmen leaders said, "In order to show solidarity with the Palestinians, we all strongly condemn the Israeli aggression." They said that international community should play its active role in stopping brutal violence against the oppressed Palestinians. They said that the brutal violence against the oppressed citizens of Palestine is a cowardly act that deserves maximum condemnation. They said that ruthless and indiscriminate use of force by Israeli army against the helpless and defenseless Palestinians is a serious and blatant violation of international laws and principles including human and fundamental rights. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani and Speaker National Assembly Asad Qasir leading rally of the parliamentarians to show solidarity with peoples of Palestine on current situation in Gaza Palestine, at parliament house. - DNA

Envoy thanks Pakistan for support to Palestine

Israel has been working on changing the face of the Palestinian lands in particular Al-Quds. Everyone should coordinate Israeli acts that are a continued violation of International Law. Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem is a de facto sovereignty

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) had a Webinar titled Palestine Under Siege today. The distinguished panel of experts included: Mr. Nader Alturk, Deputy Head of Mission / Counselor at the Palestinian Embassy in Pakistan, Dr. Mohammad Makram Balawi, Palestinian writer and President of Asia Middle East Forum, Ambassador Javid Hafeez, Former Pakistani Diplomat, Dr. Daud Abdullah, Director Middle East Monitor (MEMO), Mr. Muhammad

Oves Anwar, Director Research Society of International Law (RSIL), Dr. Nazir Hussain, Former Dean School of Politics and International Relations, QAU, Dr. Bilal Ahmed, Director General Middle East Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan and Mr. Haitham Naser, Palestinian Journalist based in Islamabad, correspondent of TRT Arabic channel. The keynote address was given by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BOG ISSI. During his remarks he said that the world has witnessed yet another carnage of the Palestinians at the hands of Israeli occupying forces. He outlined how Israel's pattern of violence resur-



faces every few years and said that these 'symptoms' are emblematic of a much deeper problem- the root cause of which lies in the continued Israeli occupation and the denial of rights to the Palestinians. The United Nations also recognises the right to armed struggle of people

under colonial rule. There is also a similarity in the situation with Illegally Indian Occupied Kashmir (IloK) since Indians are also wrecking all kinds of oppression on the people of Kashmir. It is imperative that humanitarian assistance be rushed to the people of Gaza. He also said

that the proposals - which have included a coalition force to provide protection to the people of Palestine- need to be fleshed out by experts. It goes without saying that the root cause needs to be addressed and that can only be through the revival of the peace process. During her introductory remarks Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA, said that the sheer magnitude of illegal, disproportionate and indiscriminate use of force, tyranny and injustice being perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinians is appalling and jarring. Unsurprisingly, there is a deafening silence from the media which continues to eulogise Israel's

stance and at the same time continues to turn a blind eye towards Israel's atrocities. Pakistan's founding father, Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, was unrelenting in upholding the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. His legacy continues to date. The people and government of Pakistan stand in firm solidarity with the people of Palestine and their right to self-determination as has been exemplified by Prime Minister Imran Khan's solid support for the Palestinian cause. Most importantly, Pakistan's efforts have been principal in bringing about the ceasefire which came into effect early this morning today.

Addl IG lauds SSP Kamal for his incessant efforts

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: IG Punjab Highway Patrol Akram Naeem Bharoka lauded the incessant efforts of SSP Patrolling Region Faisalabad Mirza Anjum Kamal in signing memoranda of understanding with different Hospitals, diagnostic Laboratories and academic institutions. He said while chairing the Regional officers meeting at CPO office that the best practices of PHP Region Faisalabad emulate by other regions. The welfare and betterment of patrolling police officers/officials is a perennial process that brings honour and respect for the department. To buttress the harmonization process among health organizations and patrolling police, more MOUs have been signed among Private organizations and Punjab highway patrolling police. The well being and wel-

fare of Patrolling Officers/ Officials develop a sense of ownership and esprit de corps among commanders and field formation. SSP Punjab Highway Patrolling Mirza Anjum Kamal said while talking to media in a celebrated signing ceremony of Memoranda of understanding in the domain of health. SSP said that it is a landmark achievement that we are successful to reach an understanding with prominent laboratories and Educational institutions. While giving detail of MOUs, he added that children Hospital Faisalabad and Chiropractor Dr Nisar are prominent names in the field of health. MS Children Hospital Faisalabad Dr Habib Ahmad Buter and Chiropractor Dr Nisar signed a memorandum of Understanding for the welfare of PHP personnel. SSP Patrolling has deputed Incharge MEU Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti as focal person to avoid the hassle. Chiropractor will deliver lectures to PHP personnel

to relieve from their body stress by emphasising on certain body movements and exercises. After the assumption of charge as SSP PHP, he has carried out total 09 Memorandum of understanding i.e. Chughtail diagnostic lab, Rifah Lab, Rehman Lab, Meezan Lab, Children Hospital Faisalabad, Shifa International hospital ltd, Career IT Institute, Chiropractor Dr Nisar Clinic and Kips group of colleges. The salient feature of these MOUs is that the families of Shuhda will get 100% discount on Lab tests and Fee. The existing staff and their families will get upto 30% discount on the lab tests. Furthermore, he said that more MOUs are in the pipeline that will be carried in the coming days. He appreciated the efforts of Incharge Mobile Education unit Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti for consummating the deal with Hospitals, diagnostic labs and Educational institutions.



FAISALABAD: SSP Patrolling Region Faisalabad Mirza Anjum Kamal, Dr Nisar signing a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the welfare of PHP personnel. - DNA

Pakistan voiced Palestinians plight effectively

Chairman Islamic Ideological Council, Dr. Qibla Ayaz thanked Allah Almighty for ceasefire in Palestine and said, "The dominant nation agrees to ceasefire when there is pressure in international politics and political and diplomatic commitment is shown"

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib Friday said Pakistan under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan is effectively voiced the plight of Palestinians people at all the international forums. "Not only the Prime Minister Imran Khan raised his voice against the brutal killing of over 250 innocent people in Palestine but also the Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi took a leading role and pleaded the case of Palestinians at the

United Nation General Assembly meeting", the state minister said while addressing at Palestine Solidarity Day celebrations at Eidgah Sharif. "This is a matter of pride for us that our foreign minister along with other Muslim countries representatives highlighted Palestine issue at United Nation General Assembly effectively which developed a global pressure and changed western media perspective that was mostly depicting double standards and biased approach earlier in portraying the situation in Palestine," the minister said.



Condemning the Israel's unprecedented atrocities against innocent Palestinian people, he said who ever committed an unjust killing has killed the humanity and no Muslim can remain silent on such brutalities.

Farrukh Habib said that the Prime Minister raised his voice against the attack on Palestine when he was present at the Holy Shrine of the Holy Prophet (Peace Be Upon Him) in Madina. All such efforts have re-

flected that the government of Pakistan has immense strength to become voice of the whole Muslim Ummah against such atrocities under the leadership of Prime Minister. It also gives a lesson that the entire Muslim Ummah must unite and raise its voice in unison wherever Muslims face aggression as there can be no powerful and effective voice than this, he said. Prime Minister Imran Khan has not only raised his voice against Israel's aggression but is ready to take practical steps whether it is Kashmir issue, Islamophobia,

Tahafuz-i-Namoos-i-Risalat, through the platforms of United Nation, Organization of Islamic Countries, and writing letters to western countries, proving himself as a true lover of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him). "We have to be united and continue our struggle to stop wherever there is a violence, barbarism and illegal occupation", he said. Condemning the brutal killing of over 250 Palestinians, the state minister said that the issue of Palestine should be permanently resolved in accordance with the United Nations resolutions.

NKATI setups Covid-19 vaccination centre

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry (NKATI), has set up a vaccination center in collaboration with the Sindh government to protect industrial workers from the COVID-19 pandemic, with a maximum number of factory workers will be vaccinated on a priority basis. "Captain A Moiz Khan Vaccination Centre" at NKATI welfare Clinic, was inaugurated by Faisal Moiz Khan, President NKATI, Riaz Haider, Member Provincial Assembly Sindh, Sadiq Mohammad, Chairman UFG and Mohammad Baksh-Dharejo, Deputy Commissioner Central. MPA Riaz Haider visited various departments of NKATI welfare Clinic and appreciated the arrangements made for providing medical facilities to the workers, also termed the establishment of Vaccination Centre as an important step for the health of industrial workers. On the occasion, Faisal Moiz Khan said that the purpose of setting up "Captain A. Moiz Khan Vaccination Centre" is to save the lives of factory workers from COVID-19 pandemic, as workers are our assets and we can never compromise on their health. "Therefore, with the same approach, the North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry (NKATI) has set up a vaccination center in collaboration with the Sindh government, where workers can easily avail this facility without any difficulty", he added.

IFJHRJK continues to fight against violence

ISLAMABAD: International Forum for Justice and Human Rights (IFJHRJK) Friday paid rich tributes to Moulana Muhammad Farooq, Khawja Abdul Ghani Lone and the victims of Hawal massacre on their martyrdom anniversary being observed today. Chairman of IFJHRJK Muhammad Ahsan Untoo said that the victims of the violence perpetuated by the Indian forces, are still waiting for the justice. He said that although 15 CRPF personnel have been held responsible for the massacre but they are yet to be punished. Detailed Report He said on 21 May 1990, chief religious cleric and senior pro-freedom leader Mirwaiz Moolvi Mohammad Farooq was killed by unknown gunmen who barged into his house at his Nigeen residence. As the news spread about the killing of Moulvi Farooq, people in thousands from different areas of Kashmir rushed to the premier medical institute SKIMS and carried his body in a massive procession towards Mirwaiz Manzil at Rajouri Kadal in Old City. - APP

Daraz and Fempro sign MoU

DNA

KARACHI: The partnership between Daraz and Nadia Patel Gangjee's social enterprise - Fempro is set on terms where they will facilitate the newly registered female sellers to establish their shops on the platform and therefore, boost their growth in terms of sales and reach with the help of Daraz' monthly userbase of 6,000,000. These customized trainings are targeted to help these sellers improve in the areas of business ethics and importance of social media along with other basic guidance required. Fempro's growing community of women entrepreneurs also got more than 150 female entrepreneurs to register from their platform who will be facilitated with this partnership to establish stores on the biggest online marketplace in Pakistan. Fempro is a social enterprise to help advance women's professional growth and economic empowerment through offline and online entrepreneurship education, capacity building, business and community support. Fempro also works with strategic partners to provide visibility and access-to-market to women-owned businesses.

Briefs

CDA starts adorning green belts with lights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority has started decorating green belts at the major markets and other frequently visited places with colorful lights to give the Federal Capital a festive look after sunset.

According to a senior CDA officer, beautiful lights had already been installed along the green stretches of various sectors and Srinagar Highway. The trees and plants at the green belts were being lit up under the 'Light up Islamabad' drive of the CDA, which was aimed at ensuring beautification of the city through inclusive steps, the officer told APP. He said the project was being carried out with the help of private sector under its corporate social responsibility. The civic agency, he said, had posted a two-minute video clip of the lit up green belt on its official pages of the social media networking sites such as Facebook, with an attractive caption.

"Islamabad is the city of flowers. While the daylight scenic beauty of the Capital is marked with colorful flowers, the nights need some show of lights and colors," read the caption, which also pointed out the illuminated green belt of the Super Market of Sector F-6. The post added that the lights would be installed along the road medians encircling various markets.

