

# Islamabad POST

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**Nepalese president dissolves parliament amid Covid-19 crisis**

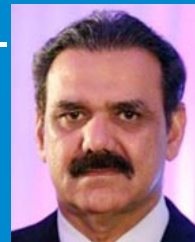
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**Palestine envoy indebted to Pak for huge support**

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**Work on Nokundi-Mashkhel Road started: Bajwa**

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## Briefs

**Nawaz keeps mum on Israeli aggression**

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Sunday said the PML-N's absconding leader Nawaz Sharif made no statement on Israeli aggression against Palestine as he [Nawaz] had billions of rupees properties abroad. "The reason for this silence is his [Nawaz] assets worth billions of rupees abroad," he said in a tweet. Fawad said Nawaz Sharif had been expressing his views on each and every issue, and never missed any opportunity to criticize the government.

**Govt working to ramp up vaccination**

STAFF REPORT



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan says the government is working to further ramp up the COVID vaccination drive to meet the target of five hundred thousand doses per day. Talking to a private news channel, he said mass vaccination is the only way to fight the COVID virus. Dr Faisal Sultan said Pakistan has achieved another milestone in its vaccination drive, as the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country crossed the figure of five million.

**Press freedom part of PTI manifesto**

ABID RAZA



SAILKOT: Special Assistant to the Chief Minister Punjab on Information Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan inaugurated the corona vaccination of the journalist community in Sialkot by administering vaccine to journalists herself at the office of the DC. Talking to media, she said that the Punjab government, under the leadership of CM Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, is expediting the vaccination process to eradicate Corona.

## No NRO come what may, says Imran

PM Imran Khan said that if overthrowing the government is someone's goal, then they should fulfill their desire

SHUJAAT HAMZA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has given a clear and unequivocal message that the government will not be blackmailed by any pressure group adding that the rule of law will be ensured. No one would be spared and no one would be given NRO, the premier said while addressing the PTI Core Committee meeting at his Bani Gala residence on Sunday. Without mentioning Jahangir Tareen, he said no one should think that he could blackmail him.

PTI-backed chief ministers, governors and federal ministers participated in the meeting and raised issues including the matter of the Jahangir Tareen Group. Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar briefed the meeting on the meeting with Jahangir Tareen Group. Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister said: "our entire political struggle was for the rule of law. We believe in justice and the process of accountability will continue without any discrimination." Prime Minister Imran Khan said that if overthrowing the government is someone's goal, then they should fulfill their desire. "We will not back down from our manifesto due to the blackmailing of anyone."

Continued on Page 06

*— to head global climate moot*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host World Environment Day 2021 globally for the first time in history with Prime Minister Imran Khan heading a climate change conference on June 04 to highlight the country's effective policy in this regard.

This year's observance of World Environment Day with the collaboration of UN Environment Programme (UNEP) will be on the theme of 'ecosystem restoration' and focus on resetting our relationship with nature. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 - 2030.

Only four people are invited to attend the conference with Prime Minister Imran Khan chairing the global summit on the environment, which would also be attended by the Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Pope, and German Chancellor. Last year, China was picked as the host of the global summit on World Environment Day. The prime minister during the summit would highlight the Billion Tree Tsunami project, Clean Green Pakistan project, electric vehicle policy, national parks, green jobs, and other climate change initiatives at the conference.

## NCOC urges masses to adopt safe tourism policy

The forum was informed that stringent SOPs for inbound passengers was in place

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Sunday in its special session reviewed implementation strategy of NPIs enforcement focusing opening up of Tourism Sector from Monday (May24) and urged the masses to resort to "Safe Tourism" policy.

The NCOC special session was chaired by National Coordinator Lieutenant General Hamood uz Zaman Khan held here where the forum took detailed stock of implementation strategy of

Continued on Page 06

## Pak receives 2 mn doses of Sinovac vaccine

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) plane carrying 2 million doses of Sinovac vaccine reached Pakistan on Sunday. National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) in a tweet said that the consignment was purchased by Pakistan from China. With the arrival of this consignment, a total 11 million vaccines had been received by Pakistan, the NCOC Tweet said. Last Sunday, a special flight PK 6852 had also transported a consignment of one million doses of Sinovac vaccine procured from China to fight the ongoing wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan, Qadir Bux Sangi, PIA Country Manager for China said. The relevant Chinese authorities have pledged to continue uninterrupted supply of vaccine to help Pakistan defeat the deadly virus.



**CHITRAL:** Ambassador of Switzerland Ambassador Bénédict de Cerjat visits Chitral to oversee various development projects executed under the Swiss Development Program. – DNA

## IMF harsh attitude toward Pakistan disappointing

At the current pace of economic growth, the country can expect 5% growth in FY2022 and more than 6% growth in FY2023: Tareen

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin on Sunday said that at the current pace of economic growth, the country can expect 5% growth in FY2022 and more than 6% growth in FY2023. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, he said recent indicators led the government to announce a 3.94% expected growth rate. He said from here on, the govern-



ment's focus will be on bringing stability to prices and thereby reducing inflation to bring people much-needed relief. "It is Imran Khan's promise to the people that prices will be brought down." The finance minister also spoke of how the agriculture sector has been neglected for a long time. "The country is suffering from malnutrition," he said. Speaking of the government's efforts so far in bringing

Continued on Page 06

## Shahbaz invites opposition at dinner

ISLAMABAD: Shehbaz Sharif has invited the opposition leaders for a dinner on Monday (today) at 07:30 PM in Islamabad, according to media reports. Reports say that among others, former President Asif Ali Zardari, Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and JUI-F chief and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman have been invited to the dinner. PDM and the current political situation will be discussed in the dinner. Meanwhile, the Pakistan People's Party will decide whether to attend the dinner hosted by PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif for members of the opposition parties. The sources in the Pakistan People's Party said the party's senior leadership was in support to attend the dinner reception of Shahbaz Sharif. The party's senior leadership was of the view that attending the dinner reception would be beneficial for the opposition to give tough time to the PTI government in the budget session in the National Assembly. Earlier, PPP Sindh President Nisar Ahmed Khuhro said that PPP has not left PDM yet, adding that a decision will be made in this regard when the PPP will be invited to PDM's meeting with the heads of all parties involved. – DNA

*No Hajj decision taken yet*

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Saudi Embassy in Pakistan said in a statement that no decision had been taken yet regarding the Hajj. A spokesman for the Saudi embassy in Pakistan said, Sunday, that

Continued on Page 06

## Palestine envoy indebted to Pakistan for huge support

This historical act will be remembered, not only by the entire world, but it will be a history to remember for generations: Ahmed Rabei

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Palestine to Pakistan Ahmed Rabei has expressed his gratitude to the people and govt of Pakistan for extending whole-hearted support to Palestine during war with Israel.

In a special message issued on Sunday Ambassador Ahmed Rabei said, on behalf of the Palestinians I express my sincere gratitude to the brotherly People of Pakistan, all respect to the Prime Minister, Foreign leaders of the parties, for their courageous efforts to support Palestine.

He said he wanted to convey his heartfelt gratitude for their support to the Palestinian people. "Your efforts are greatly admired regarding convening of the emergency session, cease-fire, de-escalation and an end to atrocities". This historical act will be remembered, not only by the entire world, but it will be a history to remember for generations. He expressed gratitude



for Pakistan's remarkable role while urging the international community to take concrete and immediate steps for resolution of the issue. The ambassador greatly appreciated Pakistan foreign minister for speaking up and pushing for an emergency session of the OIC meeting and UN Gen-

eral Assembly. Pakistan played an important role in building, steering the discussion and building a consensus. He said Palestine will never forget the Solidarity Day observed on May 21 on the call of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, when the entire Pakistani nation expressed solidarity with Palestine. He said they owe a great deal to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

The Ambassador also thanked all those delegates hailing from various walks of life that visited the Palestine embassy and expressed solidarity. He especially thanked the parliamentarians who came to see him to express unity. The ambassador said it was indeed a great brotherly gesture, which the people of Palestine will never forget.

Ambassador Rabei said though war in Gaza has ended, yet our struggle for two-state solution shall continue. He hoped Al Aqsa mosque shall be free from occupation and we shall In-shallah pray together in the Mosque, which is our Qibla-e-Awwal.

## Monal

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Country's businessmen stand united to support Palestine – Page 07

'Pakistan seeking investment through economic diplomacy' – Page 08



## Briefs

185,815  
persons  
vaccinated  
against corona

FAISALABAD: As many as 185,815 people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in Faisalabad district. District Health Officer Dr. Atau Mun'im said on Saturday that 136,066 citizens had been given the first dose while 24,711 were administered second dose of vaccine. He further said that 15,925 health workers were also given first dose while 9113 received second dose of vaccine. He said that 17 vaccination centers were operational in Faisalabad where registered persons were getting anti-coronavirus vaccine doses. He said that sufficient stock of anti-coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now, 7,300 first doses and 11,200 second doses of vaccine were in the stock at Faisalabad, he added. — APP

Power supply  
restored in  
Karachi

KARACHI: K-Electric KE's 220 Kilovolt (Kv) Extra High Tension network on Saturday afternoon experienced tripping along with the 220 kilovolt (Kv) NKI-Baldia 1&2 circuit. The National Transmission and Dispatch Company (NTDC) and K-Electric teams immediately responded by coordinating closely for the restoration of the circuits, said a statement on Sunday. The connection with National Grid and subsequently power supply to all affected grids was restored within the hour. Power supply to strategic installations such as KWSB water pumping stations, Airport, and major hospitals of the city was also restored on priority basis while supply to areas such as North Nazimabad, Lyari, Federal B Area, Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Gulistan-e-Johar, Defence, and Clifton was normalized within a few hours. Restoration in remaining affected parts of the city was underway on immediate basis while K-E team was also on ground. During the restoration process, initial reports were received of smoke from one of four buses used for outgoing supply of power from the KE's Bin Qasim Power Station 1 whereas no fault was discovered on the generation side. The damaged busbar was isolated and alternate busbars were utilised to bring BQPS 1 back online. Power from BQPS 2, NKI and IPPS is being supplied to the city whereas full load of BQPS 1 is expected to be added into the system in next few hours. — APP

Farrukh Habib inaugurates  
corona ward in National Hospital

Faisalabad only public sector hospitals were vaccinating the people but now we had decided to enhance this facility by allowing private hospitals for anti-corona vaccination

## BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: State Minister for Information & Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has inaugurated a COVID-19 ward in National Hospital Faisalabad here on Saturday and said that government has prudently tackled corona challenge and now its positivity declining due to the sincere efforts of the government and NCOC. He said that in Faisalabad only public sector hospitals were vaccinating the people but now we had decided to enhance this facility by allowing private hospitals for anti-corona vaccination. He said that although government was striving hard to overcome corona pandemic, yet cooperation of private hospitals was imperative to contain this disease completely. Therefore, the government also decided to support private sector hospitals

by resolving their genuine issues at maximum extent. He said that corona pandemic changed global situation. Pakistan was also not ready to deal such natural catastrophe at all. However, due to visionary leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the PTI government had not only contained the spread of coronavirus at a large extent but also boost the national economy for its stabilization. He said that government immediately focused on increase production of oxygen gas in the country. Our oxygen production was 400 million tons when corona broke out. Later, we increased capacity of oxygen production up to 700 million ton to cater to the emergent situation. Similarly, we had also started manufacturing of facemasks and PPEs to cater to our domestic needs but now due to business friendly policies of the gov-



ernment we were exporting the masks and PPEs. He said that Pakistan was not in a position to conduct corona test when the pandemic broke out. However, on special direction of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the PTI government started work on this site and now we were in a position to conduct 50,000 corona tests daily. He said that necessity is the mother of invention which

encouraged us to pay attention to manufacture medical equipment to treat corona patients and we succeeded in making cheap ventilators, facemasks and PPEs and now our scientists were working to prepare anti-corona vaccine in Pakistan. He said that National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) also played a major role in controlling corona pandemic in Pakistan and

efforts of PTI government in this regard were acknowledged at international level. He said that arrival of Pakistanis during corona pandemic was also a major challenge for the present government but the PTI government took bold steps and successfully tackled this issue by screening the air travelers at airports. He also appreciated the role of private sector hospitals in controlling corona spread and appealed the public not to ignore preventive measures as we were still passing through a critical situation because third wave of corona was most dangerous. He said that registration of the people having age of 30 years or above had been started for their vaccination against coronavirus. The people should not hesitate to get them registered for anti-corona vaccination as the government was sincerely striving for saving

people from deadly corona disease. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan was committed for human development and in this connection, the government was focusing on overcome the issues of malnutrition especially in children. He said that government had also started health card scheme to provide best health facilities especially to the low-income people. The government was also concentrating to lessen burden of patients from major hospitals by providing treatment facilities of minor and seasonal diseases at rural and basic health centers. Earlier, District Health Officer (DHO) Dr Bilal, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Finance Afifa Shajia, Chairman Board of Management National Hospital Zulfiqar Sheikh, Medical Superintendent National Hospital Dr Zaem Aslam and others also addressed the function.

