



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, May 25, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

China in discussion with third parties on CPEC extension

Detailed News On Page-08

Agreed to boost cooperation with the US

Detailed News On Page-01



Shahid Afridi ruled out of HBL PSL 6

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Blinken in Mideast post Gaza attacks

DNA

WASHINGTON: The United States' Secretary of State Antony Blinken departs Monday for a Mideast trip. "Secretary Blinken will meet with Israeli leaders about our ironclad commitment to Israel's security," US President Joe Biden said in a statement. "He will continue our administration's efforts to rebuild ties to, and support for, the Palestinian people and leaders, after years of neglect."

PM covering up economic disaster with lies

NAZIR SYIAL

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan People Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that Imran Khan is trying to cover up the economic catastrophe with persistent lies as marketing of chickens, eggs and buffaloes cannot improve the country's economy. A statement issued by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari states that Imran Khan's government used the old census data to depict higher per capita income. As long as there are experiments like Imran Khan in the country, Pakistan cannot make progress.

Hajj: Pak in contact with KSA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has not yet taken a decision about the number of pilgrims who will perform Hajj this year, SAPM on Religious Harmony Allama Tahir Ashrafi said. He said in a statement that the Kingdom's health ministry proposed that 60,000 pilgrims be allowed to perform the annual ritual this year. Allama Ashrafi said the Government is in contact with Saudi officials over the issue of inclusion of Chinese vaccines in the Kingdom's list of approved vaccines for pilgrims.

Exams from June 5 under strict SOPs

No promotions without exams this year for students; summer vacation will be shorter, decide education ministers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to take examinations of all students this year under Coronavirus SOPs. This important decision was taken at a meeting of inter-provincial education ministers chaired by Federal Minister for Education Shafiqat Mahmood. It was decided that the examinations of 10 and 12 classes will be held in the third week of June. The minister said the NCOC meeting has decided not to promote the student this year and exams will be conducted from June 20. The NCOC meeting decided that summer vacation will be shorter this year and the decision will be taken by provinces. It has been decided that the 10th and 12th class examinations will be held in the third week of June. In case of delay in results, the universities will admit students on the basis of Provisional Certificate and the decisions will be made by the provinces. The Inter-Ministerial Conference of National Command and Control Centre (NCOC) was chaired by Federal Minister for Education Shafiqat Mahmood and

Continued on Page 06

Single curriculum for Grade Pre-1 to V, NA informed

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed today that the Single National Curriculum for Grade Pre-1 to V will be implemented throughout the country from August this year. Responding to a question during Question Hour, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Profession Training Wajiha Akram said all the federating units have been taken on board in preparing the SNC. She said in the second phase, the SNC for Grade 6 to 8 will be implemented from next academic year, while for Grade 9 to 12 be implemented from academic year 2023-24. Wajiha Akram said SNC is aimed at providing equal learning opportunities to all classes of people; besides, ensuring national harmony and cohesion to build one nation. Responding to a calling attention, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs said that it has, in principle, been decided to grant Technical Allowance to the registered engineers.

US acknowledges Pak role for Afghan peace

WASHINGTON: Pakistan has played an important role in supporting the peace process in Afghanistan, according to a top Pentagon official. Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Affairs David F Helvey made this statement while addressing lawmakers of the Senate Armed Services Committee in the US on Saturday. He was responding to a question from Senator Joe Manchin, a West Virginia Democrat, about his "assessment of Pakistan" and its intelligence agencies

Pakistan, US NSAs agree to boost cooperation

GENEVA: The national security advisers of Pakistan and the United States of America met in Geneva, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said Monday. "Both sides had a positive conversation on a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues of mutual interest and agreed to advance practical cooperation on these issues," the statement added. Prime Minister Imran Khan had appointed Yusuf as his NSA last week. According to a May 17 notification issued by the Cabinet Division, Dr Yusuf would, in his capacity as the NSA, enjoy the status of a federal minister. Newly appointed National Security Adviser Moeed Yusuf, in a tweet, said he was pleased to meet US NSA Jake Sullivan. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ikram Bin Mohammad Ibrahim, High Commissioner of Malaysia called on Leader of the House in Senate, Senator Dr Shahzad Waseem. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: DG Inter Services Intelligence Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed receives Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa at ISI Headquarters. — DNA

PM, miltop brass briefed over security

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday along with his cabinet members and top military officials visited the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Secretariat, where they were given a briefing on the national and regional security situation. Director General ISI Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed welcomed the prime minister and other dignitaries on their arrival. The prime minister was accompanied by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Defence Minister Pervaiz Khattak, Information Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza, Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi and Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar.