Court grants NAB further physical remand of accused

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Friday granted National Accountability Bureau (NAB) a further 11 days physical remand of the owner of All Pakistan Projects Company Adam Amin in a case pertaining to allegedly looting the citizens on the name of investment. AC-I Judge Muhammad Bashir heard the case lodged by NAB against the above accused that was produced before the judge during hearing by officials. The NAB official informed the court that Adam Amin was accused of committing fraud with the people on the name of investment. NAB prayed the court to grant further physical remand of the accused as they had to find relevant documents and do further investigation. The court accepted the request and grant further remand of the accused till May 11. The court also instructed the NAB to conduct medical examination of the accused during the time and present him on next hearing. — APP

IHC instructs to fix housing society case for hearing

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday accepted a petition for early hearing of a case pertaining to inquiry of National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against Blue World City Housing Society. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the case filed by NAB. The NAB adopted the stance that the society had withdrawn Rs2 billions from the bank accounts which was frozen on the directions of this court. It prayed the court to fix the case for early hearing into the matter.

The court accepted the request and instructed its registrar office to fix the case as soon as possible. It may be mentioned here that the court had instructed the society's lawyer to submit cross arguments against the NAB reply in the case. The court had also ordered to unfreeze the bank accounts of society to meet its day to day expenditures.



ISLAMABAD: People from different walks of life participating in a protest demonstration against Israeli attack on Gaza in front of National Press Club. — APP

'Recognize Israel' mantra buried in the debris of Gaza

The speakers viewed that normalization of relations with Israel, an apartheid state, will not churn out benefits for Muslim countries. Rather, Israel is thumping its nose at Washington, so it would be better to exert pressure diplomatically on the US

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A change in the world order is vital to rein in states like Israel and resolve the long-standing Palestine issue since the major roadblock is the prevalent unjust world order based on the paradigm of survival of the fittest. In addition, worldwide civil society linkages, alliances of the forces of good across the world, and the anti-apartheid movement model of South Africa can play a central role in this regard. These views were expressed by eminent geopolitical analysts at an international webinar titled 'Israeli Aggression and the Plight of the Palestinians' which was jointly organized by Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Islamabad and ILKE Foundation, Istanbul. The speakers included Mushahid Hussain Syed, Pakistani Senator and chairperson Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Khalid Rahman, IPS Chairman, Dr. Ramzy Baroud, a US-based Palestinian author and journalist, and Dr. Ali Abo Rezeq, a Palestinian journalist based in Turkey. The event was moderated from Istanbul by Ahsan Shafiq of ILKE Foundation.

It was underscored that Pakistan sees an inextricable linkage between Palestine and Kashmir; both are occupied territories, both are denied the right of self-determination, both are under the occupation of



facist regimes that are also racist and Islamophobic – Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel and Narendra Modi in India. Besides, there is an attempt at demographic transformation of a majority into a minority in both occupied territories. As such Islamabad's policy is very clear – if Pakistan weakens its position on Palestine it will also undermine its position on Kashmir. So the recent 'recognize Israel' mantra is now buried deep in the debris of the destruction of Gaza, they added. The speakers viewed that normalization of relations with Israel, an apartheid state, will

not churn out benefits for Muslim countries. Rather, Israel is thumping its nose at Washington, so it would be better to exert pressure diplomatically on the US. The experts were optimistic that changing global dynamics – with the world transforming into multipolar from bipolar after the Cold War – will benefit the Palestinian cause. A positive aspect, they noted, was the favorable voices within Jews and Israel besides non-Muslims, liberals and civil society, and concerns shown in the media and by the human rights organizations. The discussants pointed out that Israel

launched the latest aggression thinking the Palestinians were isolated because many countries are normalizing relations and they are losing global solidarity. But the violence has spawned a massive global movement rooted in civil society.

This can be seen in the demographics of the worldwide pro-Palestinian protests participated in by people from all ethnic, racial and religious backgrounds. People are angry and rightly calling Israel an apartheid genocidal state, which the speakers termed a defining moment in history. Sane voices in solidarity with the Palestinians are also being heard in the US Congress, UK Parliament and the European Parliament, indicating a change in world opinion. This is evident from the biggest protests taking place in London, Madrid and Paris. The speakers stressed that Muslims must take the leadership role in this global movement. Only by reaching this critical mass they would be able to achieve a paradigm shift; that South African moment when apartheid was defeated. Apartheid was crushed in South Africa not because enough governments spoke out but because civil society rose globally and boycotted the apartheid government in all its forms and shapes until they forced their governments to follow suit. Similarly, civil societies are the ones that need to be reached out in the cases of Palestine and Kashmir.

CCP to to develop e-commerce policy

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) will work with businesses to develop and declare e-commerce policy guidelines to build consumer confidence in the electronic marketplace and encourage fair trade practices to prevent any possible abuse and deceptive marketing practices in the e-commerce domain.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards a more digital world. Pakistan is no exception where there has been a rapid shift to digital business models, a surge in online transactions, and changes in consumption patterns. Therefore, it is deemed urgent to ensure that consumers are just as safe when shopping online as when shopping offline.

The CCP Chairperson Ms. Rahat Kaunain said: "Effective communication and transparency will provide impetus to e-commerce growth and building consumer confidence."

In this regard, the CCP has approached around 35 major online platforms in Pakistan, seeking information on the principal aspects governing their online activities and transactions.

AIOU VC visits FGEI Directorate

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum visited Federal Government Educational Institutions (Cantt/Garrison) Directorate and agreed to promote education activities. He was warmly welcomed by Director General FGEIs (C/G) Directorate along with its faculty.

Worthy guest was apprised about challenges of online teaching due to COVID pandemic to seek guidance and assistance for further improvement. Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum briefed participants about the initiative taken by AIOU in developing and implementation of virtual learning methodologies and the challenges being faced in molding the conventional pedagogy. In-depth discussion took place on utilization of emerging technologies for informal mode of teaching, learning and both organizations agreed to collaborate in the fields.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Ambassador of the Azerbaijan, Mr. Ali Alizada at Parliament House. — DNA

World peace linked to settlement of Kashmir, Palestine disputes

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, the wife of Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front Yasin Malik, said that people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and inhabitants of war-torn Palestine are facing worst form of terrorism at the hand of their respective occupied forces. Speaking at a rally held in protest against human rights violations in Kashmir and

Palestine here on Friday, Mushaal said that the on one hand Hindutva regime of India unleashed a wave of barbarism and state terrorism in the occupied Kashmir valley while on the other the apartheid Israeli state made life a hell of the innocent Palestinians through continued airstrikes and ruthless bombardments. The Hurriyat leader said that the world looking the bloodbath of the innocent and helpless Muslims like a silent spectators and no one have the courage to

give a shut-up call to these two terrorist states. She vowed that Kashmiri and Palestine people could not be deterred and frightened through such brutal tactics, as they would continue struggle for their legitimate, just and birth rights come what may. Mushaal questioned the role of UNSC and UN and said that what's the existence of such world bodies which could not in position to implement own passed resolutions. The Chairperson said that it seemed their roles are just

limited to pass resolutions and condemnations instead of taking any practical steps to stop aggression. However, she said that the world bodies could be seen playing active role when somewhere Muslims are in dominant position or where non-Muslim minority faced minor issues. She urged that the Muslim world should take the issue as there is a serious need of overhauling these world bodies so as to make them purposeful or else their existence would be of no good.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

CITY SEWERAGE DIVISION

RE-TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis at NIT cost from the Contractors duly enlisted with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in appropriate category / Code and having valid PEC license, along with NTN / GST number as applicable for the works as detailed below:-

Sr	Name of Work	NIT amount in PKR	E/Money amount in PKR	Tender Fee Non Refundable amount in PKR	Tender receiving Date/Time	Tender opening Date/Time
1.	Rehabilitation of trunk sewer line along SR (North) bridge and street No.11 in Sector G-10/2, Islamabad.	5,059,980/-	151,799/-	3000/-	07.06.2021 11:30 AM	07.06.2021 12:00 Noon
2.	Re-routing of trunk sewer line 24" dia from MH-112 (Khyber Plaza, Blue Area) to MH 112/13 in Sector G-7/2, Islamabad.	12,193,761 /-	359,813/-	3000/-	07.06.2021 11:30 AM	07.06.2021 12:00 Noon
3.	Re-routing of trunk sewer line 15" dia near Puly Stop to G-7/2, Islamabad.	4,955,991/-	148,680/-	2000/-	07.06.2021 11:30 AM	07.06.2021 12:00 Noon
4.	Shifting of trunk sewer line 18" dia Imam Bargha in Sector G-8/1, Islamabad	4,252,401/-	127,572/-	2000/-	07.06.2021 11:30 AM	07.06.2021 12:00 Noon
5.	Rehabilitation of trunk sewer line at Shakarparian to I-9, STP Plant and repair of sewerage line of Usmania Market and Mughal Market in sector I-8, Islamabad.	4,634,173/-	139,025/-	2000/-	07.06.2021 11:30 AM	07.06.2021 12:00 Noon

- Tender forms / documents can be purchased on cash payment (non-refundable) for above mentioned works from the office of Dy. Director City Sewerage Division, CDA located at Room No.148, First Floor, Old Naval Headquarter, Melody Sector G-6, Islamabad during working hours. Last date for submission of application for purchase of tender form document is 03.06.2021 upto 12.00 (Noon).
- Applications on original letter Pad for issuance of tender documents shall accompany the name, address(s), signature of contractor and valid entitlement / renewal of Firm with PEC, attested copy of CNIC, Professional Tax Certificate active NTN/GST Number and at least three number of work order in last two financial year i.e. 2018-19 & 2019-20.
- The owner of firm should submit the application and collect the tender documents by himself. In case of representative copy of CNIC alongwith general, special power of attorney through respective court must be attached with the application. The attorney holder must be legitimate and should not be the employees of any Government / Semi Government Institute.
- Earnest Money in shape of call deposit generated only from firm account bearing name of firm in favour of Dy. Director (CSD) from local scheduled Bank of Islamabad must accompany with the application. Without call deposit no application for issuance of tender will be entertained. Cash/cheque will not be accepted.
- Tenders for the works mentioned above will be received and opened by the Director (Sanitation), CDA at Room No.148, First Floor, Old Naval Headquarter, Melody Sector G-6, Islamabad in the presence of Contractors are their authorized representatives who care to attend.
- The contractors who are interested to participate in above mentioned tenders, they will have to submit their experience certificate of complete works of similar nature during the last two financial year 2018-19 & 2019-20 while submitting application, otherwise tender will not be issued.
- The contractors will submit the documents as per instructions of tender documents alongwith their tender, without which tender will be liable for rejection.
- The relative of tendering Authority should not be entertained for participation in tendering.
- The Bid Security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA Bank account and same should be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. That is required performance security = NIT amount – total bid amount – 10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. Bids not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the project.
- PEC Certificate 2020-21 and professional tax certificate in original will be seen before issuance of tender.
- CDA may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of bid proposal. CDA shall upon request, communicate to any contractor or Supplier who submitted a bid or proposal, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- This notice may be seen at CDA web site No. www.cda.gov.pk and PPRa website No. www.ppra.org.pk

PID (I) No.6324/20

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
City Sewerage Division, CDA.

Briefs

Siraj ul Haq demands boycott of Israel

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj ul Haq has said that the Islamic world should boycott Israel completely and unite to liberate Palestine from Zionist oppression.

"The establishment of an international fund for the reconstruction of Gaza is a matter of urgency" he said. The Muslim Ummah, which has been struggling for seven decades for the liberation of Palestinians and Kashmiris, should unite and support the oppressed in this struggle.

To expect any action from the United Nations for the liberation of Palestine is to live in a fool's paradise. Whether it is the Rohingya massacre or the tragic atrocities on Kashmiris and Palestinians, the UN has always been a spectacle. Al-Aqsa Mosque is being bathed in blood.