All resources  
being used  
against  
dengue: MPA

## BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: MPA Chaudhary Lateef Nazar said that the government was using all available resources to prevent from dengue. However, public cooperation was essential for complete eradication of dengue larvae. He was leading a dengue awareness walk at Zila Council Chowk while MPA Shakeel Shahid, MPA Firdous Rae, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Khurram Perwaiz, Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari, CEO District Health Authority Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Sipra, District Health Officer Dr. Bilal Ahmed, District Coordinator for Infectious Diseases Dr. Zulqarnain, doctors and Lady Health Workers were also present on the occasion. The walk started from the DHO office and ended at the District Council Chowk. The participants were carrying banners and placards inscribed with slogans for prevention from dengue.

MPA Chaudhary Lateef Nazar said that dengue was a social problem and for prevention of dengue larvae, indoor and outdoor surveillance activities were going on uninterrupted, which had yielding encouraging results. He said that steps should be taken to eliminate all sources of dengue breeding through joint efforts. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali said that homes, offices and the surrounding environment should be kept clean while water should not be left stagnant at any place.

All PTI  
leaders united  
under PM's  
leadership

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood Saturday said all the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders were united under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. The prime minister was only loyal and popular leader in the country, he said while talking to a private news channel. The minister said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was divided in different groups and they were doing dirty and negative politics for their political point scoring and gains. Commenting on the performance of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, he lauded the three years performance of Usman Buzdar as he was serving the masses in best national interest and providing relief to them through various welfare programmes and projects. PTI Senator Faisal Vawda said all the PTI lawmakers were playing important role to further strengthen and enhance credibility and reputation of their political party. — APP



KARACHI: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami, Sirajul Haq addresses participants of Palestine March at Sharahe-Faisal against Israeli aggression on Palestinians. — DNA

Special allowance to reduce  
government employees' problems

The purpose of this step was to provide relief to people and to pave way for solving problems of masses

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that Punjab Chief Minister's approval of 25 percent special allowance to government employees from grade 1 to 19 will reduce their financial problems. Talking to media here she said, "Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is a democratic party and due to Prime Minister Imran Khan's democratic attitude everyone has a right to speak in the party." She said that the assurance which Punjab Chief Minister



Sardar Usman Buzdar had given to associates of Jahangir Tareen regarding removal of their genuine problems was not only for them but also for all the members of Punjab Assembly.

The purpose of this step was to provide relief to people and to pave way for solving problems of masses. Dr Firdous said that all possible efforts would be made to eliminate the difference of development in rural and urban areas. To a question, she said that delegation of Jahangir Tareen during a meeting with Punjab Chief Minister had reposed full trust on Prime Minister Imran Khan and CM Sardar Usman Buzdar and expressed resolve that they would play their role in Punjab Assembly as party

members. She said that Nawaz Sharif hoodwinked the people and went to London for medical treatment. SACM said, "If Nawaz Sharif thinks that Britain is unsafe for him then he must come to Pakistan adding that Nawaz Sharif will be given protection in prisons here." Earlier, addressing the ceremony of Road Safety in Governor's House, she said that people of Punjab were very lucky that 'Rescue-1122' service was available to them in case of emergency. — APP

Thousands march  
in Karachi against  
Israeli brutalities

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Tens of thousands of people in Karachi marched in a protest against Israeli brutalities in the holy land on appeal of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Karachi on Sunday. People from all walks of life participated in the march. JI leaders and representatives from Majlis Wahdatul Muslemeen, Minorities, and Lawyers fraternity also participated and addressed the march. On the occasion, Sabir bin Maryam from Palestine Foundation presented a Palestinian scarf to JI chief Sirajul Haq. JI Pakistan Ameer Sirajul Haq in his presidential address hailed the people of Karachi for their overwhelming response to the solidarity call with the people of Palestine. He thanked them for their show of expression of support to Palestine. Rejecting the expression

that the concept of Muslim umma has failed, he said that tens of thousands of people in Pakistan, Turkey, Afghanistan and other Muslim countries took to streets in expression of solidarity with the Palestinians. He strongly condemned the brutal actions by Israeli forces against innocent people in Palestine. He also paid a rich tribute to the people of Gaza and other parts of Palestine for their bravery and sacrifices they are presenting for their freedom. The JI leader dedicated the Palestine March to the issues of Muslims across the world. He said he messaged to Ismael Hania that he shares the ownership of each and every causality in Palestine. He said that soon after the Israeli aggression he had approached Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, urging the minister to mobilize the Muslim world against Israel.

Govt completes 921  
development schemes

## ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: As many as 921 development schemes are being completed of Community Development and Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programs with the cost of 6.75 billions and these schemes are apart from the Annual development program. Deputy Commis-

sioner M Ali reviewed the progress of implementation on development programs during a meeting in which Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Afifa Shajia, Deputy Director Development Rana Tahir Mahmood besides PHA, WASA, FDA, Sui Gas, FESCO, Officers from Buildings, Roads, Local Government and other departments were also present.

Govt committed  
to hitting looters  
hard: Shahbaz

## ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Communication Shahbaz Gill has said that the government is committed to hitting the looters and plunderers hard and Shehbaz Sharif will not be allowed to skip the process. Talking to the media here on Sunday, he said that Nawaz Sharif staged a drama to bypass the law but now he stands exposed that his motive was not treatment in England but to save his skin from the rule of law. He said that Shehbaz Sharif was guarantor of Nawaz Sharif and now the government has decided that he would not be allowed to flee Pakistan in any case. The motive of Shehbaz Sharif is also to save himself from the spectra of accountability. Responding to a question as to why Nawaz Sharif is not being brought back to Pakistan through Interpol, he said that we have already started working on it. He said Nasir Butt was staging a drama to malign Britain that people living there were not safe. He said that this family was in the habit of bringing bad name to the benefactors and supporters. If they (Nawaz Sharif, etc.) feel themselves

insecure in London, we will provide them excellent security in Pakistani jail. The nation voted him (Nawaz Sharif) to power but he gave them the gift of price-hike and heavy burden of foreign loans. Similarly, he was once a blue-eyed personality of the establishment, but now he is opposing it by tooth and nail, he added. Gill made a humble appeal to the UK through Pakistani embassy that Nawaz Sharif would bring a bad name for that country and its tourism industry might face a decline as Nawaz Sharif was projecting that London was an unsafe place. He termed Sharif family gobbles who were telling lies repeatedly so that people could believe that it was the truth. About return of Shehbaz Sharif in the past, he said that he came back as he expected that Imran Khan's government will fail to handle the economy and he will be there to enjoy another chance of ruling the country. About the PDM, he said that it is a dead horse. He expressed pity for "Baji Maryam" and said that despite her feverous efforts, the net result is zero. Shahbaz Gill said that Imran Khan took over the power in very difficult situation.

## احساس بچت اکاؤنٹ

احساس کفالت پروگرام کے مستحقین کیلئے ایک اور انقلابی قدم

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## Briefs

### Gallery 6 organizes discussion on APA

ISLAMABAD: Gallery 6 on Sunday organized a live discussion on Arjumand Painting Award (APA) 2021. Prominent cultural personalities and artists participated in the online discussion. In their presentations, they highlighted various aspects of the APA. They said specially this award was great opportunity for the emerging artists and they should submit their paintings. They highly praised the Gallery 6 for introducing the special award for the artists' community. In his welcome remarks, Curator Gallery 6 Faisal Arjumand said that APA was a first-ever art award by any private gallery at the national level. He said that any artist meeting the eligibility criteria should submit artwork executed in 2020 or 2021. He said APA 2015, 2017 and 2019 were very well received by artists and art lovers nationwide. — APP

### Rs. 21.86 b recovered by RDA

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Director General Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) Capt. (R) Abdul Sattar Issani left the charge of his post where he served as Director General RDA for three months. During his tenure the Authority recovered more than Rs 80 million which were deposited in the public treasury and 320 maps were approved in three months. While in addition to providing facilities to the people and activating one window operation centre to solve the problems faced by the masses, stringent action was also launched against illegal housing societies and the looters of lifelong savings of the people.

### Police arrest hardcore criminal

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested hardcore criminal, involved in heinous crimes, including murder, attempted murder, extortion, illegal possession and intimidation of citizens, informed police spokesman. SHO Sadiqabad, led by SDPO Newtown, along with his team, conducted an operation in the case of extortion and terrorism. The accused Shams Farooq alias Shamu was arrested who had snatched Rs. 09 lakh from Ehsanullah, and case was registered in Sadiqabad police station. SDPO Newtown said on the occasion that the arrest of the accused's accomplices was underway. SP Rawal Division commented SDPO New Town, SHO Sadiqabad and the police team and said that strict action should be taken against criminals.

# Embassy of Indonesia, RINSTRATech. explore digital diplomacy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Adam Tugio met CEO RINSTRATech, Mr. Jahangir Amir on May 21, 2021. During the discussion collaboration between the Embassy and RINSTRATech to jointly produce documentaries, organize film festivals for digital viewing and content competition on various thematic areas involving academic institutions of Pakistan and Indonesia were explored. CEO RINSTRATech Technologies informed the Ambassador that RINSTRATech was Pakistan's first short-form digital media platform for on-demand streaming and for creation of user generated original content on iRINSTRATech. "RINSTRATech also provided entrepreneurship opportunities to emerging and established content creators and film makers in Pakistan and beyond", Mr. Jahangir Amir added.

Ambassador Adam Tugio expressed his pleasure to meet CEO RINSTRATech Technologies, Mr. Jahangir Amir and underscored the importance of Information Technology platform not



only for business communities but also for bringing Indonesian and Pakistani to get closer during the pandemic. "IT platform will allow constant and intensive

communication between people of the two countries, particularly millennials of the two countries who are technology savvy and active social media users", Amba-

sador Tugio added. He further underlined that digital platforms and technology solutions were imperative for growth in economic ties between countries around

the world. The Embassy has just organized Virtual Trade EXPO last month and were pleased by the positive response it gained from busi-

ness communities, and outcome of this Virtual EXPO. The Embassy and RINSTRATech will continue discussion to identify digital contents to start collaboration.

## Chairman CDA inspects various developmental sites



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, CDA visited Snigar Highway, Sector I-10 and steel Market I 10/3to inspect the progress on various development, rehabilitation works related to roads, parks, Sanitation, sewerage, sanitation and water supply in these

areas. During the visit, the Chairman CDA directed to increase the number of garbage trolleys. He further issued orders to place waste bins along water filtration plants. DDG water was further directed to ensure availability of water to the residents and proper functioning of filtra-

tion plants also be ensured. Chairman CDA also inspected on going Nullahs cleaning drive. DG Civic Management was instructed to expedite the nullahs cleaning works besides completion of works related to connection of sewerage lines to main trunk. During the inspection, The Chairman showed displeasure on non-resumption of

carpeting works and directed the concerned formation that the same must be started immediately. Overall progress of various formations was found satisfactory, however, chairman directed that the pace of works should continue and all out efforts to be made to provide better services to the residents.

## Pak on track to meet renewable energy targets by 2030: Amin

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam on Sunday said that Pakistan would become the world's best example in green energy revolution as government was well on track to meet the renewable energy targets by 2030 and will raise it to 60% through renewable resources. Pakistan was encouraging private sector investment in renewable energy projects to reach its clean energy goal by 2030 and it would produce 60 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources, he said this while talking to PTV news. The SAPM said "green Pakistan" vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan aims to transform country into lush green land with a clean environment for people and it was topmost priority of the government. Amin said Prime Minister Imran Khan was committed to the challenge of initiating a

green recovery through ecosystem restoration to protect nature and create much needed green employment. "Pakistan has made remarkable progress in recent years, bringing electricity connections and impressively scaling up the use of renewable energy, particularly solar," he added. He said Pakistan also set to approve its first ever National Forest Policy which aims to protect and promote the wise use of national forests, protected areas, natural habitats and watersheds. These ecological zones have immense significance and their restoration can improve livelihoods and human welfare, he added. Talking about Food Security, he said Pakistan initially with 8 districts has been adopting the policy of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) to achieve food security and broader development goals under a changing climate and increasing food demand. — APP

### CAS grieved over demise of Nigerian Army Chief

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu has expressed his heartfelt sorrow and grief over the sad demise of Nigeria's army chief, Lieutenant General Ibrahim At-tahiru, who died in a plane crash on Friday. In his condolence message here received, the Air Chief prayed for the eternal bliss of the departed soul and grant of courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with patience. On this sad occasion, he said, "our hearts reach out to the family of the deceased in the grief and this void can't be filled". — APP

### Pak-Iran gas pipeline will revolutionize the energy sector

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: PML-Q Punjab Deputy Secretary Information Khawaja Rameez Hassan while addressing a video link meeting on Pak-Iran relations said that US sanctions are a conspiracy to weaken the region. Economic ties with existing friendly countries need to be further strengthened. He said that resumption of work on Pak-Iran gas pipeline project would bring about a revolutionary change in the energy sector. The opening of new borders with Iran will further improve bilateral relations and sustain the economy.