Pak-Malaysia vow to meet trade potential

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem during meeting with Ikram Mohammad Ibrahim Ambassador of Malaysia has emphasized to further enhance bilateral trade, investment and tourism between Pakistan and Malaysia. He said that the present state of bilateral economic ties does not commensurate with the potential and there is need to explore possibility of co-operation in diverse fields.

Continued on Page 06

'Electoral reforms vital for fair elections'

"We want to hold elections on which no one could raise a finger", says Fawad

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Monday said that the introduction of electoral reforms were imperative to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections in the country. "We want to hold elections on which no one could raise a finger and the electoral reforms will guarantee fair elections", he expressed these views while talking to a delegation of District Bar Rawalpindi,



Lahore High Court Bar Rawalpindi Bench, Punjab Bar Council, and High Court Bar Multan Bench. The Minister said that the government was well aware of the lawyers' problems and it was the top priority of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI) government to solve the problems of the lawyer community. Fawad said his family was being known in the areas for doing politics or for adopting the lawyer profession. The minister said that professional loans would be disbursed among the lawyer community while the legal community below the age of 45 years would be given easy loans up to Rs. 1 million under the Kamyaj Jawan Program for the construction of their chambers.

Continued on Page 06

Interpol seeks details of 'wanted' Belgian citizens

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Interpol in a letter to Karachi terror actlice and the CTD has sought details of the Belgian citizens involved in terror activities in Karachi. Interpol Brussels chapter, in a letter to Additional I.G. Police Karachi and DIG Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) via the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), has sought the list of the citizens of Belgium involved in terrorism in Karachi, sources said. According to sources, Belgian authorities had sought details of the terror suspects from the Interpol. It is to be mentioned here that the CTD Karachi DIG Omar Shahid Hamid had wrote a letter for arrest of the Belgian nationals involved in anti-state activities in Karachi.

It had requested the foreign ministry to share the Joint Interrogation Team (JIT) report of alleged Muttahida Qaumi Movement London (MQM-L) terrorist Wahid Hussain alias Guddu with the Belgium Embassy. "Wahid Hussain alias Guddu is holding dual nationality of Pakistan and Belgium", the letter read. Wahid Hussain had disclosed names of his associates including Arif Ajakia, Saleem Belgium and others in committing various crimes, according to CTD. The CTD in its letter further said that the terror network comprises of 30 to 40 members. "Those staying in Belgium also collecting funds from the Pakistani community, which used for terrorism acts in Karachi," according to the letter.

Continued on Page 06

PPP, ANP urged to rejoin PDM

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif hosted a dinner in honor of the parliamentary leaders of the opposition parties. Shahbaz Sharif offered all the opposition parties to launch an anti-government movement. PPP's Yousuf Raza Gilani, Raza Pervaz Ashraf and Sherry Rehman attended the dinner. Amir Haider Hoti, Maulana Asad Mahmood, Allama Sajid Mir, Mohsin Dawar and other leaders also attended the dinner. The overall political situation of the country was discussed at the dinner hosted by Shahbaz Sharif. According to sources, PPP and ANP were invited to rejoin the Opposition alliance, PDM, to which both the parties assured to make a decision after discussion within parties.

Inside...