More than 300 Palestinian children, sisters, mothers and youth have died in the 12-day siege of Gaza, but the international conscience is asleep. Pakistan is the most powerful country in the Islamic world but our rulers are cowards. The so-called superpowers can be defeated only by showing the same courage and passion of Afghans as jihad. If East Timor and South Sudan can be liberated in a matter of days, then why is the international community trying to crush the struggle of the unarmed Palestinians and Kashmiris for independence?

He expressed these views while addressing the participants of Labeeq-ul-Quds Million March at Islamabad De Chowk. Al-Quds March was attended by people from all walks of life, including women and children, holding Palestinian, Pakistani and Jamaat-e-Islami flags in their hands. At the request of Amir Jamaat-e-Islami, solidarity Palestine rallies were held in all major and minor cities of the country after Friday prayers.

Farrukh for passage of journalists' protection

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting (MoIB) Farrukh Habib has urged the parliamentarians to play their due role for ensuring enactment of the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Bill 2021, tabled by the government in the National Assembly (NA) on Friday.

"Today, the Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Bill 2021 has been tabled in the National Assembly. Now, it is responsibility of the entire House to ensure its enforcement by passing this bill, so that all forms of exploitation can be eradicated," he said in a tweet on Friday.

Farrukh also gave special credit to Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and Minister of Human Rights Shireen Mazari for the initiative. — APP

Anniversaries of Kashmiri leaders observed

ISLAMABAD: The anniversaries of prominent Hurriyat leaders, Mirwaiz Muzaffar Ahmad, Mirwaiz Masroor Ahmad and Mirwaiz Ghani Lone martyrdom as well as the martyrs of Hawal massacre were observed on Friday in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan and all across the world by holding protest rallies and prayer gatherings. According to details, in illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, complete shutdown was observed and a march were conducted towards Mazar-e-Shuhada at Eidgah in Srinagar.

As per programme special prayers were offered in Faisal Masjid, Islamabad, and a protest was also held on this occasion. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) was also appealed to the people to observe complete strike, and also organized protest and rally to pay tributes to the martyred leaders.

The agents of Indian secret agencies had shot dead Mirwaiz Muzaffar Ahmad on Friday at his residence in Srinagar on 21st May in 1990. — APP

China urged to play role in Afghan development

Mr. Said Azam and Mr. Muzammil Shinwari expressed hope that Afghanistan and its neighbouring regional countries can turn the challenges posed to Afghanistan after US troops' withdrawal into opportunities of lasting peace and development

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: China must continue playing a vital role in the region after the US withdrawal as they are working on massive development projects in the immediate neighbourhood of Afghanistan, i.e., Pakistan and Iran and any instability in Afghanistan will impact them enormously. These were the remarks made by Dr. David Kilcullen, Professor of International and Political Studies at the UNSW in Canberra, Australia whilst speaking at the quadrilateral webinar organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies Islamabad. The theme of the webinar was "the consequences of the US troop withdrawal this year in terms of a potential civil war, the suffering of the Afghan people over the

course of this war, and the most viable path forward." Other speakers included Dr. Michael Hannahan, Director of the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass-Amherst) Civic Institute, and a US foreign policy expert, Mr. Said Azam, author and Senior Afghan Journalist, Mr. Muzammil-Shinwari, Former Deputy Economic Minister, Afghanistan and Mr. Imtiaz Gul, Executive Director, CRSS.

Dr. Kilcullen further added that China's role is anticipated to support and assist Afghans in securing their fundamental rights post US withdrawal. Moreover, he stated that Australia has been committed to the Afghan cause since 2001 and has made significant efforts to counter terrorism and assist Afghanistan in various avenues. Expressing his fear, Dr. Kilcullen said that Taliban might attack police,



Afghan National Army, and local government workers in the coming days to cause unrest in Afghanistan. Nevertheless, the Taliban are not capable enough to seize Kabul anytime soon, however, the provincial capitals are under a great threat.

He emphasized that US should try to maintain its intelligence surveillance, and air defence system in Afghanistan even after the troops' withdrawal. Dr. Michael Hannahan from the United States highlighted the US citizens' obli-

giness vis-vis US' longest war. He was of the view that US leaders and stakeholders failed to shape the public narrative about the war properly as they never explained why US was in Afghanistan, what did they accomplish, and why they are withdrawing now? He further stated that after the announcement of the final date of troop withdrawal, a debate has started about the US' accomplishments in the last two decades.

Highlighting the Afghans' perspective, both Mr. Said Azam and Mr. Muzammil-Shinwari expressed hope that Afghanistan and its neighbouring regional countries can turn the challenges posed to Afghanistan after US troops' withdrawal into opportunities of lasting peace and development. Mr. Azam stated that despite the sufferings and plights of the Afghan people

in the last 2 decades, millions of Afghans got access to their fundamental human rights including education, healthcare, and telecommunication industry.

The economic, infrastructure, and human development in the last 20 years has been remarkable and would not have been possible without the international community and US' continued assistance, the same trend should continue in the future to achieve comprehensive peace and development.

However, he expressed his concerns over the Biden administration's decision of a complete troop withdrawal by September 2021 as the outcomes of the intra-Afghan peace talks have not been finalized yet. He suggested that US should withdraw its troops only if the Intra-Afghan Peace dialogue is properly in place and yields significant outputs.

Islamabad private schools to resume from June 7

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Private schools across Islamabad have been allowed to resume classes twice a week from June 7. A notification issued by the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority on Friday stated that classes up to intermediate will resume in a staggered manner. Schools have been told to strictly follow Covid-19 SOPs. It is compulsory for students to wear masks and maintain social distancing.

The authority will meet again on June 3 to review the coronavirus case trend. The decision was taken after the infection rate in the capital city climbed above 5%. Earlier this week, the NCOC allowed reopening educational institutions in districts with less than 5% virus positivity rate. On Thursday, the forum decided to vaccinate coronavirus injections to all teachers across the country.

In the last 24 hours, 104 people died from the coronavirus, while 3,070 new cases were reported. The death toll in the country has crossed the 20,000-mark.



LAHORE: Aybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Pakistan in a group photo with Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, CGSS & Dr. Fousia Hadi Ali, Director, Regional Integration Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore. — DNA

HEC train instructors to enhance capacity

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission's Postsecondary Education Reform Unit (PERU) and National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE) are working collaboratively to strengthen teaching in postsecondary educational institutions. This capacity building exercise has started with public sector affiliated colleges but will later be expanded to universities. The new HEC Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 (UEP) mandates a number

of reforms to better serve undergraduate students. These changes include the revamped BS and Associate Degree (AD) curriculums, the Gen Ed requirement, the practical learning requirements (Internship and Practical Learning Labs such as entrepreneurship, youth clubs, and sports), and a shift to the semester system in affiliated colleges. The goal of this training workshop is to prepare faculty and staff of HEIs to implement these changes and improve the quality of education available. PERU and NAHE will be

working together to train Instructors who will go on to train faculty and master trainers from affiliating universities and affiliated colleges across Pakistan. Designed, developed, and facilitated by Dr. Shazia Awan (NAHE) and Mr. Danyal Wahid (PERU), the first workshop in this series was launched virtually on May 19, 2021, training a total of 15 instructors. All the instructors who received training in this two-day workshop are the top-performing candidates from the National Faculty Development Program in 2020 and repre-

sented multiple districts and provinces of Pakistan.

This 2-day workshop included lectures and learning activities around the new Undergraduate Education Policy 2020 (UEP), training versus teaching faculty, and developing content for college faculty. Intended learning outcomes included improved understanding of teaching faculty, better knowledge of types of assessments suitable for educators and students and improved knowledge of the policy and rules governing affiliated colleges and universities.

ICCI hails CDA's development works in city

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has lauded the efforts of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) for carrying out development works in markets and industrial areas of Islamabad that would uplift the look of the federal capital and facilitate the growth of business activities. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that he along with Amir Ali Ahmed, Chairman CDA had visited various markets of Islamabad including F-6 Markaz, G-6 Melody Market, Blue Area, Aabpara Market, F-10, F-11 and G-11 Markaz for needs assessment of development works and highlighted the areas that needed urgent attention of CDA for addressing issues. Consequent upon those visits, CDA has now started the development works in markets and industrial areas including carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths and restoration of street lights which was laudable. He expressed thanks to the Chairman CDA and his team for fulfilling their commitments based on meetings of both sides and joint visits of commercial areas and hoped that in the coming days, people will see more development works in the rest of markets and industrial areas. He said that the role of CDA was very important in the better development of the federal capital and appreciated the cooperative approach of Chairman CDA for taking initiatives to address the demands of the business community.

ICCI President said that Kahuta Industrial Triangle housed many important industries including pharmaceutical manufacturing units while with the efforts of ICCI, CDA has also allocated development budget for this industrial area. He, therefore, emphasized that CDA should start the development works in Kahuta Industrial Triangle as soon as possible including carpeting of roads, development of footpaths & well-functioning sewerage system, restoration of streetlights, renovation of water system and other required works as due to lack of development works in this industrial area since long, industrial units were facing great problems in production processes.

Farooq Qasir remembered at PNCA

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The one and only Farooq Qasir was remembered in an on-line reference arranged by Pakistan National Council of the Arts. The session hosted by DG, PNCA Dr. Fousia Saeed a close friend and fan of Farooq was attended by Uncle sargum friends and family members. In her opening remarks Dr. Fousia Saeed eulogized his contribution towards art and humanity.

These days we lost a large number of great names of the art world but Farooq Qasir departure is felt differently. He was unique in his writing, acting, friendship and love for the oppressed. "Though we are saying goodbye to you but you are with us and will remain all the time" she added. I think it's not possible for anyone to forget him. He not only worked with his team but lived with them and shared the good and bade of life.

The whole society have reflected their love and respect for him. Arshed Mehmood Ch. One of his colleague said that sweetness of Farooq is unmatched and unforgettable. Actually, I was the uncle sargum because it was my sketch and I was to compose music for it thus the character was named uncle sargum. He was a great writer and was spontaneous in all segments of his life. Salema Hashami paid tribute to Farooq Qasir. She said basically he was a great humanist and he wrote and work for the welfare of the people. He never dares to portray the follies of ruling elites.



ISLAMABAD: Zubair Ahmed Malik Former President FPCCI along with Muhammad Ijaz Abbasi Former President ICCI, Khalid Iqbal Malik Former President ICCI, Ahmad Hassan Moughal Former President ICCI presenting Flower Bouquet to Zafer Bakhtawari Former President ICCI Congratulations for his appointment as Secretary General United Business Group UBG at his Residence. Ahsan Bakhtawari Former VP ICCI is also present at the occasion. — DNA

Shehryar Afridi for judicial reforms to provide speedy justice

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Shehryar Khan Afridi Friday stressed the need to introduce judicial reforms to further provide speedy justice to the masses. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government had always respected the courts and its decisions in larger national interest, he said while talking to a private news channel.

He said the incumbent government committed to carry out accountability process against plunderers across the board. "We came into

power by raising slogans against the menace of corruption and money laundering," he added.

The chairman said nobody was above the law and Constitution and stern actions would be taken against the mafias. Nobody could pressure the government as it was following the concept of Madina welfare state, he stated.

Commenting on Palestine issue, he said Pakistan was fully supporting the Palestinian people in this difficult time by highlighting the Israel atrocities and barbarism on them. — APP

Faheem Mohammad appointed Chief (Admin Pool): FBR

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has appointed Faheem Mohammad, a BS-20 officer of Inland Revenue (IR) Services as Chief (Admin Pool), FBR, Islamabad.