### NUMS VC for vaccines research

RAWALPINDI: Vice Chancellor National University of Medical Sciences (NUMS) Lt Gen Muhammad Imran Majeed HI (M) on Sunday called for forging international partnership in research with leading universities of the world for producing vaccines and medicines, specific to microbial strains found in Pakistan. Research collaboration of Pakistani medical universities with international partners is the way forward in the medical field. NUMS is already collaborating with some universities in the UK, US, China, Malaysia and Turkey to promote research, he said in an FM Radio programme on medical education here on Sunday. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Readers Welfare Association G12 President, ICCI Executive Member Mehboob Khan, former Senior Vice President ICCI Khalid Chaudhry, offering flowers to newly elected Secretary General of United Business Group and former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari. Former Vice President Nisar Ahmad Mirza is also present. — DNA

## Performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

QURAT-UL-AIN SIDDIQI

**M** SMEs are backbone of many economies worldwide as they provide income and employment generation to a large number of people around the globe. In the case of Pakistan, MSMEs are considered as crucial for economy as they contribute 40% of the GDP with over 40% to export earnings. These businesses represent a significant portion of manufacturing, retail, wholesale, trade, agriculture and service sectors and spread all over Pakistan in urban and rural areas. Due to COVID-19 lockdowns and outbreaks, Pakistani firms are facing unusual adverse effects on their businesses. According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development report, Pakistan is the hardest-hit by the global pandemic of COVID-19. The ongoing pandemic crisis is severely hampering the operations of MSMEs businesses because they are highly dependent on cash economy which has been adversely affected by the pandemic.

Besides this, the shortage of raw materials, the unavailability of labors, slowdown of productions and transportation restrictions will have major impact on the national economy as a whole. Pakistan has also witnessed several similar crisis in past such as climate change, earth quakes, flood and draught that severely affected many businesses. MSMEs have limited resources and capabilities to recover from such crisis especially those in developing countries like Pakistan with economic and political instability and high poverty rate. The first case of COVID-19 in Pakistan as reported on February 26th 2020. From March 15-25, 2020 the number of confirmed cases has started rising rapidly. Since then, the cases are growing exponentially day by day in different areas of the country. It has been reported that Pakistan has lost one-third of its revenue and exports dropped by 50% due to COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown. The World Bank also warns that Pakistan might fall into a recession. Due to ongoing crisis caused by COVID-19 pandemic, Pakistan's

GDP growth for FY20 may contract by 2.2% before just recovering to 0.3% growth in FY21. Due to lockdown, out of 2700 factories in Karachi, less than 50 were operating on the first working day. There are around 05 million people in Pakistan who live just at or below the subsistence line while there are a large number of unskilled or low-skilled people such as labor, construction workers, transport and domestic workers who works in different industries, agriculture and services sectors that rely on daily wages to meet their needs. These daily wagers have been hardest hit by the lockdown. After them, there is a class of micro enterprises such as shop owners, street vendors and household businesses who heavily rely on their micro business. These micro enterprises are considered as a part of informal economy and they are facing severe outbreak of COVID-19. After micro enterprises, many small and medium enterprises are also facing huge issues. For instance, textile and apparel industry has been affected mainly due to imposition of lockdown.

In the same way the agriculture sector is no exception. Due to non availability of transport and labor, this sector also faced several issues. The closure of businesses and disruption of national supply chains have a major impact on wholesale, retail, transport, warehousing and communications services. Most importantly clothing, saloons, food, electronics and shoes businesses among others are severely affecting due to this pandemic. These small and medium businesses are expected to face liquidity issues and hardly hit by ongoing crisis. Those firms that are still operating their businesses are facing extra cost to buy gloves, masks and sanitizers among others in terms of managing health and safety of employees. Further, due to COVID-19, Pakistan's currency has been devalued which poses another threat for the businesses. Due to the ongoing crisis and lockdown, the unemployment rate in Pakistan is expected to reach 5% by the end of year 2021. The impact of corona virus on the global and Pakistani economy will leave deep scars.



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**Mobile: 0300 8553342**



## Briefs

**Motorbike, three wheeler sales up 34pc in 10 months**

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The sale of motorbikes and three wheelers witnessed an increase of 34 percent during the first ten months of financial year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

During the period under review, as many as 1,587,562 motorbikes and three wheelers were sold in July-April (2020-21) against the sale of 1,184,659 units in July-April (2019-20), showing growth of 34 percent, according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

The sale of Honda motorcycles went up 39.43 percent from 771,757 units in last year to 1,076,077 units during current year whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 27.72 percent from 15,637 units to 19,973 units.

Similarly, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes went up from 18,142 units to 18,375 witnessing growth of 1.28 percent while the sale of Ravi motorbikes witnessed a sharp decline of 54.67 percent from 11,405 units to 5,169 units during the period under review.

The sales of United Auto motorcycles increased by 29.70 percent from 242,387 units to 314,393 units while the sales of Road Prince motorcycles also increased by 21.80 percent from 91,595 units to 111,570 units.

Meanwhile, the sale of Road Prince three wheelers witnessed a decrease of 4.32 percent from 7,837 units in last year to 7,498 units in the same month's current year while the sale of Sazgar three wheeler increased by 34.85 percent from 9,500 units to 12,811 units.

**Mobile imports increase 63.98 per cent**

ISLAMABAD: The import of mobile phones into the country has witnessed an increase of 63.98 percent during the first ten months of current financial year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of last year.

Pakistan imported mobile phones worth US \$1684.988 million during July-April (2020-21) as compared to the imports of US \$1027.585 million during July-April (2019-20), showing growth of 63.98 percent, according to the latest data issued by Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

Meanwhile, on year-to-year basis, the import of mobile phones also rose by 212.88 percent during the month of April 2021 when compared to the same month of last year.

The import of mobile into the country during April 2021 were recorded at \$148.991 million against the exports of \$47.619 million in April 2020.

On month-on-month basis, the imports of mobile phones however witnessed decrease of 33.64 percent during April 2021, as compared to the imports of US \$224.503 million during March 2021, according to the data. — APP

**IRSA releases 191,800 cusecs water**

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 191,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 173,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1402.45 feet, which was 18.45 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 56,200 and 70,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1111.30 feet, which was 71.30 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 53,600 and 58,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 96,800, 73,400 and 16,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 36,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 6,800 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

# Experts discuss Taliban role in future Afghan set up

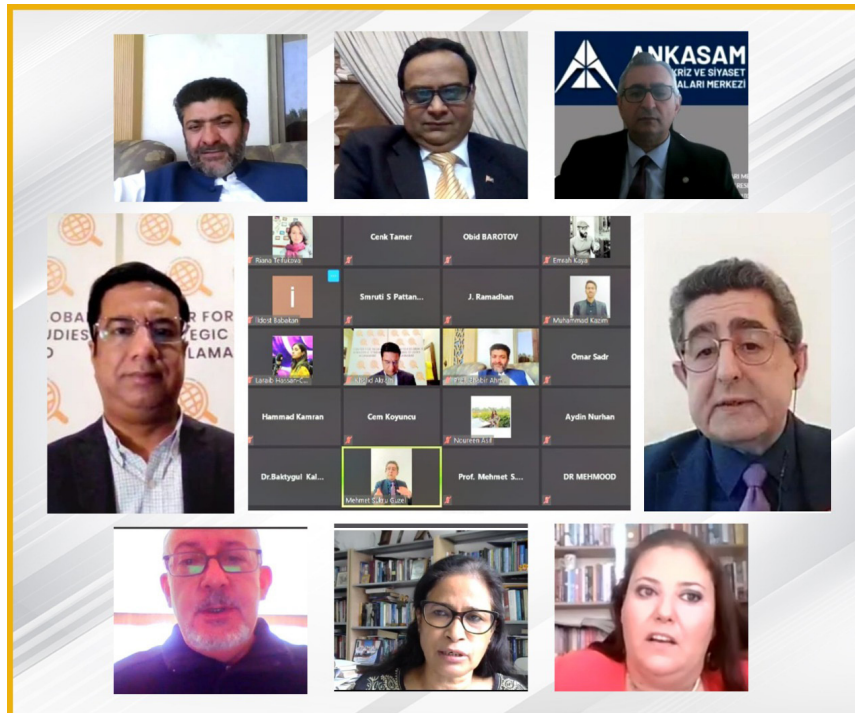
CGSS ED Khalid Taimur moderates the session

## MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Mehmet Sukru Guzel, ANKASAM Representation in Geneva (Switzerland) has stated that from a terrorist organization to a Non-state armed group there must be some changing. He elaborated in detail about the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on Afghanistan, Taliban and US-Taliban peace deal of 2020. Mr. Mehmet stated that Taliban accepted the binding of UNSC resolutions. However, the legal team of Afghanistan are making mistakes by not fulfilling the agreed resolutions of the accord.

He expressed these views during the Second Session of the Two-Day Online International Conference on "The Rise of Asian Geopolitics and Terrorism at the Threshold" Conducted by Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Research (ANKASAM), Turkey. While briefing on two preambles of UNSC, Prof. Mehmet explained that in first preamble the Taliban are defined as the terrorist organizations and in second preamble, Para 6, they are put into the peace negotiation. He concluding

by stating that the Taliban need to understand and have to obey the UNSC resolutions as it is binding and they have to fulfill their responsibility for a better solution. Asst. Prof. Ali Bilgin Varlik, Colonel (R), Istanbul Arel University (Turkey) discussed "Afghanistan, Towards Reconciliation or a failed state?". He gave brief presentation on the topic and discussed historical and contemporary perspective of Afghanistan. He stated that Afghanistan has been a country of power struggle between the regional and global powers. Therefore, the reconciliation process will change the position of country. There are geo-strategic, geopolitics, energy-politics and cultural dimensions of Afghanistan. He stated that it can be consider a potential country as it has colorful human geography. Mr. Ali comprehensively discussed the economic indicators of Afghanistan. He stated that the all the fundamental indicators are interrelated in Afghanistan. Therefore, the main indicators according to him will be the vacuum authority as US withdrawal its forces. Mr. Ali stated that



in the absence of secular political life, a state always fails. Therefore, with the rise of Taliban, irreversible conditions will likely to prevail. He concluded by saying that complete US withdrawal would make Afghanistan a total fail state. There would be consequences of

the withdrawal, however, can provide short to medium-term benefits. Regional instability may hamper China's BRI or create internal issues that may trigger security problems for adjacent countries. Dr. Mehmood ul Hassan Khan, Member Board of

Experts, CGSS, (Pakistan) talked about 'Central Asia and Afghanistan in the Rise of Asian Geopolitics'. He explained in detail about the changing dynamics of the region. He gave profound analysis on the US incumbent government's policies regarding the complete withdrawal. Dr.

Mehmood highlighted the role of Pakistan to support the Afghan cause and playing a pivotal role in the socio-economic reconstruction of Afghanistan. He explained that dream of regional connectivity has been battling out in Afghanistan during last decades.

Prof. Dr. Shabir Ahmed Khan, Member Board of Experts, CGSS & Director, Area Study Center (Pakistan) shared analysis on "peace prospects in Afghanistan". While elaborating the prospects, Prof. Shabir stated that the Doha peace process has provided historical opportunities to the Afghans to reach a consensus for power sharing and achieve sustainable peace. Dr. Shabir elaborated three main options for resolving the power sharing issue. First, the incumbent government should become a part of the Taliban dominant government as an inclusive political settlement with modifications in present constitution not entirely replacing it with new one. Second, an interim setup in consensus through intra-Afghan negotiation for a specific period followed by election. Third, Taliban become part of the current government. Dr.

Shabir stated that among these options, the third one seems quite difficult as the emboldened Taliban may not opt for becoming part of the current government. According to Dr. Shabir, Taliban are inspired by forcing US/NATO to come to negotiations. They consider the US/NATO and Kabul regime intend to win a war on table which they have lost on grounds. Therefore, Taliban seems not averse to first and second options. Prof. Shabir, while concluding his speech stated that if any of these options agreed upon by the Afghan new political setup and ceasefire to end the violence, shall be declared and practiced upon simultaneously. It is obvious that without reaching to a consensus on a new political setup there will be no end to violence.

Earlier, Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Session Chairperson and Moderator, extended his appreciation and gratitude for the Ankara Center for Crisis and Policy Research (ANKASAM) for timely organizing the conference and highlighting crucial matters of concern for the international community.