- Pak plays lead role in shacking world conscious over Palestine — Page 02
- Pak Navy, RCCI mull joint manufacturing ventures — Page 03
- Regional cooperation on pandemic response urged — Page 04
- Cease-fire is no excuse for the world to look away — Page 05
- West weighs action after Belarus diverts plane — Page 06
- As US pulls back in MENA, China, Russia may step in — Page 07
- Bosnian envoy, AJK President for more people to people links — Page 08

Govt committed to complete CPEC projects: PM

The Chinese Ambassador extended President Xi Jinping's invitation to the Prime Minister to participate in the 'CPC and World Political Parties Summit', to be held in July 2021

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Nong Rong, Ambassador of China in Pakistan, called on Prime Minister Imran Khan, on Monday. The subjects covered during the meeting included Pakistan-China bilateral relations, including CPEC; 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties; vaccine cooperation; and high-level bilateral exchanges. The Prime Minister deeply appreciated Chinese leadership and conveyed his warm greetings for President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang. Emphasising the time-tested "All-Weather Strategic Co-operative Partnership", the Prime Minister reaffirmed Pakistan's deep commitment to further enhance and broaden Pakistan-China ties. The Prime Minister recalled his earlier

telephone conversation with Premier Li Keqiang, on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic



ties, which is the reflection of excellent cooperation between Pakistan and China. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the high-

est priority accorded by the Government to CPEC and the firm commitment to expeditiously complete CPEC projects, which will open up tremendous opportunities for increased economic growth and development in the region and beyond. The Chinese Ambassador extended President Xi Jinping's invitation to the Prime Minister to participate in the 'CPC and World Political Parties Summit', to be held in July 2021. The Prime Minister graciously accepted the invitation to attend the virtual event. Ambassador Nong Rong reassured that China will continue to firmly support Pakistan in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and accords high priority to help address Pakistan's requirements. It was agreed to continue with the momentum of high-level bilateral exchanges to further solidify strategic cooperative gains between the two countries.

No US military bases in Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Responding to media queries, the Spokesperson stated that there was no U.S. military or air base in Pakistan; nor was any such proposal envisaged. Any speculation on this account was baseless and irresponsible and should be avoided. The Spokesperson added that Pakistan and the U.S. have a framework of cooperation in terms of Air Lines of Communication (ALOC) and Ground Lines of Communication (GLOC) in place since 2001. No new agreement has been made in this regard.

Briefs

16 deaths,
802 corona
cases in
Punjab

LAHORE: As many as 802 new corona cases were reported in Punjab on Monday while the pandemic claimed 16 more lives in the last 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 9,784.

According to the data, shared by a spokesperson for the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), the number of coronavirus cases in the province have reached 334,760.

The P&SHD confirmed that 290 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, one in Kasur, 18 in Sheikhupura, 13 each in Nankana Sahib and Rawalpindi, 23 in Jhelum, 18 in Chakwal, 45 in Gujranwala, nine in Hafizabad, 13 in Mandi Bahauddin, three in Sialkot, one in Narowal, 19 in Gujrat, 69 in Faisalabad, one in Toba Tek Singh, two in Chiniot, two in Jhang, five in Sargodha, nine in Mianwali, three in Bhakkar, 86 in Multan, seven in Vehari, three in Khanewal, 16 in Lodhran, 16 in Muzaffargarh, 10 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 19 in Layyah, one in Rajanpur, 10 in Rahimyar Khan, 45 in Bahawalpur, 13 in Bahawalnagar, two in Okara and 17 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Sahiwal district during the last 24 hours. — APP

Kashmir Bar
urges world
to focus on
Kashmir

DNA

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, High Court Bar Association has thanked the international community for acknowledging the sufferings of Palestinian people and timely intervention to seek an immediate end to the human sufferings in Palestine.

The Bar Association Spokesman, GN Shaheen Advocate, in a statement issued in Srinagar said, "It is a welcome step in right direction of durable peace in the Middle East. The international community must similarly focus on Kashmir to seek end of human sufferings in this part of the globe and secure settlement of the Kashmir dispute with same political will and diplomacy." The statement said that the sufferings of the Palestinians are brought before the world community but it is equally important to focus on the human sufferings in Kashmir. The Bar pointed out that because of curbs on social media and state repression the sufferings of the Kashmiri people could not be known to the world community.