According to FBR notification issued here on Friday, he assumed the charge of the post. FBR also notified that NafeesaBano, an officer of Inland Revenue Service assumed the charge of the post Additional Commissioner —IR (BS-19 on regular basis), as CTO, Islamabad. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police launched the "Gender Protection Unit" helpline 8090, to help out the victims of domestic violence, harassments, Rape victims, women and children affected by forced labor. — DNA

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Education for all

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

ONE of the pillars assuring success to an individual and a nation is education. Enough stress has been given to the children and the youth to gain an education. Unfortunately, the state of affairs in Pakistan needs to be addressed at the earliest. Even in today's age, education is not easily available to the children who belong from the lower-middle or lower classes of the population. Parents belonging to the middle class do their best to send their children to private schools and colleges of repute. However, this luxury is not available for all.

Indeed, education has become a luxury that must be a necessity and available for all. While the state of affairs of education in cities and especially in the metropolis is not that bleak, the situation in villages and remote areas shows a distressing picture. Children living in villages have no access to proper education. Even if they can study in schools, they do not have proper colleges. They need to relocate themselves to the nearest city to get admission to a university. That too is a rarity as such students, because of their financial shortcomings, cannot pursue higher education in private universities that charge hefty fees. The concerned authorities in the Ministry of Education must allocate some budget that allows children from the underprivileged sector to complete their primary education. They can at least complete their graduation to earn a job. Once they are employed, they can fund their higher education themselves.

Furthermore, the Ministry can have some model to facilitate portions of their higher education. Indeed this process would strictly be on merit or need-based model with proper scrutiny and research conducted before providing the students with some form of financial assistance. It must be easier if students from the underprivileged sector can gain access to education in state-owned educational institutions and complete their studies to add value to the country's economy.



Electoral reforms

THE government's enthusiasm to quickly pass electrical reforms and introduce electronic voting and biometric machines is not shared by everyone. The topic triggers a rigorous debate with many passionate opinions—the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs proposed as many as 49 amendments to the Election (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Apart from criticism from the opposition, the Free and Fair Election Network (Fafen) has also weighed on, urging the government to desist from any haste in introducing the changes to the Elections Act, 2017, and instead to consider an immediate review of the inefficacy of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) system.

This is a worthy suggestion which the government can consider while passing reforms. The FPTP is a plurality voting method and is used as the primary form of allocating seats for legislative elections in about a third of the world's countries. The system which Fafen proposes borrowing from is one of Proportional Representation (PR), an electoral system in which divisions in an electorate are reflected proportionately in the elected body, the way the Pakistan Senate is constituted.

These are not orders for the government—indeed, adopting such wide electoral reforms can be a burdensome task. However, these suggestions and recommendations are helpful and worth looking into, if the government wants to ensure the electronic voting reform it sets out to inculcate are accepted and given credibility.

There are a lot of studies showing the shortcomings of electoral systems—it is true that the system now does not allow for all votes to be counted. There is an argument that governments so formed have been weak as they have never represented more than 17 percent of the registered and 46 percent of the polled votes, and the reason that the opposition has always been weak is because of the lack of power of minority governments.

These are factors that must be brought up in parliament to ensure that the final law passed is as representative and democratic as possible so that future elections are not constantly beholden to rigging and foul play claims.

Nuclear tech to achieve sustainable development goals

Dr. Syed Javaid Khurshid



Pakistan as a developing country is one of the largest recipients of technical and financial help from IAEA. Pakistan also has achieved considerable expertise in the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and also using Nuclear technology in achieving 9 of 17 sustainable development goals

IN 2015, 195 nations of the world agreed under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) to set out seventeen sustainable development goals to be achieved by 2030. If these goals are achieved it would have a lasting impact on the reduction of poverty & making health and education facilities more accessible for the common people in the less developed countries. All the countries agreed to adopt these goals that would improve the lives of their citizens through Agenda 2030. These countries have to work devotedly to achieve the goals as there is no plan B. Global challenges have now become more complex after the outbreak of COVID-19. Working for sustainable development goals was being done effectively by many countries before the COVID-19 pandemic, but after this crisis, the targets are disturbed and seem difficult to be achieved by many countries by 2030. Many states have made commitments to achieve them at the national level. In 2015, Pakistan Planning Commission incorporated these SDGs in its national economic planning. The action plans and policies at the national level will play a fundamental role in countries' development by translating these SDGs into workable actions. In Pakistan, national planning and incorporating the use of nuclear technology has played a significant role in achieving SDGs. It is good to remind ourselves on the

28th of May that nuclear energy has also been used for the betterment of the lives of Pakistanis and not only for making nuclear weapons.

It was recognized from the beginning by the planners in Pakistan that SDGs can be more easily achieved by involving science and scientific communities and adopting innovative technologies such as nuclear technology. Nuclear technology is guided and supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) internationally and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) nationally, which ensures it is safe for use.

Pakistan as a developing country is one of the largest recipients of technical and financial help from IAEA. Pakistan also has achieved considerable expertise in the application of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and also using Nuclear technology in achieving 9 of 17 sustainable development goals. These goals are to Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition, Provision of Good Health and Well-Being, Access to Clean Water and Sanitation facilities, Provision of Affordable and Clean Energy, Increase Industry Innovation and Infrastructure, Mitigation of Climate Change, Sustain Life Below Water, Sustain Life on Land, and Strengthening Partnerships for the achieving Sustainable Goals. These goals are discussed in detail as below.

Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition: In 2050, it is expected that the world population will grow to nearly 9.7 billion thus increasing our need for more food by 60% compared to the present. Currently, about 842 million people remain hungry every day and roughly about 1 billion people in the world are food insecure. There is, therefore, an urgent need to increase food production by at least 60% to meet global needs. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has underscored that there is very little additional land available to grow more food crops. It requires that we must produce new varieties of crops which should be high-yielding, disease-resistant, drought and salt-tolerant and are suited to insect pest management.

In Pakistan, three institutes working under PAEC are using nuclear techniques to develop high-yielding varieties. Until now they have developed about 115 new varieties of different cash crops of national importance by radiation mutation. These crops at present cover about 35-40% of cultivable area, contributing about 10% to crop productivity. These are commendable achievements, but we need to continue our efforts to meet the ever-rising future requirements. Radiation sterilization technique such as Male Sterilization is also used for insect pest management to protect crops such as sugarcane crop in Sindh. Pakistan is also developing mutant varieties rich in iron and zinc micronutrients. A commercial irradiation facility in Lahore is helping to increase the shelf life of perishable food items by removing harmful bacteria and unwanted insects. Pakistan is also using stable isotopes to monitor body composition, food intake and absorption of various nutrients to understand the problems of malnutrition in the country.

Provision of Good Health and Well Being: People should be healthy so that they can work and support themselves and their families as well as contribute to the national economy. A healthy nation would be essential to achieve sustainable development goals. Nuclear techniques are most important in cancer treatment and management of some other fatal diseases using nuclear medicine, radiation oncology, radiation treatment and radiation diagnosis modalities. International Agency for Research in Cancer, estimates that about 150 million people are suffering from cancer globally. At present, Pakistan has about 30 cancer treatment facilities, whereas, 10 out of these have either diagnostic or treatment facilities. These facilities are catering to about

14,50,000 patients/year, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission and Shaukat Khanum Hospital are playing a key role in cancer treatment in the country. In 2015, it was suggested by me to Planning Commission to establish a Cancer Control Program at the national level to achieve tertiary health care targets in the country. The program needs to be implemented in two phases and both phases should be implemented simultaneously. A very large number of cancer patients cannot be treated as they reach the hospital when the disease is already in an advanced stage. An early diagnosis of cancer patients would help the treatment and recovery of more patients afflicted by this malady. The allocation of funds for early diagnosis of cancer, therefore, is very important in controlling the disease. More importantly, cancer treatment facilities need to be doubled in the country. For this purpose, we need cancer diagnosis facilities after every 50 miles and treatment facilities after every 100 miles. Other than cancer diagnosis and radiation treatment, nuclear techniques are in use in the precise diagnosis of cardiovascular disease, tuberculosis, and in the diagnosis of many other infectious diseases. Nuclear techniques are also helping to detect and control outbreaks of animal diseases. Access to Clean Drinking Water and Sanitation: Water is essential for life on the planet. Pakistan is already placed among the water-stressed countries. Besides access to clean water, the efficient use of water is also very important for the country and thus groundwater management and water conservation are needed. To achieve this goal Pakistan is utilizing nuclear isotopic techniques for collecting information such as age, amount and quality of groundwater which is very useful in integrated management of water resources and water ecosystem. Nuclear technology is also being used to make water bacteria-free.

Provision of Affordable and Clean Energy: Producing sufficient energy at an affordable cost without emitting greenhouse gases is a very important SDG. The energy production choices will have huge consequences for health, economy and climate change. World energy mix at present shows 65% fossil fuel, 16% Hydropower, 13% Nuclear power and 6-7% renewable energy. Besides Hydel, renewable and nuclear are the clean sources of energy. The most important thing is that nuclear energy is an uninterrupted clean source of energy. Recognizing the importance of nuclear energy first commercial nuclear power plant of the world was connected to grid in 1956 at Calder Hall, England. At present, 31 countries are operating about 449 nuclear plants for electricity generation, whereas about 67 are under construction in 16 different countries. Pakistan recognized the importance of nuclear power from the beginning and built its first commercial power plant in 1971, K-1 of 137MW at Karachi. At present Pakistan is producing about 6% of its energy mix by 5 nuclear plants, which is going to increase upto 12% this year after K-2 in May and K-3 in October 2021 start operation at Karachi. Nuclear power is the answer to Pakistan's future development, safety and security. Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission has already given a 40 years plan to the Government of Pakistan, of achieving a target of 8800 MW by 2030, and of 40,000 MW by 2048. The target of affordable and clean energy can only be achieved through nuclear energy, by installing more nuclear power projects on a Build Operate and Transfer (BOT) basis.

Sustainable Industry Innovation and Infrastructure: An excellent infrastructure and cutting-edge technologies are required to sustain and increase industrial growth. Nuclear technologies are contributing to achieving the indicators of this SDG by using Non-destructive X-ray techniques for quality testing of the products, such as welds, building and bridges and irradiation of wires, cables pipes and tyres

to improve their quality and durability. Irradiation is also used to remove bacteria from medical products, sterilizing surgical instruments, and increasing the shelf life of food products such as onions, potatoes, spices and mangoes. Pakistan has done a lot of research work in this direction and the first commercial irradiator was established in the country in 1987 at Lahore. At present two irradiators are working in Pakistan, one for single-use products and the other for food products, whereas another Electron Beam sterilization plant is coming up at Lahore. Here I would like to suggest to the government of Pakistan that we should install two Electron Beam irradiators at Gawader and one each at Gilgit and Karachi, their use will add value to our products and will increase our exports.

Mitigation of Climate Change: Temperature plays a very important role in food production and thus in the economy of the country which is affected by the release of greenhouse gases mainly carbon dioxide. All the leading nuclear think tanks and the research groups working on "nuclear for climate" programs in different countries agree that nuclear energy is the key in the fight against climate change. It is one of the leading reasons for considering an increase of nuclear power share in the country's energy mix. As mentioned earlier Pakistan has chalked out an ambitious program to increase its nuclear energy production and thus help mitigate climate change.

Sustainability of Life Below Water: Protecting sea life is a significant SDG as marine life is one of the biggest and the cheapest sources of nutritious food for human beings. Marine life can be studied by using the powerful method of isotopic techniques. The isotopic techniques can help scientists to understand, monitor and control pollutants and protect marine health.