ISLAMABAD: Pakistani and Chinese children holding postage stamps on the occasion of 70th anniversary of Pakistan, China relations. — DNA

## No new taxes should be imposed in the budget

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said the government should not impose new taxes in the budget to ensure economic development. The export sector should be given the facility of zero-rating while government should freeze electricity and gas tariff for one year, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that steps should be taken to improve real wages of the labour class which is feeling the pinch of high inflation more than any other group. He noted that the economy is growing but the real wages of labour are on the decline for three years which should be noticed and corrected. He said that remittances and

large scale production is increasing, current account deficit is surplus, profit of cement, automobile and other sectors is increasing but the benefit is not reaching the lower-income groups. He noted that the real income of people increased by two percent from 2009 to 2013 while it increased by four percent per annum from 2013 to 2018. From October 2018, the real wages started shrink while was from six to twelve percent for different sectors that took a toll on the poor and middle class, he informed. He noted that the construction package failed to trigger economic activity to an extent that it can boost the real income of the poor but the profits of the corporate sector jumped which indicates distortion in the system.

## ICCI calls for extending business timings to 10 pm

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, ICCI said that with the increase in vaccination of people, the average positivity rate of Covid-19 pandemic has now come down to 5.9% reflecting an improvement

## ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to extend the business timings in markets from current 8:00 pm to 10:00 pm and for food outlets/restaurants up to 12 midnight so that business activities could flourish smoothly that would help in reviving the overall economy.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that with the increase in vaccination of people, the average positivity rate of Covid-19 pandemic has now come down to 5.9% reflecting an improvement, therefore, it was important that the timings for businesses should be enhanced to give ample time to customers for shopping and avoid overcrowding in commercial areas.

He said that shopping malls across Pakistan were ensuring strict implemen-



tation of SOPs by adopting the policy of no mask no entry and they should be allowed to operate as per normal working hours for 7 days a week. He said that cinemas worldwide were opened by maintaining social distancing between seats and the government should open them in Pakistan with 60-70 percent capacity of viewers as these businesses were closed for more than a year and were now on the verge of bankruptcy.

He further said that Pakistan has already suffered an estimated economic loss of Rs.2.5 trillion in 2020 and was anticipated to suffer additional loss of over Rs.1 trillion this year due to restrictions on businesses while the livelihoods of over 18 million workers have been badly affected. Therefore, it was high time that the government should remove all restrictions on businesses to save businesses from further damages, workers from job losses and economy from plunging into further recession. Meanwhile, Ms. Fatma Azim, Senior Vice President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry along with a delegation of restaurants association held a meeting with NCOC authorities and stressed that indoor and outdoor dining in restaurants should be allowed as these restaurants all over the Middle East and most of the Europe were allowing indoor dining with acrylic or glass partitions between each table to maintain safe distance.

## 100 Pakistani literary books to be translated into Chinese

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: At least 100 Pakistani literary books will be translated into Chinese under an agreement with Iron Brother China, said Dr. Yousuf Khushk Chairman of Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) according to Gwadar Pro. Speaking at an international 'Eid Milan Mushaira (Poets get-together on Eid)', he said that the poetry received under 'Omid Zeest Award' will be published soon. Hopefully this book will become a literary document.

Poets from all over the country and abroad presented their poetry. During the month of Ramadan-ul-Mubarak, two international 'Hamdiya' and 'Naatiya Mushairas' were organized in which poets presented their poetry in Urdu.

## Farrukh condemns firing on Pak post

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has strongly condemned the terrorists' across the border firing on a Pakistan Army post in the North Waziristan area. The minister, in a statement, said Pakistan Army's befitting response to the terrorists' firing, from inside Afghanistan across the international border, was inevitable. "The entire nation is standing with the country's armed forces in the fight against terrorism," he said. Farrukh Habib prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of the ranks of the martyr, who received bullet injury and embraced Shahadat the other day, and patience for the family members. — APP

## Growth figures unanimously approved

ISLAMABAD: The Finance Ministry on Saturday clarified that the final economic growth numbers released by the National Accounts Committee (NAC) were unanimously approved by the meeting participants.

It termed the media reports as baseless that claimed the ministry and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) had objected to the growth numbers presented and finalized in NAC meeting held on Friday, May 21, 2021.

"A section of the press has mentioned that SBP and Ministry of Finance had objected to the growth numbers presented and finalized in the National Accounts Committee meeting held on 21-5-2021," Finance Ministry said in a statement issued here.

It is clarified that these were baseless assertions. — APP

## Motorcyclists urged to use helmet for own safety

## STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rai Mazhar Iqbal urged the motorcyclists to use safety helmets for their own safety. CTO said that motorcyclists must wear helmet to avoid fatal accidents. He said, Traffic wardens had been directed to take strict action in accordance with the law against the violators. He said wearing a helmet could save a driver's life in case of any accident. "Sometimes it's the only difference between life and death," he added. CTO said all traffic issues could be resolved by observing traffic rules which are for the safety and protection of the road users.

## The effect of cyber threats in e-banking

Cyber crime has become one of the major concerns for financial institutions in 21st century, especially when everyone is using the e-banking options for their respective banks that can impact both reputation and customers reach of the financial institutions

## WAJEEUL HASSAN RIZVI

THERE is a cyber war happening from last few years across the globe. Everyone is trying to gather as much data as they can to use it for their benefits. This all is happening due to the rapid growth in technology across the world. Technological advancement has been observed in every field of life across the globe, no matter whether it is manufacturing, retail or Service Company. One will find the technology there; same is the case of financial sector. Due to the ongoing pandemic of Covid 19,

everyone is looking for the modes which do not involve human interaction physically. The financial sector has been introduced with the paper less transaction like micro finance banks and online payments for almost everything. We all know that every new advancement comes with both advantages and disadvantages, the major problem arose in the financial sector is the cybercrime in which many people have faced severe monetary losses.

Cyber crime has become one of the major concerns for financial institutions in 21st century, especially when everyone is using the e-banking options for their respec-

tive banks that can impact both reputation and customers reach of the financial institutions. The report of the world cybercrime expected the cost of \$100 Billion yearly and it is expected to increase up to \$25 Trillion in next ten years. There are many ways used by the hackers for the crime. In Pakistan, increased number of cases has been reported during the pandemic.

Pakistan does not have that much of advancement in the financial sector but still there are many problems faced by the e-banking users in which scammers took a lot of money from them by using the tools of e-banking services. The main victims of these crimes

observed are the labor class or illiterate class of the society. Micro – finance platforms like Jazz Cash, Easy Paisa etc. are the main targets of the hackers to take money out of the accounts. Financial institutions must take measures to make the users feel safe, otherwise many micro-finance banking users will be keeping the cash in liquid form that does not help the economy to grow.

To prevent this crime, regulatory bodies and financial institutions must work together. The first step must be educating the user about the security protocols and how their security can be breached like OTP and Security verification code etc.

The labor class or most of the users of micro finance does not have the confidence to use the platform in Pakistan that leverage the scammers with a good opportunity to perform the crime also the password strength and its importance should be communicated to the user by the financial institutions. The cyber crime cannot be eradicated completely from any sector because of the rapid change in information technology all across the world but the risk can be minimized on the individual level by taking the appropriate steps. These steps should be communicated with the user.

— The writer is a student



## Short on water

**C**ONCERN over water shortages for the 'kharif' crops in Pakistan, notably in the provinces of Sindh and Punjab, have been growing over the past few days. The concern arose primarily because of slower glacial melt in northern areas as a result of climate change, which has resulted in cloud cover, hanging over parts of Skardu and other areas from which glacial melt flows into rivers. This had already meant a shortfall in water for crops including cotton, Pakistan's main cash crop and the source of material required to manufacture textile items, which are a major export. In addition, the summer crops or kharif' crops include sugarcane, maize, and millet. There is a direct danger to these crops because of the water situation. The problem is made more complicated by an emerging dispute between the provinces. Issues between Sindh and Punjab over the distribution of water have occurred before. They are now cropping up again with Sindh accusing Punjab of putting dams on rivers which stop the inflow of water into Sindh. Punjab, on the other hand, seeks dams because it has a greater capacity to store water compared to Sindh. IRSA, the only forum set up under the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord to determine how water is to be divided between the provinces, has to play a part in this problem. The problem has been a long-standing one. The central government would do better by developing and following a well-articulated and managed strategy to address this issue. No step is advisable without taking into confidence the federating units that bear the brunt of water scarcity resulting from such decisions. To deal with it we need to build water resources, and initiate dialogue with India about enforcing the Indus Waters Treaty 1960 in which Pakistan says there are violations by India, which has built dams on some of the rivers providing water inflow into Pakistan. At the same time, farmers must also be educated about climate change, so that they can carry out agricultural duties more effectively, and possibly change sowing and harvesting times during the year in keeping with the new and more unpredictable climate change that we face.

**Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily**

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# The utter failure of the Abraham Accords

Imad K Harb



Economic relations between Bahrain and Israel are also likely to intensify. The Israeli government foresees a non-military trade volume of \$220m with Manama in 2021, but also expects to sell it military and security hardware. No major trade flows are expected out of the normalisation deals with Sudan and Morocco, but the two countries are set to reap the benefits of their own political victories facilitated by the US. Khartoum was removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, which will help the poor country secure loans

**O**VER the past few weeks, tensions in Israel-Palestine had escalated and the Israeli army had launched yet another deadly war on Gaza. This assault, as well as the threat of evictions of Palestinians from occupied East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood and the Israeli raids on Al-Aqsa mosque during Ramadan, which triggered Palestinian protests, are all just another chapter in the 73-year-old Palestinian Nakba. But these events also demonstrate the failure of the normalisation deals – the so-called Abraham Accords – between four Arab countries and Israel concluded in 2020. These agreements were heavily advertised as promoting peace in the Middle East and reining in Israeli expansionist policies in Palestine. But they have proven to have failed in both. The announcement of the normalisation of relations with Israel came laden with promises that it will help bring peace to the Middle East, put a stop to the Israeli plan to annex parts of the occupied West Bank, and open the door to economic development for the entire region. But what has transpired since has proven that these agreements were a mere business transaction shepherded by former US President Donald Trump, who did all he could to accommodate all of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's whims. The main outcome of the normalisation deals is that the United Arab Emirates is set to become a major trading partner for Israel after it abandoned the decades-old Arab boycott of the Zionist state. Abu Dhabi has announced it intends to invest in Israeli hi-tech firms, manufacturing, healthcare, and agriculture, among other sectors. Importantly, the two countries will most likely cooperate on military production. The UAE, like some other Arab countries, has already acquired Israeli surveillance technology, drones, and airport security equipment. Despite the declared Emirati opposition to Israeli occupation and settlement of Palestinian territories, it has started allowing goods from illegal Jewish settlements – labelled "from the land of Israel" – to be sold in its markets. Economic relations between Bahrain and Israel are also likely to intensify. The Israeli government foresees a non-military trade volume of \$220m with Manama in 2021, but also expects to sell it military and security hardware. No major trade flows are expected out of the normalisation deals with Sudan and Morocco, but the two countries are set to reap the benefits of their own political victories facilitated by the US. Khartoum was removed from the US list of state sponsors of terrorism, which will help the poor country secure loans and investments, while Rabat was granted Washington's recognition of its sovereignty over the Western Sahara, which it had sought since the 1970s. None of these deals changed the situation on the ground in the Middle East's hotspots, particularly in Palestine, as the events of the past few weeks demonstrate.