Single
curriculum
for grade 1-5

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Profession Training Wajih Akram on Monday told the National Assembly that under the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan single national curriculum for grade 1 to 5 would be implemented across the country from August 2021.

Replying to various supplementary questions during question hour, she said that all the federating units have been taken on board in preparing the single curriculum. Model textbooks have been developed for these classes and the provinces were asked to adopt these books or develop their own as per these textbooks, she added.

Ms. Akram said in the second phase, the single curriculum for Grade 6 to 8 would be implemented from next academic year, while for Grade 9 to 12 be implemented from academic year 2023-24. She said the single curriculum was aimed at providing equal learning opportunities to all classes of people, besides, ensuring national harmony and cohesion to build one nation. To another question, she said the Federal Directorate of Education has initiated to execute two projects with a vision to integrate technology in Public Sector Education.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan meets Delegation of Islamic Ideology Council. — DNA

Pak plays lead role in shacking
world conscious over Palestine

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Serious and sincere efforts of Pakistan and Turkey coupled with unity among Muslim Ummah have forced Israel to announce unilateral ceasefire in Gaza.

Addressing a rally organized by the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) to express solidarity with the Palestinian brethren, Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed President FCCI said that Pakistan has played a lead role in motivating Muslim Ummah and shaking the world conscious over the genocide of Palestinians including innocent children and women. He said that international pressure forced Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu to immediately announce a ceasefire in the Gaza strip.

He lamented that Israeli jets have flattened the Gaza during two week long pounding and indiscriminate firing. He said that a large number of Palestinians including women and children were martyred while thousands sustained fatal and serious injuries. "The continuous fight was brewing a human tragedy in this region as the people living in the direct hit-zone were deprived of all basic amenities including most essential health facilities. He said that this situation forced Muslims and other communities across the globe to condemn Israeli barbarism", he said and added that in this connection hundreds of protest rallies were arranged throughout the world to express solidarity with the innocent and unarmed Palestinians who were being expelled from their own land.



Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed said that the inhabitants of Kashmir were also facing a similar situation as the valley has been converted into the world's biggest open Jail with no basic facilities. He said that the fallout of Indian atrocities in Kashmir has turned this country into the graveyard of corona patients and this situation may further aggravate if India fails to give fundamental rights to the Kashmiri people. He said that India should immediately stop aggression or it will be dismembered because of its own inhuman acts. Representing the business community of Faisalabad, Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed said that Pakistan is against all types of suppressive measures in any part of the county as these are an open threat to global peace. He further said that the international community must realize that they are unintentionally promoting hate and confrontation by denying rights to the poor and helpless people whose basic and fundamental rights have been usurped by the influential powers. "This situation is also detrimental to the world economic system", he said and added that the world must make conscious efforts at all levels for a durable peace by adopting the "live and let other live" poli-

cy. He said that the UN has already adopted a resolution proposing two state systems in Palestine. Similarly the Kashmir issue should also be resolved by giving them the fundamental right of franchise. He said that the nation must keep up the current tempo so that the Kashmir problem could also be resolved without any further delay.

Senior Vice President Chaudhary Talat Mahmood, Rana Ikramullah, Chaudhary Muhammad Nawaz, Engineer Babar Shehzad, Kashif Zia, Arif Ehsan Malik, Ghulam Hussain and other business leaders also participated in this rally and raised slogans in favor of Palestinians people. Later Haji Abid prayed for immediate resolution of the most chronic issues of Palestine and Kashmir.

Several marriage halls
sealed over violations

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Several marriage halls on Monday have been sealed in Lahore over violation of coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs). According to details, several managers have also been arrested for not adopting precautionary measures to avoid further spread of the virus. The district administration has told that the marriage halls were sealed for not ensuring implementation on the SOPs.

On the other hand, Pakistan has reported 57 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged

to 903,599. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 20,308 on Monday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 3,060 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Punjab remains the worst-hit province in terms of deaths and cases followed by Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Till now 9,784 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab 4,920 in Sindh, 3,950 in KP, 745 in Islamabad, 532 in Azad Kashmir, 270 in Balochistan, and 107 in GB.