Sustainability of Life on Land: Land erosion is the biggest problem being faced the world over. About 1.5 million acres of soil is under erosion and degradation globally affecting the economy of several countries. Many countries are contributing to help control this menace by using nuclear and isotopic techniques. Nuclear techniques help to determine soil erosion rates. Based on these calculations remedial measures can be undertaken to restore soil, ecosystem and biodiversity. IAEA is supporting many countries in this field. Pakistan's two research institutes are using these techniques in controlling the saline land which makes about 30% of the country's cropping area.

Strengthening Partnership for achieving SDGs: To achieve SDGs partnerships have to be developed with international organizations such as UN, WHO, FAO and IAEA. In order to help achieve SDGs, the government of Pakistan should further strengthen the partnership between IAEA and PAEC.

Pakistan's challenge is to achieve SDGs for the prosperity of the country. Nuclear techniques have played an important role in making progress on many fronts for achieving these goals. Pakistan is lucky to have scientific know-how and trained manpower in the field of nuclear technology. This advantage has been quite helpful in making steady progress in several areas as noted before. This should be further enhanced by IAEA's support. Pakistan is already the highest recipient of financial and technical know-how from IAEA in Asia. There is a need to develop the political will to coherently move with the UN and IAEA for utilizing nuclear techniques to achieve sustainable development goals in the country by 2030.

—Dr. Syed Javaid Khurshid is a Senior Research Fellow at Centre of International Strategic Studies, Islamabad

The fallacy of the colonial 'right to self-defence'

Patrick Gathara



Colonial occupiers have long claimed a "right" to defend themselves from the resistance of native communities, including by committing mass murder

THE violence convulsing the Middle East has produced heart-rending images and statistics. As I write this, at least 160 people, the vast majority of them Palestinians, including at least 41 children — the vast majority Palestinian — have been killed as the Israeli military carries out bombing raids in densely populated Gaza and armed Palestinian groups hurl rockets at Israeli cities. Meanwhile, inter-communal violence has broken out across Israel.

In response, Western governments, led by US President Joe Biden, have been quick to unequivocally condemn Palestinian groups for the rocket barrages, but have been much more circumspect about condemning Israel's attack on Palestinian civilians.

Lukewarm expressions of "dismay" and "grave concern" at Palestinian deaths have been interspersed with declarations of "unwavering support for Israel's security and for Israel's legitimate right to defend itself". They have also included appeals for "moral clarity", implying that the actions of Palestinian groups, though causing a tiny fraction of the death and destruction that Israeli bombardment has wreaked, were nonetheless more objectionable. While some progressive politicians — such as US congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — have pointed out the hypocrisy of a blanket assertion of the Israeli right to self-defence, even they have balked at outright rejection of Israeli justifications.

Colonial occupiers have long claimed a "right" to defend themselves from the resistance of native communities, including by committing mass murder. The history of Af-

rican colonisation is littered with the corpses and mass graves of those who dared to resist the militarily superior Europeans.

In her book, the British Gulag, historian Caroline Elkins describes a "murderous campaign" by the British in colonial Kenya following the 1950s Mau Mau peasant uprising, including the establishment of concentration camps for 1.5 million Kikuyu civilians and a brutal system of torture camps that may have claimed the lives of tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands of those suspected to have pledged themselves to the rebellion. The idea that imperial land grabbers have the right to terrorise, brutalise, torture and murder those whose land they steal under the rubric of "self-defence" flies in the face of UN General Assembly Resolution 37/43 of 1982 which recognised "the legitimacy of the struggle of peoples for independence, territorial integrity, national unity and liberation from colonial and foreign domination and foreign occupation by all available means, including armed struggle". That resolution specifically reaffirmed this right in the case of the Palestinian struggle.

Thus, today in Gaza, rather than seeking "moral clarity", the West is using moral obfuscation to justify attacks on a refugee population by a colonial power that has evicted them from their land, blockades them in what is, in essence, an open-air prison, and then claims the right to do so in peace and quiet.

When Western media speaks of a "cycle of escalation", it equates oppression to the resistance to oppression, presenting the violence as a conflict between two sides with

equal claims to security and land. It ignores that the Palestinians are engaged in a struggle for national liberation against a decades-long illegal and immoral occupation, and the imposition of a regime of racial and ethnic discrimination which Human Rights Watch, in a report the media pointedly refuses to bring up, says fits the definition of the international crime of apartheid.

In interviews, Israeli spokespeople repeatedly stress the difficulty that Israel's self-declared "most moral army in the world" has in finding and killing what are in essence Palestinian resistance leaders, who, they say, are hiding behind civilians. The Western press is happy to accept that the leaders of Hamas and other groups are legitimate targets, and with it, the implication that while its tactics may be somewhat unsavoury, Israel is nonetheless waging a legitimate war. Uncritically accepting this framing makes Western media complicit in the delegitimisation of Palestinian resistance to colonial domination and dispossession by the Israeli state.

As Ocasio-Cortez pointed out, regurgitating the line that "Israel has a right to defend itself" without including the context of oppression simply excuses and legitimises even more oppression. But she should have gone further. If Western media, politicians and diplomats truly seek moral clarity, it behoves them to reject outright as gaslighting and bothsidesism, the outrageous proposition that colonial states such as Israel have a right to defend themselves from those they oppress.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

Egyptian delegation arrives in Gaza to follow cease-fire

GAZA CITY: A delegation from Egyptian intelligence on Friday arrived in Gaza just hours after a cease-fire was announced between Palestinian resistance groups and Israel. A Palestinian source told Anadolu Agency that the Egyptian delegation entered Gaza via the Beit Hanoun (Erez) crossing with Israel to meet with leaders from Hamas in order to follow up the cease-fire commitments. The delegation is headed by Ahmed Abdel Khaleq, a top Egyptian intelligence officer responsible for Palestine. The source did not say how long the delegation would stay in Gaza. Late Thursday an Egyptian-brokered cease-fire to end the fighting between resistance groups in Gaza and Israel was announced. — APP

Alvi, Xi...

From Page 01

"The mutual trust and friendship between the two countries have gone through the test of 70 years of international changes and remain rock-solid, and have become the most valuable strategic asset of the two peoples," he stated. He said in recent years, with the joint efforts of both sides, the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had achieved remarkable results, bringing tangible benefits to the people of both countries, and adding strong impetus to the regional prosperity. "In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic, China and Pakistan have shared weal and woe, and sincerely helped each other, and the ironclad friendship between the two countries has been further sublimated," President Xi said. He said he attached great importance to the development of China-Pakistan relations.

"I am ready to work with Your Excellency to deepen strategic communication and pragmatic cooperation between the two countries, promote the high-quality development of the CPEC, and work together to build a closer China-Pakistan Community of Shared Future in the new era, for the benefit of the two countries and the two peoples," he remarked.

Morocco...

From Page 01

Al-Quds-East as its capital. To this end, the Kingdom urges the international community, in particular the Security Council and the Quartet, to engage in stopping the escalation, to act actively to break the cycle of violence and to initiate intense diplomatic action in view of a peaceful settlement, in accordance with resolutions based on international legality. Mr. Bourita pointed out. The minister also stressed the urgent need for intervention by the international community to help the Palestinian people in the West Bank, Al Quds and the Gaza Strip, in order to overcome the impact of this tragic situation. Bourita recalled that the Kingdom, following the High Instructions of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, took the initiative to send emergency humanitarian aid to the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which includes basic food products, emergency medicine and blankets. "This royal decision is part of the Kingdom's unwavering support for the just Palestinian cause and its permanent solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people.

It is also part of the continuation of His Majesty the King's action, in his capacity as chairman of Al-Quds Committee, at the political and diplomatic levels but also on the ground, in particular through the Bayt Mal Al Quds Agency, for the benefit of the people of the Holy City, in order to provide them with decent means of subsistence and to support their capacities and resilience," Bourita said. Firmly attached to peace and stability in the Middle East, Morocco is sparing no effort to fully contribute to international efforts aimed at ending the escalation of violence and fostering a constructive dynamic for peace in the region, the minister concluded.

Pakistan, China all weather partners, iron-brothers: Wang

Pakistan-China friendship would serve the best interests of the peoples of two countries and also remain as the guarantor of regional peace and security

DNA

BEIJING: China's Vice-President, Wang Qishan said on Friday that Pakistan and China were all-weather strategic cooperative partners, iron-brothers and most reliable friends. The Chinese vice president made these remarks in a meeting with Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin-ul-Haque at the Diaoyutai State Guest House at the side-lines of the reception held to commemorate the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China.

He highlighted that Pakistan-China friendship would serve the best interests of the peoples of two countries and also remain as the guarantor of regional peace and security. Chinese Vice-President added that China attached immense importance to its ties with Pakistan and would continue developing bilateral strategic relations as envisaged by the leadership and peoples of two countries.



Recalling his visit to Pakistan in 2019 as an element of high level bilateral engagements, Vice-President Wang conveyed message of goodwill to the government

and people of Pakistan. Thanking Vice-President Wang for the meeting, Ambassador Moin conveyed to him best wishes of Pakistani leadership for his contributions to Pakistan-China friendship. He highlighted that due to massive support of the government and people of the two countries, Pakistan and China were celebrating the 70th anniversary with tremendous enthusiasm and passion. Ambassador Moin underscored that friendship with China was a cornerstone

of Pakistan's foreign policy and that the government of Pakistan would resolutely continue to deepen bilateral ties with China in all areas of mutual interest. The meeting was also attended by high level officials of two sides including Mr. Luo Zhaohui; Chairman of CIDCA; Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianghao; Mr. Lin Songtian, President of Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and Ambassador Sha Zukang, President of China-Pakistan Friendship Association.



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee along with other participants posing for a group photo after completing the 'diplomatic training course' for foreign diplomats at ADA University. — DNA

Iran dismisses Canada court ruling on downed airliner

TEHRAN: Iran on Friday dismissed as baseless a Canadian court ruling it had deliberately shot down a Ukrainian passenger jet, saying the court did not have the authority to issue a verdict. The Superior Court of Justice of Ontario had on Thursday ruled that two missile strikes on the Ukraine International Airlines flight PS752 shortly after takeoff from Tehran on January 8, 2020 "were intentional" and "an act of terrorism". All 176 people aboard were killed, including 55 Canadian nationals and 30 permanent residents, with the Islamic republic admitting three days later that its forces had shot down the Ki-

ev-bound plane "by mistake". Iran's foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said the verdict was "without any basis and objective evidence and reasons". The court "has no authority to address this air incident" since it was outside its territory and jurisdiction, he said. Khatibzadeh also accused the Canadian government of "exploiting the sorrows" of victims' families and alleged the court judge had followed "political orders". The Canadian legal action seeking Can\$1.5 billion (US\$1.25 billion) was brought by four people who lost family members in the disaster. — APP

President Alvi stresses for holding mega sports events

The President assured the delegation of extending all possible support for highlighting the event at national and international levels

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday stressed the need to promote mega sports events in the country for utilizing talent of youth and project Pakistan's soft image in the world. Talking to the management of Kashmir Premier League (KPL) at Aiwan-e-Sadr,

he said the launch of the League would provide a quality platform to Kashmiri youth to display their cricketing talent besides promoting the Valley's beautiful landscapes and culture at global level. Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir Affairs Shehryar Afridi, President KPL Arif Malik, CEO KPL Chaudhary Shahzad

Akhtar, members of senior management of KPL, franchise owners and senior officials of the government attended the meeting. President Alvi lauded the efforts of KPL Management and expressed the hope that the mega event would prove to be successful and would allow the Kashmiri youth to exhibit their skills. The management of KPL

briefed the President about the purpose and objectives of the League, saying that it would help promote the cause of Kashmir across the world and would also put Kashmir on the global sports map. The President assured the delegation of extending all possible support for highlighting the event at national and international levels.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi, in a group photo with the management of Kashmir Premier League, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. — DNA

1,621 staff on poll duty die of COVID

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Aniket Kumar lost both his parents — who worked as principals in government-run schools — to COVID-19 within 10 days. In early April, his father Lallan Ram, 59, and mother Meena Kumari, 55, attended a camp held in Uttar Pradesh's Siddharthnagar district to train government staff for the panchayat (vil-

lage council) elections in the state. The large northern state, roughly the size of the United Kingdom, is India's most populous with nearly 220 million residents. Despite a ferocious second wave of the coronavirus engulfing the country, the mammoth village council elections were held in four phases in April in which nearly 1.3 million candidates aspired for 800,000 posts.