Israel continues to be engaged in systematic ethnic cleansing of Palestinians. Aided by police and state laws that discriminate against non-Jews, the Israeli authorities persist in their campaign to expel Palestinians from occupied East Jerusalem, with several families now threatened with forced eviction from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood. Israel also continues to trample over Palestinians' religious rights. For nights on end, Israeli police attacked worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque during the month of Ramadan and actually lobbed stun grenades and smoke bombs into the al-Haram al-Sharif compound. Israeli forces also harassed Palestinian Christians and prevented some of them from reaching the Church of Holy Sepulchre for Easter services. Israeli far-right groups, feeling emboldened by their electoral alliance with Netanyahu, have also stepped up harassment of Palestinians. Some of them marched in Jerusalem chanting "death to Arabs" during Ramadan. Their virulence spread to mixed cities inside the Green Line where they attacked Palestinian homes, motorists, and pedestrians. In their aggression towards Palestinians, they were protected by Israeli police, which once again confirmed that the Palestinians in Israel are second-class citizens. This was made official with the enactment of the "Jewish Nation-State Law" in 2018 which practically codified Israel as an apartheid state. Finally, Israeli aggression towards Gaza shows no sign of abating. Last week it launched its third major assault on the besieged strip in 10 years. As of the time of writing, more than 200 people have been killed in Gaza, including 59 children, and over 1,000 injured. Another 13 Palestinians were killed in clashes with occupation forces in the West Bank. It is hard to see how Arab countries that normalised relations with Israel can claim that their purpose was to bring peace to the Middle East. The events of the last few weeks point to their utter failure to effect any positive outcome on all fronts. To be sure, they are likely to face a public backlash and lose credibility following the Israeli raids on Al-Aqsa and the bloody assault on Gaza. The Arab public has repeatedly shown itself to be committed to the Palestinian cause. In the last Arab Opinion Index of 2019-2020, conducted in 13 Arab countries representing some 300 million people, 88 percent of respondents rejected the idea of normalising relations with Israel. Seventy-nine percent said that Palestine remains the major concern for all Arabs. In Sudan, 79 percent of respondents said they oppose having relations with Israel before Palestinian rights are secured. In the face of ongoing Israeli aggression, the Arab public remains committed to defending Palestinians and Jerusalem, including people in the four countries that normalised relations. But what continues to be an impediment to publicly showing solidarity is the authoritarian nature of Arab politics that prevents the true expression of pop-

ular sentiment. To be sure, it is hard to voice an anti-Israel opinion in the UAE when the Emirati embassy in Tel Aviv is tweeting congratulatory messages to Israel for its "independence" day, which marked the beginning of the Palestinian Nakba and dispossession in 1948. Considering public opinion indicators and current Israeli actions, it is difficult to see how the normalisation deals with Israel will be any different in their impact on Palestine from the current cold peace between Israel and each of Egypt and Jordan. Aside from establishing formal relations and limited trade, the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 and the Jordanian-Israeli treaty of 1994 have not swayed public opinion nor intensified official exchanges. In fact, the frosty ties between Israel and Jordan are a reminder to all that the Zionist state will never compromise its own interest to maintain a good relationship with any Arab country. Israel is also unlikely to go out of its way to defend any of the Arab states that have normalised relations with it. One of the rationales for normalisation touted by the Trump administration was a potential regional alliance against Iran. With Israel focused on expanding and solidifying its settler-colonial project in Palestine, it has no reason to come to the rescue of any Arab state. Israel is only concerned with its own security and would not fight Iran on behalf of the Arabs. Normalisation is also not giving any more dividends in Washington, after Trump's term ended. It is true that the Biden administration considers itself a defender of Israel, but it is clearly not willing to reward Israel's "new friends" as its predecessor did. The US Congress may still cancel the UAE's F-35 deal and political pressures on the administration may potentially force it to reverse the US recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the Western Sahara. It also increasingly seems that Saudi Arabia – the ultimate normalisation victory sought by Trump and Netanyahu – is unlikely to follow in the UAE's footsteps. The Zionist state's assault on the Palestinians and its violation of Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem make any such Saudi move utterly folly. As Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman works to rehabilitate his image domestically, regionally, and internationally, any steps towards normalisation may deprive him of the essential element of legitimacy his rule needs. As Jerusalem's Palestinians fight for their continued presence in the city and Gaza resists the criminal Israeli onslaught, normalisation with Israel has proven to be an utter failure in bringing peace and security to the region. To be sure, given what has transpired since the signing of the Abraham Accords last September, normalisation has shown itself to be a mere business transaction for those who engaged in it – one that may cost them their credibility in the region and beyond.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

# 'American century' will end when troops leave

Spyridon Litsas



There are many ways to read President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan and many more repercussions to discuss. First, during Donald Trump's presidency, the US spent a tremendous amount of the soft power clout that Obama had managed to save for the state

**S**YMBOLISM plays a significant role in international politics, even when it goes beyond strategic necessities. The process of lowering the Stars and Stripes from every military installment in Afghanistan is already on and will be concluded by Sept. 11. The White House decided to send the strong message that the vicious circle that the terrorists opened 20 years ago will be permanently closed, and the boys can now come back home. But where does symbolism stop and political reality start to bite again? There are many ways to read President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw all US forces from Afghanistan and many more repercussions to discuss. First, during Donald Trump's presidency, the US spent a tremendous amount of the soft power clout that Barack Obama had managed to save for the state. The "Make America Great Again" slogan – so profoundly populist and so categorically simplistic in its essence, thus predominant among white, blue-collar Americans – inflicted great damage to America's image worldwide. The harm can only be compared to that of the image of nine-year-old Phan Thi Kim Phuc, the naked Vietnamese girl pictured running naked to save herself from the Napalm bombs near Trang Bang in South Vietnam in 1972. Biden is now trying his best to rebuild the image of the "shining city on a hill," sending the message that the US is ready to open a new chapter in its foreign policy. However, as I have argued many times in the past, there was nothing wrong with the American decision to openly confront the Taliban and Al-Qaeda. On the contrary, it would have been almost impossible to deter the terror if Afghanistan was to be allowed to continue to function as the de facto land of dystopia, much earlier than Raqqa in Syria. The Taliban, alas, continues to exist in Afghani-

stan, while Al-Qaeda is making a comeback in the international arena, especially in Yemen. On top of that, Daesh continues to exist in Yemen, Libya and sub-Saharan Africa. This leads to the undeniable conclusion that the US is withdrawing from Afghanistan without having secured even a fragile peace and order there, or given the Taliban the understanding that any erratic behavior will have military repercussions. From a strategic point of view, the Taliban's long-standing endurance feeds its narcissistic ego – this is understood since it managed to survive the methodical military operations of the strongest armies in the world today: The US and NATO forces. The fact the Taliban regards itself as an invincible power adds to the radical metaphysics surrounding its very existence, raising serious concerns regarding the peace status in Afghanistan on Sept. 12 and beyond. Some would say that Biden's decision is a realistic one as a member of the Obaman school of thought. In my latest book, "US Foreign Policy in the Eastern Mediterranean: Power Politics and Ideology Under the Sun," I strongly support the view that these arguments are correct. Who can doubt American sincerity regarding a post-Taliban Afghanistan when so many lives and money were spent over the years that followed 9/11? Biden will bring a halt to all this, admitting what the Soviets, the British, the French, the Greeks and the Persians came to realize throughout the centuries: You cannot conquer a region that openly rejects the conventional method of political thinking, has few urban centers, and boasts terrain that is among the most difficult any army may ever encounter. Such a concession from the most powerful army that humanity has ever witnessed brings an official end to the so-called "American century," which started with the US entry into the First World War.

The international system has been multipolar for many decades now; however, future historians will use the day of America's final withdrawal from Afghanistan to signal the official end of an era. What does the future hold for Afghanistan? The omens, alas, are not good. The Afghans have to exercise efficient and operational self-help and drastically oppose the return of the Taliban in the central scene. This means that, for the first time, Afghan patriotism has to triumph over loyalty to tribes or factions. In other words, the most challenging task for Afghanistan is to explore the depths of the Westphalian system and emerge as a conventional nation state. And what does the future hold for the rest of the international system? From the statements of the US president and his close associates, it is obvious that America will concentrate even more on a double deterrence process toward China and Russia. Antagonism will rise further. Yet, as I constantly argue in my lectures and writings, this will build on systemic stability rather than instability. After all, the international arena exists in continuous antagonistic activity, meaning that multipolar conditions come closer to what international relations theory calls "systemic anomaly." The end of the American century is a fact. But this does not mean that the US is not the most robust and most influential Western state in international politics. On the contrary, the rise of antagonism between the US, Russia and China will allow Washington to revive the transatlantic geostrategic goal as a valuable tool to withstand the systemic pressure and diversify, once again, its tremendous and unique hard and soft power skills. Biden is more than capable of achieving this monumental transition in the smoothest possible manner.

– Courtesy: Arab News



## Briefs

## Italy: Nine dead after accident

FOREIGN DESK

ROME: Nine people have been killed after a cable car fell on a mountain near Lake Maggiore in northern Italy on Sunday. The accident happened on a service transporting passengers from the resort town of Stresa up the nearby Mottarone mountain in the region of Piedmont. An image posted on social media by emergency services showed the wreckage of the car lying in a wooded area.

Officials say two children were taken from the scene by helicopter to a Turin hospital. They are the only survivors of 11 passengers who had been on board when the cable car crashed, a spokesman for Italy's alpine rescue service confirmed to the Reuters news agency. Officials said a call to emergency services came just after 12:00 local time (11:00 BST) on Sunday. Walter Milan, another alpine rescue spokesman, told RaiNews24 television that the cable car was left "crumpled" after falling from a high height. The cause of the incident remains unclear, but local reports suggest the cable carrying it may have failed about 300m (984ft) from the top of the mountain.

## No NRO come what may, says Imran

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We will not give NRO to anyone to save government," said Imran Khan. "My party is not for someone who thinks they will join it with a motorcycle in their possession but will rake up money for Land Cruisers," said the Prime Minister who also heads the ruling party. The Prime Minister also directed visas for Chinese investors should be extended to two years. The meeting also mulled over introducing a separate category for the people related to CPEC projects. Imran Khan commenting on the fresh rate of inflation said it was the result of the wrong economic policies of the previous governments. Even if my government collapses, I will not compromise on accountability principal, the sources quoted PM as saying. "My government will not be blackmailed at the hands of some pressure groups." Separately, the core committee meeting deliberated over local bodies elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab, the two provinces where PTI has its rule. PM Khan directed chief ministers of KP and Punjab to hold local bodies poll this year. The meeting also said there will be no vengeance policy by the government, neither on the opposition parties nor on allies who dissent from the policies. PM Khan said he never directed anyone to open a case on someone or prosecute someone based on his personal bias or to exact revenge on them. Nobody should expect any concession on me, however, the PM said, adding that the law will mark its own trajectory for my allies and enemies both.

## NCOC urges masses to adopt safe...

From Page 01

non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) being enforced with special focus on opening up of Tourism Sector from May 24. The forum urged the public to resort to "SAFE TOURISM" policy of strict adherence to health guidelines and safety protocols devised by the forum aimed to curb disease spread of deadly coronavirus. The forum was briefed that a comprehensive monitoring mechanism had been devised to ensure that standard operating procedures (SOPs) were being implemented in true letter and spirit. The forum also reviewed the inbound travel policy where it was informed that the Category C list of the countries, having mutated version or variant of Covid-19 prevailing with more lethal and contagious form of the disease, had been revised with addition of certain other countries which would be implemented from 26th May.

## Pak-Iran diplomacy urged for security, cultural collaboration

The issue of India-US strategic partnership and the crisis in Afghanistan requires Pakistan to maintain a superficial relationship with the US despite tensions

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The experts from both sides noted that Pakistan-Iran diplomatic relations are based on the commonalities of language, literature, culture and religion that can enhance bilateral strategic and trade collaboration for a win-win situation. Post withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan, the two countries should have a mutually agreed strategy to handle the emerging situation of security and peace in the region. They said the enhanced cultural collaboration and heritage tourism can bring the people from both sides closer to each other beyond the ethnic and religious divide. Youth engagement in a variety of sectors is imperative. The CPEC could be another economic and trade bond for closer ties between Iran and Pakistan. A youth expedition from Chabahar to Gwadar would lead to much better understanding between the people

of both sides, and will open many vistas of collaboration. Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan), DTN and Tehran International Studies and Research Institute (TISR) jointly organized the webinar on "Iran-Pakistan diplomatic relations: opportunities for cooperation and convergence" on Sunday. The panel of experts included Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, former ISI chief and geopolitical analyst Muhammad Asad Durrani, research analyst and former ambassador to Iran Asif Durrani, Iran's former ambassador to Pakistan Dr. Mashaallah Shakeri, Iran's Cultural Counsellor Ehsan Khazaei, Director South Asian Studies at TISR Dr. Somaye Morovati, and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed who also moderated the discussion. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said three factors will promote ties between Iran-Pakistan in the near

future. First, CPEC and regional connectivity are key to the economic future of both Pakistan and Iran, with the Iran-China deal a plus for Pakistan, securing Pakistan's Western flanks and good for development of Gwadar Port. Second, with instability likely in Afghanistan post-US withdrawal, counter-terrorism border cooperation and border management will bring the two countries closer as both seek lasting peace, stability and security in Afghanistan as well as on their border. Third, with pressures from the Biden Administration on both Iran and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan can play the role of a bridge between Tehran and Riyadh, especially on issues like Palestine and Kashmir. He said Pakistan also supports revival of Iran's nuclear deal and removal of all sanctions on Iran as Pakistan too once faced discriminatory sanctions from the West. One new plus point is a closer rapport between the military and security establishments of both countries, with greater trust among them.

Lt General (retd) Muhammad Asad Durrani said Pak-Iran relations have generally been good – ranging from close to correct – at their peak before the Revolution. During the Khomeini era, the US, then our close ally in Afghanistan vacated, wanted our relations downgraded because of the siege of its Embassy in Tehran, but we refused and have ever since represented Iranian interests in Washington. He said after the American invasion of Afghanistan, the two countries started addressing irritants like Jandullah and with Russia, China, and Turkey joined hands to manage the chaos post the US withdrawal. Balancing our relationship with Saudi Arabia and Iran has been a challenge – mostly met with finesse. Post 2003 instability in the Region, especially after Mohammed Bin Salman foolishly invaded Yemen, it became more complex but was still taken care of. Some bigots have at times aired sectarianism, but the deep commonality of in-

terests prevailed. Ambassador (Retd) Mashaallah Shakeri said Pakistan and Iran enjoy centuries-long relations in cultural, social, politics and economic and trade spheres. However, the historical developments, however, resulted in the alteration of geopolitics in Persia and the subcontinent as well. But the drastic consequences regardless of their implications on geography or geopolitics of the region could never change the principle ties between the relevant territories and Societies. Persian Culture, language and literature once were the elements by virtue of which the religion of Islam was introduced to some part of South Asia particularly to the region that is now known as Pakistan. Ambassador (retd) Asif Durrani said the strength of Pakistan-Iran relations is that they have no dispute, although they may differ in perceptions on specific issues. Both have always cooperated bilaterally and at the international forums.



RABAT: Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco Hamid Asghar Khan received a delegation of GHQ Pakistan. – DNA

## Hetmyer, Johnson to feature in PSL 6 Abu Dhabi-leg

LAHORE: West Indian famed T20 batting duo of Shimron Hetmyer and Johnson Charles were submitted as replacement picks by Multan Sultans in an online session held with the franchise representatives on Tuesday evening. The hard-hitting left-hander Hetmyer will be making his HBL PSL debut while the wicketkeeper-batsman Charles has represented Quetta Gladiators as well as the Sultans in earlier HBL PSL editions. Earlier, it was decided that all teams will be allowed 20-member squads and the teams submitted a total of 12 picks which included replacement as well as the 19th and 20th player submissions for some of the teams. Islamabad United, Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars have not made selections for their 20th player which they will make later, if needed.

Besides Hetmyer and Charles, Sultans also picked Hamad Azam and Muhammad Waseem (UAE). The Gladiators chose Jack Wildermuth (Australia), Jake Weatherald (Australia), Zahir Khan (Afghanistan) and Khuram Shehzad as their picks. Qalandars picked Tim David (Singapore) and Sultan Ahmed from UAE. United added Mohammad Akhlaq, Zalmi added Bismillah Khan and Kings added Mohammad Haris Khan to their respective squads.

HBL PSL 6 squads for Abu Dhabi-leg:

Final squads (in alphabetical order):

**Islamabad United** – Shadab Khan (c), Ahmed Saifi Abdullah, Ali Khan, AkiJaved, Asif Ali, Colin Munro, Fawad Ahmed, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali, HussainTalat, Itikhar Ahmed, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Mohammad Akhlaq, Musa Khan, Rohai Nazir, Usman Khawaja, Zafar Gohar and Zeeshan Zameer.

**Karachi Kings** – Imad Wasim (c), Abbas Afridi, Amir Yamin, Arshad Iqbal, Babar Azam, Chadwick Walton, Danish Aziz, Martin Gupitll, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Ilyas, Mohammad Haris, Thisara Perera, Najeullah Zardran, Noor Ahmed, Qasim Akram, Sharjeel Khan, Waqas Maqsood and Zeeshan Malik.

**Lahore Qalandars** – Sohail Akhtar (c), Ahmed Danyal, Ben Dunk, Callum Ferguson, Dilbar Hussain, Fakhar Zaman, HarisRauf, James Faulkner, Maaz Khan, Mohammad Faizan, Mohammad Hafeez, Shakib al Hasan (replacement to be announced shortly), Salman Ali Agha, SeekugePrasana, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sultan Ahmed (replaces Joe Burns), Tim David, Zaid Alam and Zeeshan Ashraf.

## Chair's KC-EU asks EU, UN to stop HR violations in occupied Kashmir

DNA

BRUSSELS: Kashmir Council Europe (KC-EU)'s Chairman Ali Raza Syed has asked high ranking EU and UN officials to use their good office in order to stop human rights violations including extra judicial killings of the innocent people.

He wrote a letter in the context to David Maria SASSOLI, the President of Europe-

an Parliament, Maria Arena, the Chair of Human Rights Subcommittee of the European Parliament and Iverna McGowan, a senior of Human Rights Regional Office for Europe of the United Nations. The letter titled, "Tribute to the martyrs of Indian Occupied Kashmir," said, the long-running dispute between India and Pakistan over the status of Jammu and Kashmir provides many tragic examples of the peo-

ple who pay the ultimate price for their ethnic and political beliefs. In his letter, Chair of KC-EU memorizes that Mirwaiz-Molvi Muhammad Farooq was shot dead at his residence in Srinagar on May 21, 1990 and the seventy mourners were also killed when Indian troops opened fire on his funeral procession in the Hawal area of Srinagar. On the same day and same month of 2002,

Khawaja Abdul Ghani Lone was killed while returning from addressing a gathering at Mazar-e-Shuhada in Srinagar. Recent information received from the occupied land verifies the constant killings and tortures are being used routinely as weapons of war. Figures for last month (April 2021) show that 92 civilians were arrested, 18 of whom were killed and 64 tortured.



RIGA: Sweden's forward Oscar Lindberg (top) vies with Denmark's forward Nicolai Meyer during the Group A match between Denmark and Sweden at the 2021 IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship in Riga, Latvia. – DNA

## Pakistan students over whelmed on receiving Xi letter

## “President Xi extended a friendly hand to Pakistan and opened the door of communication”

DNA

BEIJING: Fifty two Pakistani students studying at the University of Science and Technology Beijing (USTB) last May 17 received a letter from Chinese President Xi Jinping. One year later, to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between China and Pakistan, a team of China Economic Net (CEN) visited USTB and recorded the expressions of these students on

President Xi's letter. According to CEN, In April 2020, the students who were deeply touched by the brotherhood of Pak-China cooperation in fighting COVID-19, wrote a letter to President Xi. In the letter, they recalled their experiences and feelings of studying in China, meanwhile expressed their gratitude to the university for providing care and help for them after the COVID-19 outbreak. On May 17th 2020, they received a reply. In the letter, President Xi extended wel-



comed to excellent youth from all countries in the world to study in China. He also encouraged the students to communicate more with their Chinese peers and join hands with youth from all countries to contribute to promoting people-to-people connectivity and building a community with a shared future for humanity. The letter evoked a warm response among Pakistani students in China. Besides USTB, nearly 20 universities launched campaigns and forums, and nearly 100 Pakistani students from different universities have voiced their opinions. In the interview to CEC, these students expressed fresh memories of President Xi's reply. The letter has sublimated their views on China and the relationship between the two countries,

and continued to motivate them to study hard and prepare to contribute to CPEC. The students said they would devote themselves to the construction of CPEC in the future. UllahMidrar, a management science and engineering student, told reporters: "President Xi's words confirmed my confidence in the friendship between Pakistan and China. Over the past year, I have often discussed CPEC with my teachers and classmates and combined the CPEC projects with my research. I also have a plan for my career after graduation – I will use my professional knowledge of project management in the cooperation projects under CPEC, so as to build a bridge connecting Pakistan and China within my capacity.

## Thailand reports 3,382 Corona cases

BANGKOK: Thailand on Sunday confirmed 3,382 new COVID-19 cases and 17 more fatalities, according to the Center for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA). Of the new cases, five were imported, 3,377 were local infections, including 460 detected via active testing at prisons, the CCSA said in a report.

The infections raised the country's total caseload to 129,500, with more than 100,000 cases having been reported since the third wave of the outbreak began in early April. The new fatalities reported Sunday took the death toll to 776, increasing sevenfold in the past seven weeks.

Some 44,189 patients are now under treatment at hospitals, with 1,210 in critical conditions, according to the CCSA. The country reported one case of coronavirus variant, known as B.1.351, which was first detected in South Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs official Pensom-Lertsithichai said at the CCSA daily briefing.

The variant, identified in three test samples from a new cluster of infections in Narathiwat province, was detected in a Thai businessman and his close contacts, Pensom said. – APP

## IMF harsh attitude toward...

From Page 01

the economy out of the quagmire it has been in, he said that in 2018, the country had a deficit of \$20 billion and the country simply did not have the dollars required to bridge the deficit.

"The country was forced to go to the IMF (International Monetary Fund)," he said, adding that this time around, the global lender set very strict conditions. Even under the tough conditions, the government gave special attention to the housing, agriculture, and export-oriented industry, which led to economic stability and growth.

The finance minister spoke of the measures the government has planned for the coming financial year. He said a long, short, and medium-term strategy is being evolved in 12 sectors. Short-term measures will include taking steps in the agriculture sector to enhance food supplies and to establish warehouses and cold storage facilities. "Illegal profiteers and hoarders will have to be dealt with severely," he added. Speaking of revenue collection, he said that the government will use technology to broaden the tax net.

"We will not use force, rather encourage people to pay taxes, by providing them facilities," the minister said. He said that the government has already reduced sales tax and petroleum levy. "We will not burden the people. Tariffs will not increase. This is our promise," Tarin said. The finance minister also spoke of the country's long overdue exit from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF)'s grey list. He said no conditions have been spelled out in the IMF programme for Pakistan to exit the list. He said only one condition remains to be fulfilled now.

At the time of the current National Finance Commission award, the tax-to-GDP ratio was 8.8%, Tarin said. Tax-to-GDP under NFC could not increase by 1% per annum, he said, adding that the Centre and the provinces did not take appropriate measures.

## No Hajj decision taken yet

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"no decision has been taken yet regarding the Hajj. All that is said in this regard are proposals that are still under study." According to the statement, the statement of the Special Representative of the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the Middle East and Religious Harmony Taher Al-Ashrafi regarding Hajj is incorrect.

It is noteworthy that Taher Ashrafi said on Saturday that the Saudi government has allowed 60,000 people to perform the Hajj this year, and Pakistanis will also go to perform the Hajj.



## Briefs

## Hundreds arrested in Algeria

## FOREIGN DESK

ALGIERS: Several hundred protesters were arrested in Algeria as authorities ramp up efforts to quell a years-long protest movement that has demanded root-and-branch political reform. Said Salhi, head of the Algerian League for Human Rights, said about 800 people were detained in Algiers and 19 other governorates across the North African country on Friday. The majority were released but 40 people remain in custody, he wrote on Twitter. Heavy police presence in the capital prevented their weekly march from taking place, local media reports said, with police blocking roads and regular protest routes from early in the morning. "For the 118th Friday [since the first Hirak protests], 'Algiers the White' has turned police blue," said Lyes, a man in his 40s who declined to provide his surname, referring to the capital by its Arabic moniker. Independent reporters and photographers without media accreditation cannot normally cover the marches. Internet blackouts hampered media coverage in some cities. Sweeping overhaul The largely leaderless and politically unstructured Hirak movement was launched in 2019 over then-president Abdelaziz Bouteflika's bid for a fifth term in office.

## Azerbaijan, Iran sign cooperation contract

## DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Iran have signed a contract in Tabriz city of East Azerbaijan Province (northwestern Iran) in order to study issues and problems on highways and cargo transportation, said the Director-General of Department of Transportation, said Javad Hedayati, Azeri media reports citing Ministry of Roads and Urban Development of Iran. The director-general stressed that the two sides agreed to increase cargo transportation through joint international corridors and enhance bilateral trade relations. Hedayati added that the issues facing international cargo companies were discussed at the meeting in Tabriz. As well as discussions were conducted on the reduction of transportation costs and the rules of the border terminals of the two countries. Reportedly, a two-day meeting was held in the Iranian city of Tabriz with the participation of Azerbaijani and Iranian road and transport officials. The meeting was chaired by Javad Hedayati from Iran and Head of the State Automobile Transport Service (DANX) of Azerbaijan under the Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies Habib Hasanov from Azerbaijan.

## PIJ hails Iran's support for Palestine

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: In a letter to Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the secretary general of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad hails Iran's support for the resistance front in its 12-day war against the Israeli regime, extending his congratulations to the Leader on the great victory. In his Saturday letter, Ziyad al-Nakhlah said that he has the honor to congratulate the Leader on behalf of himself and the Islamic Jihad forces as well as its armed wing Quds Brigades on the victory of the Palestinian people and their brave resistance against the Zionist enemy. He added that Ayatollah Khamenei's "constant, continued and open support" for Palestine in all fields has "played the most important and leading role" in "Operation Sword of al-Quds" and its subsequent achievements. "Despite the enemy's [purported] military upper hand, fighters of the resistance entered the battlefield with full power, strength, bravery and courage," he said.