Arctic nations agree to fight global warming

"The Arctic as a region for strategic competition has seized the world's attention" but 'rule of law' must be ensured so that it remains a region free of conflict where countries act responsibly"

FOREIGN DESK

REYKJAVIK: Arctic countries have pledged to fight global warming, which is happening three times faster in the northern reaches of the earth than elsewhere and to preserve peace in the region as its geopolitical importance increases. Accelerated global warming, untapped resources, new maritime routes opened up by retreating sea ice, and the future of local populations all topped the agenda as foreign ministers of countries bordering the Arctic gathered in Reykjavik in Iceland. "We are committed to advancing a peaceful Arctic region where cooperation prevails on climate, the environment, science and safety," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken

told his Arctic Council counterparts from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. "The Arctic as a region for strategic competition has seized the world's attention" but 'rule of law' must be ensured so that it remains a region free of conflict where countries act responsibly," he added. The warming climate has opened up the Arctic for shipping, fishing, drilling and mining, and China, an observer to the Council, has made no secret of its interest in the vast territory rich in natural resources and where retreating sea ice has opened up new maritime routes. Meanwhile, Russia has beefed up its military presence in the Arctic — reopening and modernising bases abandoned since the Soviet Union collapsed — and the United States

has stepped up naval exercises. "It is important to extend the positive relations that we have within the Arctic Council to encompass the military sphere as well," Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov told the participants at the meeting. "We have highlighted at the meeting that we see no grounds for conflict here. Even more so for any development of military programmes of some blocks here," Lavrov told reporters. The Russian envoy also said his country supported the idea of hosting a summit of Arctic nations during its two-year presidency of the Council. Lavrov has also called for a resumption of regular meetings between the chiefs of staff of the Council's member countries. Annual meetings between armed

forces chiefs from Arctic states were halted in 2014 following Russia's annexation of Crimea. Russia has not participated in another forum, the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, since 2014. The Arctic Council was set up 25 years ago to deal with issues such as the environment and areas of international cooperation, and its mandate explicitly excludes military security. Discussions focused heavily on the effect of global heating on the one-ice region. "The climate crisis is our most serious long-term threat with the Arctic warming three times faster than anywhere else on the planet," Canadian Foreign Minister Marc Garneau told the Council. The alarming data was part of a report published on Thursday by the Arctic Monitoring and Assess-

ment Programme (AMAP), which also warned of an increased risk of the region's sea ice disappearing completely in winter, before solidifying in winter. "We have a duty to strengthen our cooperation for the benefit of the people inhabiting the Arctic," Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod said. At the previous Council meeting in 2019 in Finland, the Trump administration blocked the signing of a joint declaration for the first time since the Council was established in 1996, as it refused to include climate change in the final statement. The adoption of a joint statement on Thursday went without a hitch, as did the agreement of a 10-year strategic plan for the first time in the Council's history.

Norway to ease virus restrictions May 27

OSLO: Norway said Friday it would ease some virus restrictions on May 27, making it easier to serve alcohol in bars and invite guests home as the pandemic seems to be under control. "I'm very happy today that we can see the beginning of the end of the pandemic," Prime Minister Erna Solberg told reporters. "We're gradually returning to normal life." With declining COVID-19 cases and its vaccination campaign progressing, the Nordic country has decided to move to phase two of its four-step reopening plan next Thursday. Bars will be allowed to sell alcohol until midnight, instead of 9:00 pm as now, and without any obligation to serve food. But patrons will have to remain seated and at a metre's (yard's) distance. The recommended maximum number of guests in one's home will also be raised from five to 10 — fully vaccinated or immunised people excluded — and an advisory against non-essential travel within Norway will be lifted. The restrictions and recommendations being eased are nationwide, but stricter regional restrictions can be applied depending on local infection levels. While the government continues to advise against international travel until July 1, a 10-day quarantine imposed on most people entering Norway will be eased somewhat for certain travellers. — APP

Infantino wants overhaul of FIFA calendar

LAUSANNE: FIFA president Gianni Infantino on Friday called for an overhaul of the international football calendar beyond 2024, insisting on a requirement to start with a "blank sheet of paper". "Let me be very clear: the starting point is not 'the calendar is full and so nothing changes'," he told the 71st FIFA Congress. "The starting point is the exact opposite of that. We have a blank sheet, we are open to take on board all views and opinions about how we can make the international calendar better." Infantino reiterated his intention to "find a date" for a Club World Cup which he wants to see extended to 24 teams, despite widespread opposition to the plan. However, he argued at length Friday for FIFA to play a key role in rewriting the calendar. He said the organisation is the "only body" that "generates" and "redistributes" its revenues "around the world" unlike continental confederations and leagues. — APP

World opinion changing...

From Page 01

The prime minister also spoke of the bombardment on Gaza by the Israeli military — which he referred to as one of the most powerful forces in the world — that has led to dozens of children being killed. He said that the very next day, he met with the secretary general of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and urged him to raise the issue via the platform and also stressed on the need for the matter to be highlighted at the United Nations. "When I came to Pakistan, I also spoke to King Salman about the oppression Palestinians are facing and about what happened at Al-Aqsa, and how we need to raise our voices for this. "The Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, called me and he said the same thing, and so did Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad," PM Imran Khan said.

He said that he then spoke to Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas and told him the entire Muslim world, and all those countries that advocate for justice, stand with the Palestinians. PM Imran Khan said he tasked Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi with raising the issue at the United Nations and the OIC "and he did very well to highlight it". "I am witnessing a very welcoming sign, which is, that the world's public opinion is shifting," he said, adding that he had never before seen any criticism coming from the Western quarters, in their media, newspapers, or from their politicians, in the past when Israeli oppression against Palestinians would continue unabated. "Instead it would be made to appear as if Israel is being subjected to cruelty," he said.

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Pak, Japan think tanks...

From Page 01

Vice-Chancellor of PIDE, experts from both sides have made presentations and discussed about topics such as Labor Force Participation of Women, Reform Agenda for Accelerated and Sustained Growth, Geographical Simulation Model of IDE, and Tax Policy Design and Options for Reform. MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan is very pleased with the development of cooperation between two institutions. "Although it is not easy to arrange physical people to people exchange between two countries under current COVID-19 situation, it is remarkable that two institutions have taken initiatives to realize this milestone event. The Embassy of Japan will continue to support think-tank cooperation towards the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Pakistan in 2022," he said.

Briefs

Azeri
servicemen
to join int'l
exercises

DNA

BAKU: The Azerbaijani army servicemen will participate in the Anatolian Phoenix-2021 international search and rescue exercises to start in Turkey's Konya on May 24, the Defence Ministry reported on May 21. The Air Force and the Navy servicemen will represent Azerbaijan in the international exercises. The exercises will last until June 4. It should be noted that the Azerbaijani army successfully completed large-scale drills involving different types of troops held under the plan approved by President Ilham Aliyev on May 20. The exercises had been held since May 16 and involved up to 15,000 military personnel. Some 300 tanks, and other armored vehicles, 400 missile and artillery installations of various calibers, multiple launch rocket systems, mortars, and anti-tank weapons, up to 50 units of military aviation and unmanned aerial vehicles for various purposes were used for the exercises.

Turkey
rescues
35 asylum
seekers

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkish security forces rescued a total of 35 asylum seekers who were pushed back by Greek authorities, Turkey's National Defense Ministry said on Friday. In a Twitter post, the ministry said the asylum seekers were "tried to be illegally sent to Turkey after being beaten by the Greek personnel and being held as hostages without food and water in a building where shoes, money and IDs were taken." It added that Turkish security forces in the northwestern Edirne province rescued the asylum seekers in the Meric River, which forms the Turkish-Greek border. Turkey and human rights groups have repeatedly condemned Greece's illegal practice of pushing back asylum seekers, saying it violates humanitarian values and international law by endangering the lives of vulnerable migrants, including women and children.

Kyrgyzstan
dumps 1,000
vaccine doses

BISHKEK: Kyrgyzstan was forced to dump nearly 1,000 doses of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine after a fridge in a state clinic was unplugged to charge a mobile phone, authorities in the impoverished Central Asian country said. The spoilt vaccines were part of a package of 20,000 doses of the Sputnik V vaccine donated to ex-Soviet Kyrgyzstan by Russia. Kyrgyzstan began mass vaccinations in March using shots of the Sinopharm vaccine donated by China but online polls and queues at health clinics suggest that demand for the Russian vaccine is far higher. The health ministry has come under fire over the incident, which authorities disclosed this week but that occurred at a clinic in the capital Bishkek in April. Burul Asylybekova, an official at the Central State Sanitary and Epidemiological Service, said the doses had to be written off after someone unplugged a fridge containing the vaccines in order to charge a phone. Health Minister Alimkadyr Beishenaliyev said it was responsible. Beishenaliyev was heavily criticised in April for championing a solution based on a poisonous root as a cure for the coronavirus. Beishenaliyev said the mixture containing the aconite root was concocted by President Sadyr Japarov and brewed in the presidential residence. Kyrgyzstan has recorded 101,878 cases and 1,735 deaths with the coronavirus since the beginning of the pandemic, but authorities have admitted that official numbers do not capture the full toll of the disease. - APP

Pakistani investment
invited at Belarus BFEZ

DNA

MINSK: Besides showing Belarus government's readiness to assist Pakistani businesspersons for further promoting the bilateral trade and investment ties particularly in agriculture and textile sectors, the authorities of Best Free Economic Zone of Belarus invite Pakistani investors to invest at the zone having very attractive and high potential business avenues. Expressing his satisfaction over the growing ties between the two countries, Chairman of Brest Regional Executive Committee, Yuri Shuleiko on Friday welcomed Pakistan's Ambassador to Belarus, Sajjad Haider Khan who was on three-day visit to Brest Region, which has a lot of economic scope, says statement receiving here from Pakistan Embassy in Belarus. During this interactive meeting, the two sides agreed to pursue the common objective of finding ways and means to strengthen economic collaboration between the two countries. Nasir Hamid, Minister (Trade and Investment) based in Moscow and Abdullah Amin, Deputy Head of Mission at Paki-



stan's Embassy in Minsk were also part of the Pakistani delegation. From Belarus side, Chairman of Economic Committee Mikhail Samolazov, Chief Executive Officer of Brest Free Economic Zone, Fiodar Kalanchuk and other senior officials also

attended the meeting. Appreciating the deep rooted bilateral ties, Pakistan's Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan highlighted Pakistan's keen interest in further deepening the trade and investment ties. Briefing the Belarusian dignitaries on

the recent steps undertaken by Pakistan Government for promoting multifaceted relationship in the two countries, he expressed his full satisfaction over the outcome of his three-day tour of the Brest region. There he had meetings with more than over twenty leading Belarus businesspersons representing different economic sectors including fish importers, dairy producers and textile goods manufacturers and importers. Earlier, led by Pakistan Ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan, Pakistan delegation also held very useful business meeting with seventeen top businesspersons from Brest Region at a dinner; jointly hosted by the owner of Santa Bremor and Pakistan Embassy. Mayor of the Brest city (Chairman of City Executive Committee) Aleksandr Rogachuk was among the prominent Owners/Directors of the engaged in textile, toys, furniture, meat-cannery, distillery, fish products, dairy and fashion designing businesses. The guests were served with traditional Pakistani cuisine. The participants exchanged views on ways and means to develop collaboration between Pakistan and Belarus in respective fields.



KUALUMPUR: Ambassador of Palestine to Malaysia Walid Abu Ali received former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad who came to express solidarity with Palestine. - DNA

Bangladesh
puts Rohingya
camps under
lockdown

DHAKA: Bangladesh authorities have imposed a lockdown in five Rohingya refugee camps in southeastern Bangladesh after an alarming spread of the coronavirus, officials said. The shutdown will initially last for a week, until May 27, Shah Rezwon Hayat, head of Bangladesh's Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission, said on Friday. A total of 863 COVID-19 cases and 13 deaths have so far been reported among the more than a million Rohingya living in 34 camps in Cox's Bazar district after they fled persecution in neighbouring Buddhist-majority Myanmar. They include some 740,000 Rohingya refugees who fled a deadly Myanmar military offensive in August 2017. The first COVID-19 case was reported in a camp in May last year, more than two months after Bangladesh reported its first cases in March. - Foreign Desk

China offering
cash, vaccines
to people
in Gaza

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China says it will offer cash and 200,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Palestinians caught up in the latest fighting in Gaza. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian on Friday told reporters that \$1 million would be provided as emergency humanitarian assistance and another \$1 million would go to UN-RWA, the UN agency that provides vital assistance to the 75 percent of the enclave's population who are refugees. China will "continue to provide humanitarian support within its capacity and actively participate in the reconstruction of Gaza according to the needs of the Palestinian side," Zhao said at a daily briefing. The fighting has brought Gaza's health care system to the brink of collapse and its COVID-19 vaccination drive, already slow, has stopped, according to WHO's top official in Gaza, Sacha Bootsma. China has become a major exporter and donor of COVID-19 vaccines, taking a leading role in what some have termed "vaccine diplomacy." China is a strong supporter of the Palestinian cause but also maintains robust ties with Israel.

Hackers leak
personal
data of 279M
Indonesians

WEB DESK

JAKARTA: Personal data of at least 279 million Indonesians were allegedly leaked and sold on a hacker platform this month, authorities said late Thursday. The Ministry of Communication and Information said in a statement that it is investigating the suspected data leak and its sale on the hacker platform "Raid Forums." Information related to the alleged leakage of population data first surfaced on social media, claiming to be from the Health Care and Social Security Agency (BPJS Kesehatan). The ministry's spokesperson, Dedy Permadi, said it is a major data leak and the investigation will take time. To complete the investigation, the ministry will look into several stages of the suspected leak, he said. There will be an in-depth investigation into the matter to find traces of the leak, he said, adding that the "findings of the investigation will be submitted later." Iqbal Anas Ma'ruf, the spokesman for BPJS Kesehatan, said the agency is also investigating to determine if the leaked data originated from its system. "We have formed a special team to immediately find the source of the leak," Ma'ruf said in a statement. The agency claimed to have a strict and layered data security system in place to ensure personal data confidentiality. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Home Affairs said the allegedly leaked data did not originate from the Population and Civil Registration department.

WHO: Total Covid-19 deaths
likely three times higher

In 2020, the World Health Statistics report found there had been at least 3mln excess deaths due directly or indirectly to COVID-19, some 1.2mln more than officially reported

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Official tolls showing the number of deaths directly or indirectly attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to be a "significant undercount", according to the World Health Organization (WHO), which said between six and eight million people might have died so far. As of Friday, more than 3.4 million deaths worldwide have officially been attributed to the disease since it first surfaced in China in late 2019. However, according to a global health statistics report from the WHO released on the same day, far more people have died than would otherwise not have, had it not been for the pandemic. In 2020, the World Health Statistics report found there had been at least three million excess deaths due directly or indirectly to COVID-19, some 1.2 million more than officially reported.



"Total deaths are at least two to three times higher than officially reported," Samira Asma, WHO assistant director-general in charge of data, told reporters. Asked how many excess deaths could be attributed to the pandemic today, Asma replied: "I think safely, about six to eight million deaths could be an estimate, with a cautionary note."

World should know
about 'terror state of
Israel': Erdogan

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey will continue to show the world how the map of Palestine changed since the start of the Israeli occupation, the Turkish president said on Friday. "The whole world should know that this terror state of Israel is," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said at the opening ceremony of the seventh section of the North Marmara Motorway in Istanbul. Highlighting Thursday's UN General Assembly meeting on Palestine, Erdogan said a "successful session" was held under the presidency of Volkan Bozkir, a Turkish diplomat, and with the attendance of Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu, as well as other foreign ministers that stand together on the issue. "They talked about how Palestine was occupied by this terror state of Israel since 1947, and was turned into a (small) piece of land today," Erdogan said. The president said all the oppressed people around the world are waiting for the day when "a strong Turkey will arise". A cease-fire between Israel and Hamas, a Palestinian resistance group, took effect at 2 a.m. Friday (2300GMT Thursday). The Egyptian-brokered truce came after 11 days of Israeli airstrikes on the blockaded Gaza Strip. A total of 232 Palestinians, including 65 children and 39 women, were killed during Israeli attacks on Gaza since May 10.

President Aliyev
hails ties with UK

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has praised Azerbaijan's ties with the UK, saying that cooperation with the country's BP company will continue for at least 30 years to come. Aliyev made the remarks while receiving UK Minister for Exports Graham Stuart on May 21. Stressing that the UK has invested over 30bn dollars in Azerbaijan so far, Aliyev said that this investment has helped not only the country's oil and gas sector but its overall development as well. "These investments led to additional revenues to our budget which we re-invested in non-oil and gas related areas." Commenting on the British Petroleum (BP) company that has been developing Azerbaijan's oil and gas reserves since the early 1990s, Aliyev stressed that BP will remain Azerbaijan's strategic partner "for at least 30 more years" be-

cause there are new prospects and new agreements signed. Cooperation in renewables. The president said that both BP and Azerbaijan are very actively working on renewable sources of energy, including in the country's recently-liberated territories. "There is a plan to invest in solar power generation on the liberated areas which will be very helpful to us, especially with respect to the fact that we announced liberated territories of Karabakh as a territory of green energy and smart city. At the same time, I would like to say that we already invited British companies as our partners, among the first foreign companies to work with us on the restoration, reconstruction of the liberated territories and this process already started. Cities' master plans have already been prepared and we are in a very active phase. We want to expand cooperation with British companies, as companies from a friendly country," Aliyev said.

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Briefs

Ring Road scam probe narrows down

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The probe authorities are zeroing in around the persons involved in the Rawalpindi Ring Road scam. According to sources, the establishment division is narrowing down the probe by collecting information about the main accused in the RRR scandal, ex-commissioner Capt © Muhammad Mehmood. It has contacted the power division to obtain the record of his appointment in Nandipur Power Project as managing director and the record of his removal from the post. The establishment division officers made inquiries regarding Capt © Mehmood's appointment and found that Capt © Mehmood was appointed in former Punjab chief minister Shehbaz Sharif's tenure as MD Nandipur Power Project. He was removed from the Nandipur project in 2015 due to irregularities and an increase in the cost of the project. Prime Minister Imran Khan on last Saturday ordered a full-fledged inquiry into the RRR project scam after which the Punjab government decided to send the case to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) or the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) for a thorough investigation. Punjab Chief Secretary Jawad Malik sent the "Fact-Finding Committee" report about embezzlements in the Ring Road Rawalpindi project to Punjab CM Usman Buzdar who ordered to implement all recommendations of it.

Rashid urges world to halt genocide in Gaza

KHAYAM ABBASI

RAWALPINDI: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Friday asked the international community to take measures to end the genocide in Gaza being carried out by the Israeli forces. Addressing a public meeting in connection with "Palestine Solidarity Day" observed across Pakistan on the call of Prime Minister Imran Khan on May 21, he lambasted Israel for its tyrannical measures, which include bombing Gaza and killing of innocent children. The Minister lauded the role of media for highlighting the human rights violation of Palestinians and Kashmiris in Gaza and India held occupied Kashmir, adding "the attack on the Palestinians and Kashmiris is a violation of international law," he added. Blaming the Israeli forces for killing defenceless Palestinians, the minister said it was up to the international community to take concrete measures to stop the blood-bath in Palestine. He urged the Muslim Ummah to show strong solidarity for the people of the Flag of Palestinian and Kashmiris territories.

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Pak opens vaccinations for people over 30

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday decided to start inoculating people above 30 years of age beginning tomorrow as the country aims to ramp up its COVID-19 vaccination drive. The decision was made by the National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) in a meeting today, Federal Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar said in a tweet. "The messages for those who are being scheduled will go out today," the federal minister added. The development comes only five days after the country had started registering people who are 30 years and above for the coronavirus vaccination. The country, since the beginning of the vaccination drive in February which first opened for healthcare workers, has inoculated more than 4.9 million people, with 211,475 jabs being administered in the last 24 hours.

FM urges UN Chief to help resolve Kashmir dispute

The Foreign Minister also briefed the UN chief on the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in IIOJ&K, including continued extra-judicial killings

DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary General António Guterres has expressed the hope that the announcement of ceasefire in Gaza could help revive efforts for a negotiated settlement of the Palestinian issue. Talking to Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in New York, he welcomed the ceasefire announcement by Israel and Hamas. The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Palestine. FM Qureshi is in New York as part of Pakistan's extensive diplomatic outreach efforts to mobilize international support for the Palestinians. During the meeting, according to a Pakistan Mission press release, the foreign minister conveyed

the strong sense of outrage on behalf of the entire Pakistani nation over Israel's use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force against the Palestinians, resulting in the loss of numerous lives, including dozens of women and children. He also called for ensuring protection of Palestinian civilians, allow humanitarian access to the Occupied Palestinian Territory and initiate an emergency UN humanitarian assistance plan for the Palestinians. The foreign minister underscored that peace in the region can only be achieved through the realization of a two-state solution and through the establishment of a viable, independent and contiguous Palestinian state with pre-1967 borders and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. The Foreign Minister also briefed the UN chief on the