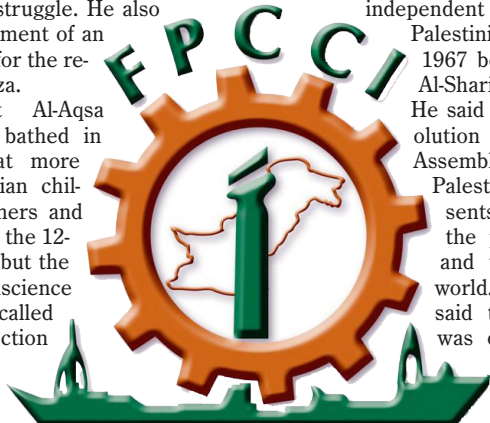
## Country's businessmen stand united to support Palestine

Mian Anjum hails trade bodies for holding protest rallies against Israel aggression

## ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar, while expressing solidarity with the Palestinians, showed a strong sense of outrage on behalf of the entire business community of Pakistan over Israel's use of indiscriminate and disproportionate force against the Palestinians, resulting in the loss of numerous lives. He appreciated the trade bodies and industrial associations for standing united to hold protest rallies in support of Palestinians across the country, calling upon the Muslim world to boycott Israel completely and get united for the cause of Palestine. He urged the business community of the whole Muslim world to stop trading Israeli products in their markets and boycott all the Israeli products. He also strongly condemned those Gulf countries who have recently recognised Is-

rael and urged them to take back their decision of recognising the Jewish state. Mian Anjum Nisar, the former FPCCI president, stated that 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. He also called for establishment of an international fund for the reconstruction of Gaza. He added that Al-Aqsa Mosque is being bathed in blood, adding that more than 300 Palestinian children, sisters, mothers and youths have died in the 12-day siege of Gaza, but the international conscience is asleep. 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 BMP Chairman 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. He said the unanimous resolution passed by National Assembly in support of Palestinian people represents the aspirations of the people of Pakistan and the entire Muslim world. Mian Anjum Nisar said the whole country was on the same page for the cause of Palestinians. He said that people of

Pakistan as well as the Muslim world would never leave their Palestinian brethren in those testing times. He said entire Pakistani nation stood by the Palestinian people in that hour of trial. He said the world community must play its role for the resolution of the lingering dispute. He said Pakistan had a clear stance regarding Palestine, adding the country's political leadership as well as the business community were on the same page on the issue of Palestine. He also flayed the deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation in IIOJ&K, including continued extrajudicial killings. He said that businessmen have deep concern at the continued incarceration of Kashmiri political leaders in crowded conditions despite the corona virus pandemic. He urged the UN to use its 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.

## Time for Pakistan to attract foreign investment

NEW DELHI: India's capital New Delhi will start relaxing its strict coronavirus lockdown next week if its new cases continue to drop. The South Asian country on Sunday reported 240,842 new infections nationwide over 24 hours – the lowest daily number in more than a month – and 3,741 deaths. For weeks, India has battled a devastating second wave of COVID-19 that has crippled its health system and led to shortages of oxygen supplies. New Delhi, one of the worst-hit cities, went into lockdown on April 20, but new cases have declined in recent weeks and the test positivity rate has fallen under 2.5 percent, compared with 36 percent last month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said. "If cases continue to drop for a week, then from May 31 we will start the process of unlocking," Kejriwal told a news conference. Delhi reported about 1,600 new COVID-19 cases in the previous 24 hours, he said. Many states remain in lockdown, raising worries about the economic impact of the pandemic. The chief of the state-run Indian Council of Medical Research said this month that districts with a high rate of infection should remain locked down for six to eight weeks to break the chain of transmission. India's daily COVID-19 cases are decreasing after peaking on May 9. The government said on Sunday it is conducting the highest number of COVID-19 tests, with more than 2.1 million samples tested in the previous 24 hours. – DNA

## RMB settlement as facilitator of CPEC development: Experts

## DNA

BEIJING: A webinar on "Boosting High-Quality CPEC Development: Path and Operation Instruction of RMB Settlement" was held, where Chinese and Pakistani banking experts have discussed the policies, procedures, guidelines and cases of RMB settlement. According to a report carried by China Economic Net (CEN), NongRong, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, said at the event that China-Pakistan trade volume reached USD 17.49 billion in 2020 and that increased use of RMB in bilateral trade "will surely attract more Chinese and Pakistani enterprises to make full use of the second phase of Chi-

na-Pakistan FTA protocol and further promote bilateral economic and trade cooperation and the high-quality development of CPEC." The importance of RMB settlement in bilateral trade is also emphasised by Mr Muhammad Ali Malik, Executive Director, Financial Markets & Reserve Management, State Bank of Pakistan. He also introduced the policy and regulatory support of SBP for RMB-based trade. "RMB is on a par with other international currencies and public and private sectors in Pakistan are free to choose RMB for bilateral trade and investment activities," he mentioned. To aid importers and exporters from both countries in RMB settlement, experts from major Chinese and

Pakistani banks introduced the policies, procedures and cases of RMB settlement. Ms Xuexue Lang, Head of Corporate Banking Department, ICBC Karachi, said that the use of RMB in China-Pakistan trade can be cost-saving and risk-mitigating and that Pakistani importers and exporters, whether individual or institutional investors, can benefit from the favourable policies in China. She also introduced the procedures, the range of services offered and cases of RMB settlement. According to Mr Chen Yuncheng, CEO of ICBC Karachi Branch, ICBC Karachi, as the first RMB clearing bank and the largest RMB market marker with three branches in Pakistan, will make further efforts to

improve RMB settlement infrastructure such as the 'RMB superhighway' and optimise policies in Pakistan to meet the growing demand for RMB settlement in bilateral economic and trade cooperation. Ms Hui Sui, Head of Business Development Department, BOC Pakistan Operations, gave a detailed introduction of the procedures and guidelines of China-Pakistan cross-border RMB settlement, and the RMB operations of Bank of China in Pakistan. She added, "Increasing the use of RMB will push the economy and trade of both countries to a higher level. Let's join hands to build a community of a shared future for Pakistan and China in the new era of RMB settlement."



**MOSCOW:** Students of International Relations from a local university visited Pakistan Embassy in Moscow. Ambassador Shafqat Ali Khan briefed them on the challenging and exciting world of diplomacy and Pakistan-Russia relations. The meeting was followed by high tea and exchange of gifts. – DNA

## Pakistani universities join SCO Agricultural Universities Alliance

## DNA

BEIJING: Three Pakistani universities, including PMAS-Arid Agriculture University and Bahauddin Zakariya University, joined the SCO Agricultural Universities Alliance (SCO-AUA) at the Inaugural Ceremony of SCO-AUA held in China's northwestern city of Yangling. According to Gwadar Pro, the alliance, first

initiated by the Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University (NWAUFU) in China, is designed to unite SCO member countries around the cause of joint talent cultivation and technological cooperation. They will also promote the research achievements to the industry by strengthening cooperation with the government and the industry. "SCO member states enjoy broad prospects for

cooperation. With similar climate, ecological environment and animal and plant adaptations, we share the common goals of ensuring food security and deepening cooperation in modern agriculture in arid and semi-arid areas," said Mr Wu Pute, president of the Northwest Agriculture and Forestry University. Vice-Chancellor Qamaruz-Zaman of the PMAS-Arid Agriculture University, and

Director Saeed Akhtar of the Institute of Food Science and Nutrition Faculty, Bahauddin Zakariya University, also delivered speeches on the potential cooperation among SCO member countries. More than 60 representatives from 19 universities and organisations from 8 countries, including Pakistan, China, Russia and India, have participated in the event, jointly initiating the establishment of SCO-AUA.

## New Delhi to relax lockdown as Covid cases decline

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: India's capital New Delhi will start relaxing its strict coronavirus lockdown next week if its new cases continue to drop. The South Asian country on Sunday reported 240,842 new infections nationwide over 24 hours – the lowest daily number in more than a month – and 3,741 deaths. For weeks, India has battled a devastating second wave of COVID-19 that has crippled its health system and led to shortages of oxygen supplies. New Delhi, one of the worst-hit cities, went into lockdown on April 20, but new cases have declined in recent weeks and the test positivity rate has fallen under 2.5 percent, compared with 36 percent last month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said. "If cases continue to drop for a week, then from May 31 we will start the process of unlocking," Kejriwal told a news conference. Delhi reported about 1,600 new COVID-19 cases in the previous 24 hours, he said. Many states remain in lockdown, raising worries about the economic impact of the pandemic. The chief of the state-run Indian Council of Medical Research said this month that districts with a high rate of infection should remain locked down for six to eight weeks to break the chain of transmission. India's daily COVID-19 cases

are decreasing after peaking on May 9. The government said on Sunday it is conducting the highest number of COVID-19 tests, with more than 2.1 million samples tested in the previous 24 hours. Still, health experts have warned India could face a third wave of infections in the coming months, and many states are unable to vaccinate those aged under 45 because of a shortage of supplies. The world's largest vaccine-producing nation has fully vaccinated just over 41.6 million people with both doses administered, or only 3.8 percent of its 1.35 billion population. Earlier health ministry said in a statement, The number of districts reporting a decline in case positivity increased from 210 in April 29-May 5 to 303 districts in May 13-19, the Health Ministry said on Thursday. It also said seven states have more than 25 percent case positivity, while 22 states have more than 15 percent case positivity. The country recorded 3,874 deaths, pushing the overall toll to 2,87,122. On Wednesday, India had recorded its highest single-day death toll with 4,529 fatalities. Meanwhile, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said India will have procured 267 crore Covid vaccine doses by the end of this year, and will be in a position to inoculate at least all of its adult population.

## Nepal president dissolves parliament

## FOREIGN DESK

KATMANDU: Nepal has plunged into fresh political turmoil as President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved parliament and fixed general elections in November amid a worsening COVID-19 outbreak. Saturday's surprise announcement comes after a presidential statement said neither the caretaker Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli, nor opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba were able to demonstrate a majority to form a new government by the Friday deadline set by Bhandari. "The president has dissolved the House of Representatives and ordered the first phase of general elections on November 12 and the second phase on November 19," a presidential statement issued after midnight said. It said the decision was made on the recommendation of the cabinet headed by caretaker Prime Minister Oli, whose December 2020 dissolution of parliament sparked weeks of protests and was reversed by the Supreme Court as unconstitutional in February. There was no immediate comment from political parties about the latest move. Nepal is battling a deadly second wave of the pandemic and is reporting 8,207 new infections on average each day.

## Pfizer, AZ effective against Indian variant

## WEB DESK

NEW YORK: The Pfizer-BioNTech and Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines have been found to be highly effective against the coronavirus variant that was first identified in India, according to a study by Public Health England (PHE). The Pfizer vaccine was 88-percent effective and the AstraZeneca jab was 60-percent effective against the B1617.2 strain after the second dose. Both the vaccines were more effective against the so-called "Kent" strain – B.1.1.7, the COVID-19 variant dominant in Britain – with Pfizer being 93-percent effective while the AstraZeneca jab was 66-percent effective over the same period. However, they were only 33-percent effective three weeks after the first dose. Health Secretary Matt Hancock described the outcome as "groundbreaking," while PHE said it expects to see even higher levels of effectiveness against hospital admission and death. "This new evidence is groundbreaking and proves just how valuable our COVID-19 vaccination programme is in protecting the people we love," Hancock said. Earlier this month, the World Health Organization (WHO) dubbed the B1617.2 strain a "variant of global concern".

## Yemeni forces shoot down Saudi drone

## WEB DESK

SAN'A: Yemeni army forces have shot down an unmanned aerial vehicle belonging to the Saudi-led military coalition over Yemen's northern province of al-Jawf. Spokesman for Yemeni Armed Forces Brigadier General Yahya Saree said air defense forces targeted the Chinese-made CH-4 combat drone with a surface-to-air missile which has not been unveiled yet. The aircraft was on a reconnaissance mission over al-Maraziq area in the Khabbwa ash Sha'af district of the province early Sunday morning, he said. It would not be a "picnic" for anyone to enter the Yemeni airspace because the country's armed forces protect it, Saree said. The CH-4 drone has a 3,500- to 5,000-kilometer range and a 30- to 40-hour endurance. It is capable of carrying six missiles and a payload of up to 250 to 345 kilogram. The unmanned aerial vehicle can fire air-to-ground missiles from an altitude of 5,000 meters, enabling it to stay outside of effective range of most anti-aircraft systems.

## Covid in India warning for third world countries: IMF

In its report, the IMF said that an urgent focus should be to eliminate constraints on cross-border exports of critical raw materials and finished vaccines. Free cross-border flow of vaccine inputs and supplies is essential for the world to achieve its vaccination targets without delay

## DNA

NEW DELHI: Observing that the ongoing "catastrophic" second wave of Covid-19 in India is a sign that the worst may be yet to come, the IMF has said that the situation in the country is a warning of the possible events in low- and middle-income nations that have seemingly escaped the pandemic till now. A report co-authored by International Monetary Fund (IMF) economist Ruchir Agarwal and its Chief Economist Gita Gopinath also said that under the business-as-usual scenario, the vaccine coverage in India is expected to remain under 35 percent of the population by the end of 2021. "The ongoing catastrophic second wave in India, following a terrible wave in Brazil, is a sign the worst may be yet to come in the developing world," it said. While India's health system held up fairly well in the first wave, this time its health

system is so overwhelmed that many people are dying because of a lack of medical supplies like oxygen, hospital beds, and medical care, the report said. "India is a warning of possible events in other low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that so far have seemingly escaped the pandemic, including in Africa," it said. For India, the report said, current bilateral purchases of vaccine plus coverage from COVAX will cover about 25 percent of its population by the first half of 2022. To get to 60 percent coverage, India will need to immediately place sufficient vaccine orders of about 1 billion doses through contracts that incentivise investment in additional capacity and augmentation of the supply chain.