FM's remarks in interview not anti-Semitic: FO

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's remarks during his recent interview with CNN cannot be construed as anti-Semitic by any stretch of imagination, Foreign Office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said on Twitter Friday afternoon. His response came after social media criticism over FM Qureshi's remarks during his interview with CNN anchor Bianna Golodryga. The anchor shared the interview on Twitter and accused the FM of making anti-Semitic comments. "Any twist given to his [Shah Mahmood Qureshi's] remarks would unfortunately prove the very point he was making," the FO spokesperson wrote. "The right to freedom of expression must be respected equally by everyone," he said. FM Qureshi had lashed out at Israel for controlling the media and having "deep pockets". "Israel is losing out," Qureshi said in the CNN interview. "They're losing the media war, despite their connections...The tide is turning," he had said. - DNA

deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in IIOJ&K, including continued extra-judicial killings. He conveyed Pakistan's deep concern at the con-

tinued incarceration of Kashmiri political leaders in crowded conditions despite the coronavirus pandemic, leading to the death of prominent Kash-

miri leader and Chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir, Ashraf Sehrai in Indian custody. He urged Guterres to use his good offices and mediation to resolve the Jammu & Kashmir dispute, including by calling on India to rescind its illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, and to allow the Kashmiris to exercise their inalienable right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant UN resolutions. He also reiterated Pakistan's call for further strengthening the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), which monitors the ceasefire line in the disputed region. In addition, Foreign Minister Qureshi highlighted Pakistan's constructive efforts to facilitate the Afghan peace process, and expressed the hope that

the Afghan parties would seize the opportunity and reach an inclusive, politically-negotiated settlement, resulting in lasting peace and security in Afghanistan. Expressing deep concern at the rising tide of intolerance, discrimination, violence and Islamophobia against Muslims, he urged the need for the relevant UN bodies to address this challenge, as well as to take effective measures against the threat posed by violent nationalist, supremacist, far right and extreme-right wing terrorist groups and ideologies. The foreign minister called for a strong international response to Covid-19 based on solidarity and cooperation to support global economic recovery, and in this regard recalled the five-point action plan for recovery from the pandemic proposed by the Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Effectively raised voice against Israel tyranny

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri Friday said Pakistan had comprehensively and effectively raised voice against Israel barbarism and tyranny on innocent Palestinian people. In an interview with PTV News, he felicitated the whole Muslim Ummah for giving strapping response against Israel bloodbath and atrocities on oppressed the Palestine people through diplomacy at all international forums. The minister said the people of Pakistan marked today as "Palestine Day" to express solidarity with the Palestine people in this difficult time. Pakistan also welcomed the Gaza ceasefire to stop Palestinian genocide, he added. He lauded the role of Pakistan, Turkey, Iran and other Muslim countries in forcing the Israel to impede its atrocities and barbarism on Palestinian people. He urged the international community and watchdog organizations to break the silence and raised the voice for basic rights of the oppressed people of Palestine and Kashmir as Israel and India were involved in the state terrorism. - APP



NEW YORK: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi meeting with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan on the sidelines of UNGA. - DNA

NA Speaker, Chairman Senate lead rally

ISLAMABAD: A rally led by Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser and Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani here on Friday expressed solidarity with the oppressed people of Palestine. Speaker National Assembly, Chairman Senate, members of National Assembly, civil society, and media representatives participated in the protest rally against the Israeli aggression. Speaking on the occasion Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser said that Pakistan had a clear stance regarding Palestine. He said the country's political leadership was on the same page on the Palestine issue. - DNA

China to remain core of foreign policy: FS

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood has said that the relationship with China will remain the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and CPEC will serve as a key driver of this flourishing partnership in 21st century. Addressing at the book launching ceremony of "Higher Than Karakoram" Here at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), the foreign secretary said strategic vision on both sides would continue to nurture the relationship in decades to come. The foreign secretary said the Pakistan-China relationship was unique and unparalleled in inter-state relations, in terms of mutual trust, mutual understanding and mutual support. He mentioned that over the past seven decades, Pakistan-China relations had grown from strength to strength, unaffected by the vicissitudes of time and changes in the regional and global environment. He said the relationship has matured into a time-tested "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership." We are indeed "Iron brothers", he added. Sohail Mahmood said Pakistan and China took a historic decision in 1966 to build the Karakoram Highway (KKH). Around 1000 brave workers made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty while constructing this marvel of the world.

Amazon adds Pakistan to its sellers' list

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Textile and Investment Abdul Razzaq Dawood said on Friday that e-commerce giant Amazon had added Pakistan to its sellers' list. In a tweet announcing the development, he said: "It is a big accomplishment for our e-commerce and will open up vast opportunities for a new breed of young men and women entrepreneurs. We congratulate everyone involved." The list of countries eligible to sell on the platform can be viewed here. It has been updated to include Pakistan. The commerce adviser also shared a message from Amazon International Seller Services Vice President Eric Broussard which stated that Pakistani entrepreneurs are now eligible to sell on the platform. "We are eager to work with Pakistan's dynamic business community, including small and medium-sized sellers and help connect them with customers around the globe," he said.

Israeli police storm Al-Aqsa hours after Gaza truce

JERUSALEM: Fresh clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police broke out at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa mosque compound on Friday, two weeks after unrest at the sensitive religious site triggered deadly hostilities in Gaza. Israeli police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said "riots broke out" at the Al-Aqsa esplanade which is Islam's third holiest site and also revered by Jews, who call it the Temple Mount. "Hundreds of people threw rocks and petrol bombs at police officers who responded at the scene and began dispersing the rioters," Rosenfeld said in a statement. "Police units (are) at the scene," he added. AFP reporters at the compound in Jerusalem's Old City said clashes were ongoing. Police have fired rubber bullets and used stun grenades at the site, according to an AFP reporter. Days of unrest at Al-Aqsa during Islam's holy fasting month of Ramadan led Hamas, the Islamist group that controls, to demand Israeli forces vacate the compound by 6:00 pm (1500 GMT) on May 10. Hamas then fired rockets at Jerusalem when the deadline expired. Israel then commenced a heavy aerial campaign targeting Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza. A ceasefire to end the Gaza hostilities appeared to be holding on Friday. - APP

PAF hands over 3 JF-17 to Nigeria

MAKURDI: Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Kamra has formally handed over three JF-17 Thunder aircraft to Nigerian Air Force at a ceremony held at Nigerian Air Force Base Makurdi. Minister of Defence of Nigeria Maj Gen (Rtd) Bashir Magashi was the Guest of Honour representing the President, at the occasion, whereas Vice Chief of the Air Staff Pakistan Air Force Air Marshal Syed Noman Ali was invited to attend the ceremony as special guest of Nigerian Air Force. Addressing the ceremony, the Nigerian Defence Minister expressed his gratitude to Pakistan and Pakistan Air Force for sustained bilateral cooperation and partnership for enhancing Nigerian Air Force capabilities to meet Nigeria's security challenges. He said he was happy and excited on the addition of JF-17 fighter aircraft from Pakistan. - DNA

CM Buzdar meets Tareen group MPAs

LAHORE: A seven-member delegation of the Jahangir Tareen group met Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar in Lahore on Friday and reposed their complete trust in his leadership. The delegation comprised Saeed Akbar Khan Nawani, Ajmal Cheema, Nauman Ahmad Langrial, Zawar Hussain Warraich, Nazeer Chauhan, Umar Aftab and Awn Chaudhry. CM Sardar Usman Buzdar said we are united under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. "We have never meted out injustice to anybody and will never do so. Politics of vengeance is not our thing." Assuring the MPAs of addressing their legitimate grievances, the chief minister said the party's name is Tehreek-e-Insaf and we believe in the dispensation of justice. MPA Saeed Akbar Khan Nawani said: "We are one and will remain so." "We have complete trust in your leadership. You are our chief minister and we have come to you for resolution of our issues," the lawmaker said, pointing to the CM. "The PTI is our party with whom our unconditional association will continue." Speaking to the media after the meeting, Nauman Ahmad Langrial said they believed that the prime minister won't allow any injustice to be meted out to them. "Our meeting with CM Usman Buzdar remained productive," he said. "The chief minister listened to our grievances and issued directives for their redressal," the MPA said. Earlier, prior to meeting with Chief Minister Usman Buzdar, the Parliamentary Leader of

Jahangir Tareen's like-minded group in Punjab Assembly Saeed Akbar Nawani on Friday extended support to Usman Buzdar, saying that he was their chief minister, days after criticizing him. Speaking ahead of the Punjab Assembly session, Saeed Akbar Nawani said that they would not sit on separate benches in the provincial assembly. "We have not made any demand to sit on separate benches," he said adding that they would resolve issues within the party. - DNA

PM not taking practical steps to end inflation: Bilawal Bhutto

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday has said that Prime Minister Imran Khan is only taking notices instead of practically eliminating the inflation. In a statement, the PPP chief said that so far, PM Imran has achieved nothing except inaugurating projects planned by the previous governments. Bilawal said that the people of Pakistan were passing through their most difficult times only because of incompetence and ineptitude of the absurd pol-

icies of the PTI led federal government of Pakistan. The federal government, under Prime Minister Imran Ahmed Khan Niazi, has proven to be absolutely unfit for the job of governing Pakistan. Government, to the PM, seems to mean taking notice of sky-rocketing inflation but doing nothing to counter it, the Chairman PPP said. The only tangible action that the selected PM seems to take is replacing plaques on Public Welfare projects with ones bearing his name, he added. "There is not a single project that has benefitted the country that Imran Khan can claim credit for. All we have to show for two and half years of government are broken promises and bold face lies, coupled with back breaking debt and soul crushing inflation. Where the nation demands leadership, we get the same tired ad hominem attacks on his opponents from the PM." The Chairman PPP was of the view that it would be impossible for the PM to keep the rampant corruption of his government hidden. Even efforts to bury the Auditors Generals damning report on severe irregularities of COVID-19 funds would fail, he added. Announcing lucrative incentives for the elites and cronies capitalists would only make the rich richer at the cost of the poor, he said. With declining wages, the rupee devaluation, and rapidly growing income disparity, it is the governments responsibility to serve the weakest, not the strongest, he opined.



Pak, ADB sign \$300m deal for hydropower project

KP CM Mahmood Khan reiterated that the provincial government is working on the development of the hydropower potential of the province on fast track basis

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed the \$300 million financing agreement of the Balakot hydropower development project. The loan agreement was signed by Economic Affairs Division (EAD) Secretary Noor Ahmed and ADB Acting Country Director Ms Cleo Kawawaki which was witnessed by Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Mahmood Khan. The total cost of the Balakot hydropower development project is US\$ 755 million out of which ADB

has committed to providing \$300 million while the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will finance \$280 million. According to the spokesperson, ADB is providing financing at highly concessional rates (LIBOR six-month + 0.5% per annum - currently 0.7% per annum) for the project for a period of 27 years including a grace period of seven years. Omar Ayub Khan, while speaking on the occasion, said that the run-of-river hydropower project will be constructed on the Kunhar River in the Manshera district and generate 300 megawatts of electricity. Balakot power project will not only help unleash the hydropower potential of the country but also im-

prove energy security by increasing clean and affordable energy share in the country's energy mix. "The government is working on renewable energy policy to harness the immense potential in solar, wind and hydel resources and have good opportunities for investments", he added. The minister appreciated ADB's valuable support for financing the highly important project. KP CM Mahmood Khan reiterated that the provincial government is working on the development of the hydropower potential of the province on fast track basis. He mentioned that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insafed government was already making huge investments in

the development of various hydro sites. He added that the Balakot hydropower project will provide livelihood by providing more than 1,200 jobs during the construction. "Once completed, this hydropower project will provide reliable and cheap energy to the national grid. It will also improve provincial revenues streams for the provincial government and boost economic activities in the country." "This project shows the strong commitment of PTI government to address the challenges of climate change through the development of clean and renewable energy in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan", added the chief minister. ADB Director General Eugene

Zhukov assured of continued support to help Pakistan diversify its energy sources, increase energy security through renewable and affordable energy mix and implement critical economic reforms. He thanked Omar Ayub Khan and reiterated ADB's commitment to further strengthen and expand its partnership with Pakistan in the priority sector for the socio-economic development of the country. The KP government's Energy and Power Department will be the executing agency while Pakhtunkhwa Energy Department Organization (PEDO) will be implementing agency for the project which is expected to be commissioned by 2026.