"In this context, the authorities' recently announced financing of about USD 600 million to the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech to boost production capacity in the near term is a welcome step," the report said, adding that authorities estimate that two billion doses will be available by the end of 2021. Efforts should be made to ensure that the projected production capacity will materialise without delay, including through securing the supply chain for raw materials—supported by international efforts to eliminate export restrictions on all critical inputs, it added. In its report, the IMF said that an urgent focus should be to eliminate constraints on cross-border exports of critical raw materials and finished vaccines.

Free cross-border flow of vaccine inputs and supplies is essential for the world to achieve its vaccination targets without delay. Governments are taking steps to relax such constraints on raw materials, it said, citing the recent pledge by the US to facilitate greater access of critical raw material to Indian manufacturers after severe shortages emerged. However, there is scope for greater multilateral action on this front, as significant constraints still remain, it said. The IMF report said India continues to face production bottlenecks, including due to ongoing shortages of critical raw materials, suggesting the need for further relaxation of de facto export restrictions under the US Defence Production Act. Despite such near-term constraints, as of mid-May 2021, the authorities estimate that over two billion doses will be available by the end of the year based on company-level supply projections publicly shared by officials.



## Briefs

Bilawal  
slams PM  
Imran over  
inflation

NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday claimed that Prime Minister Imran Khan will also flee the country like other lawmakers, including former prime minister Shaukat Aziz and former president Pervez Musharraf.

Addressing a press conference, the PPP leader alleged that the prime minister is "leading the country towards destruction in pursuit of Musharraf's goal."

"The poverty rate was 50% during the rule of Imran Khan's benefactor dictator Pervez Musharraf," Bilawal said, adding that massive loans are being taken from abroad on strict terms which will increase the economic woes of the country. PM Imran Khan's cabinet is squandering money from the national exchequer, he Bilawal said.

"Imran Khan's crime is not only inflation but also patronising the mafia that is causing inflation in the country," Bilawal said while lashing out, adding that the premier is accusing others but he should "take a look at his own deeds first".

Work on  
Nokundi-  
Mashkel  
Road started

## BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Lt. General (retd) Asim Saleem Bajwa on Sunday said that work on 103km Nokundi-Mashkel Road has been started. In a post on social-networking platform Twitter, the CPEC chairman said that the detailed design of Mashkel-Panjgur Road (200 km) in process.

He said the entire remote region of Balochistan would be opened by connecting N-40 with N-85 and M-8 (Western Route of CPEC) linking the Chagai-Nokundi Sector with Gwadar.

The Chairman said Gwadar port was becoming a hub of economic activities under the mega project of CPEC.

Meanwhile, an official of CPEC Authority said that the development of roads in South Balochistan was a key priority of the government to improve connectivity of Gwadar with North. He informed that about 60 percent construction work of Basima-Khuzdar road had been completed while construction of Hoshab Awaran road had also been started.

"Prime Minister's vision of uplifting remote areas especially South Balochistan is being realized," he added.

SBP backs  
NAC's  
estimates  
about GDP  
growth

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) Saturday said that the data released by the National Accounts Committee (NAC) on Friday about Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was approved unanimously and had the full backing of the SBP.

The provisional estimate for FY21 growth of 3.94 percent released by the National Accounts Committee (NAC) yesterday reflects the strong economic recovery underway since the beginning of this fiscal year, which has been highlighted in recent monetary policy statements and quarterly reports of the SBP, said a press release issued by the Central Bank.

It added the SBP had raised its own growth forecast in March on the basis of buoyant economic activity reflected in different high frequency data. — APP

## 'Pakistan seeking investment through economic diplomacy'

## NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Pakistan is focusing on promoting economic diplomacy to attract foreign investment as part of the efforts to make the country economically secure, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Saturday.

"We need strong economy for our effective foreign policy," he told Pakistani-American entrepreneurs and Professional at the Consulate General of Pakistan in New York.

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Munir Akram and Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Asad Majeed Khan were present on the occasion.

The foreign minister said the Pakistani government was providing all possible facilities, including e-visas, to foreign investors and welcomed overseas Pakistani entrepreneurs and companies to invest in Pakistan.

"The process of economic development is not possible without your cooperation," Qureshi said, pointing out that this year marked a historic increase in re-

FM concludes successful  
visit to New York: FO

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has concluded a highly successful visit to New York.

According to Foreign Office spokesperson, during the visit, Shah Mahmood Qureshi attended the special meeting of the United Nations General Assembly on Palestine and held meetings with his counterparts from other countries.

He also held talks with senior UN leadership on the situation in Palestine; and interacted with the members of the Pakistani community; representatives of Pakistani and international media; as well as members of the U.S. Congress.

The Foreign Minister reached New York from Turkey on 19th of this month along with the Foreign Ministers of Palestine, Turkey, and Tunisia. After his arrival, he hosted a working dinner of the Foreign Ministers and representatives of the OIC countries to consult and make collective efforts to halt Israeli

mittances for which he thanked Pakistanis abroad.

"We want to establish partnership with Pakistanis abroad," he said.

"When Prime Minister Imran Khan started work on the Shaukat Khanum project and Namal University, most of the

money was given by Pakistanis abroad."

In the second phase of the Pakistan-China Economic Corridor, he said Pakistan is working with China on the development of the agricultural sector as the South Asian region faces a food security problem

But, he said, Pakistan has the resources, the fertile land and ability to meet its food needs and those of some other countries.

In this regard, the foreign minister said efforts were being made to bring the country agricultural research up to the world stand-

ards.

After years of setbacks, he said, "Today our textile industry is fully operational." Modern machinery had been imported to upgrade the industry.

"We have decided to give the right to vote to Pakistanis abroad so that they have the power to make decisions through the political system of Pakistan."

"For us," Qureshi said, "those Pakistanis who are working abroad and sending money home are very important."

He commended the good work being done by Consul General Ayesha Ali, who hosted the event in which a large number of businessmen participated.

"Where mistakes are reprimanded, good performance will be commended."

Pakistan, he said, was working for peace in Afghanistan as it will ensure development and stability in the region where projects like CASA 1000 are being implemented

In conclusion, the Foreign Minister thanked the American-Pakistani businessmen for their full cooperation and assured them of all possible business facilities from the government.

Soldier  
martyred in  
cross border  
firing from  
Afghanistan

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI, A soldier of Pakistan Army on Saturday embraced martyrdom while thwarting a terrorist attack on military post in North Waziristan. The terrorists from inside Afghanistan across the International Pak-Afghan Border, opened fire on a military post in North Waziristan District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. The Pakistan Army troops responded to the terrorists' attack in a befitting manner, it said.

However, during exchange of fire, Sepoy Umar Daraz, age 32 years, resident of Jhang, received a bullet injury and embraced shahadat.

The Armed Forces spokesperson maintained that Pakistan has consistently asked Afghanistan to ensure effective management and control on their side of the Pak-Afghan Border. Pakistan strongly condemns the continuous use of Afghan soil by terrorists for activities against Pakistan, and the ISPR in its statement concluded.

Chaudhry  
Nisar to  
take oath as  
Punjab MPA

ABID RAZA



LAHORE: Former interior minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan on Sunday announced to take oath as Member of Punjab Provincial Assembly (MPA) on Monday (today) during the session of the provincial assembly.

In his statement, Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said he has decided to take oath as MPA after consultation with the people of his constituency.

The senior politician said development does not mean any change in stance and narrative about the 2018 general elections. "The move is meant to control the political situation." Chaudhry Nisar had earlier denied reports that he will take the oath, saying that he had no such intention and that there was no truth in the rumors circulating in certain quarters.

Bahrain  
lifts ban on  
Pakistani  
flights

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Bahrain has permitted flights from Pakistan easing the previous travel ban on the entry of Pakistani passengers to Bahrain due to surge of coronavirus cases.

In a fresh and revised travel ban list, Bahrain has eased the travel restrictions on Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal.

Passengers coming to Bahrain are required to submit a negative COVID-19 test report prior 48 hours. As per new rules, passengers will have to stay in Bahrain's government-sanctioned hotels or private residences for 10 days.

Passengers travelling from Pakistan to Bahrain must submit proof of hotel booking and residence permit before boarding.

Bahraini nationals, work visa holders, airline crew and military personnel will be exempted.

Indonesian Embassy, E-commerce  
sign MoU to increase trade

The platform will connect exporters and importers from Indonesia and Pakistan and allow them to explore untapped trade potential in various fields such as textile, food processing, agricultural products, infrastructural development, chemical & pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, iron & steel

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD - The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad signed an MoU with Ecommerce Pvt. Ltd. Pakistan to further explore collaboration to facilitate increased trade between Indonesia and Pakistan by providing a platform for business communities of the two countries to get more information which may help to increase commercial transactions.

The platform will connect exporters and importers from Indonesia and Pakistan and allow them to explore untapped trade potential in various fields such as textile, food processing, agricultural products, infrastructural development, chemical & pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, iron & steel.

Speaking on the occasion,



ambassador Adam Tugio stated that the Embassy will convene series of events to promote trade, tourism and investment.

This series of activities will complementary to cultural diplomacy that being

conducted by the Embassy in collaboration with universities.

He hoped that such initiatives would enhance people-to-people contacts and increase trade volume which amounted to \$2.5 billion last year.

Ambassador Adam Tugio also added business communities need to look at Indonesia and Pakistan beyond bilateral relations as they serve as a trade gateway to each respective region that collectively has a nearly 850 million population.

Muhammad Uzair Nizam Co-founder of Ecombri.com underscored that Ecombri.com is the Pakistan's first & largest Online plus Offline B2B platform that can potentially simplify the procurement process for buyers & sellers with Online plus Physical interaction and information access.

UNSC calls for 'full  
adherence' to cease-fire

DNA

NEW YORK: The United Nations Security Council has called for the "full adherence" to a cease-fire between Israel and Hamas-led Palestinian fighters in the bombs-battered Gaza Strip.

The 15-member council reached the required full consensus Saturday afternoon to issue an official statement after earlier attempts at a shared declaration were blocked by the United States during the 11-day conflict in which 242 Palestinians killed, including 23 girls, 43 boys, 38 women and 138 men.

In the press statement, the 15-member Council welcomed the announcement of the ceasefire and gave recognition to the diplomatic mediation efforts played by Egypt, other nations in the

## UAE ready to mediate

ABDU DHABI: The United Arab Emirates stands ready to facilitate peace efforts between Israel and the Palestinians, the UAE state news agency reported on Sunday, citing Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan.

Sheikh Mohamed's comments came in a telephone call with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, expressing support for

region, the UN, the Middle East Quartet "and other international partners".

The Ministry of Health in Gaza, reported that 1,948 Palestinians had been injured, including 610 children, and nearly 400 women.

According to the UN, 12 Is-

raelis had been killed by Palestinian rocket, or other fire — or when running for shelter during strikes.

In their statement, the members of the Security Council said they "mourned the loss of civilian lives, resulting from the violence."

India Covid  
tally rises to  
26,530,132

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally rose to 26,530,132 with 240,842 new cases registered in the past 24 hours, said the federal Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Sunday. Besides, as many as 3,741 deaths since Saturday morning took the death toll to 299,266. After two days, the number of daily deaths has once again fell below 4,000 mark.

There are still 2,805,399 active cases in the country, with a decrease of 118,001 cases in the past 24 hours. The number of daily active cases has been on the decline over the past few days, after a continuous surge since mid-April.

A total of 23,425,467 people has been cured and discharged from hospitals so far across the country.

Wheat crisis looming despite  
the record wheat production

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Vice chairman Flour Mills Association punjab Sh. Kashif Shabir said that most of the flour mills situated in Punjab as well as the federal capital do not have wheat.

They cited different reasons including the permit system and shortage of supply of wheat.

They said that Punjab has achieved the purchase tar-

get of 3.5 million tonnes of wheat during the current season however flour mills are facing severe difficulties in procuring wheat.

40 percent of flour mills in Islamabad and Rawalpindi are closed besides flour mills in the twin cities are facing difficulty in purchasing wheat directly from farmers, they added.

They also informed that flour mills are purchasing wheat at Rs 2,040 per 40kg while the government rate is Rs 1,800 per 40kg.

The present government has introduced a new system to control wheat supply and demand and in this regard, permits have also been issued to flour mills.

However, the Punjab government has refused to recognize the permit issued to flour mills due to which flour mills are in shortage of supply of wheat.

On the other hand, farmers have also stored wheat instead of selling it due to which not only the prices of wheat have increased

but also mills do not have wheat in flour mills.

They feared that flour prices are expected to rise across the country after the rise in wheat prices in the open market.

In case of an increase in the price of flour, the price of tandoori bread is also likely to increase, they added.

They requested the food department of Punjab to abolish the permit system and allow flour mills to buy wheat from all over Punjab.

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