Furthermore, 334,760 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Punjab, 309,647 in Sindh, 129,883 in KP.



LAHORE: Former Interior minister Chaudhary Nisar Ahmad Khan talking to media. — DNA Photo By Shahbaz Sindhu

PTI believes in freedom of
press, says Dr Firdous Awan

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to the Punjab Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Monday said that media freedom is one of the most important pillars of democracy and the PTI government has tabled the 'Protection of Journalists and Media Professionals Bill 2021', in the National Assembly. Talking to the media while inaugurating the corona vaccination centre for the journalist community at the Rawalpindi Press Club, she said that under the leadership of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, the Punjab government was taking practical steps for the welfare of the journalist community and accelerating the vaccination process to eradicate COVID-19 all over Punjab.



The SACM informed that the vaccination of journalists have been started in Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sahiwal and Rawalpindi district while it would be carried out at all 36 districts of the province. Dr Firdous said the country's economy was moving forward on the right path and our major crops achieved record pro-

duction. She said that wheat production has increased by 8.1 per cent while sugarcane has also witnessed an increase of 22 per cent this year.

Dr Firdous said that a 25 per cent special allowance would be given to provincial employees from June as the government was committed for providing maximum facilities to the people with available resources. Commenting on the oath-taking of Chaudhary Nisar Ali Khan, she said there is no threat to Chief Minister Punjab or PTI government due to the entry of Ch Nisar in the provincial assembly, adding a new group would emerge from within PML N in the assembly. Answering a query, she reiterated there was no political victimization in the country as Prime Minister Imran Khan believed in indiscriminate and across the board accountability according to the law.

Corrupt provincial
govt ruined Sindh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr. Shahbaz Gill said on Monday that the incompetent and corrupt provincial government of mafia has ruined Sindh province. In his reaction to statement of Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, he said instead of serving the people, the job of the corrupt and incompetent provincial ministers is to deliver money to Bilawal House, said a press release.

He said that the stability and growth on the economic front and the performance of the federal government were an issue for the "Parchi" (receipt) chairman PPP. Dr. Shahbaz Gill highlighted the performance of federal government and said that

20 billion US dollar current account deficit has been converted into a US dollar 959 million surplus, while the trade volume of Pakistan Stock Exchange is also at record 4-year high.

He said Pakistan Stock Exchange has become the best performer in Asia by crossing the bench mark of 47,000 points. Similarly, he said the tax revenue has also witnessed 6% increase and remittances by 24% in the last seven months. He asked Bilawal to get out of federal government phobia and have mercy on the people of Sindh. Special Assistant said there are daily reports of deaths of children from Sindh due to diseases like hunger, AIDS and measles but unfortunately the rulers of Sindh are in deep slumber and were not paying any heed to the issues of the people and development of the province.

Military operation to
launch in Katcha area

KARACHI: The Sindh government has given go-ahead for a military operation against bandit gangs in Shikarpur's katcha area, a provincial minister said on Monday. Provincial minister Mir Shabbir Bijarani has stated that the military troops and the Rangers personnel will launch an operation against bandits in katcha area along with the Sindh police. Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has granted approval to the anti-bandit op-

eration in the katcha area, Bijarani said. "A large-scale operation will be launched against outlaws in the area adjacent to Shikarpur," the minister further said. According to sources, controversial tribal chieftain Tegho Khan Teghani has been arrested in Karachi after an attack on police in which two policemen were martyred. "The police arrested Teghani clan chieftain from his residence in Karachi", according to sources. — DNA

FESCO
issues
shutdown
programme

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown programme for Wednesday for necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the programme, power supply from Muazzam Shah feeder emanating from 132-KV Chiniot grid station and Pakka Anna feeder originating from 132-KV Nia Lahore grid station will remain suspended from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. while Fakhar Abad, Wapda City, Farooq Spinning, Rafiq Spinning, Forest Park and Lathianwala feeders emanating from 132-KV Khurarianwala grid station, Barnala, Sultan Nagar, Jhumra City, Parco and Pakka Dalla feeders originating from 132-KV Chak Jhumra grid station will observe shutdown from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on Wednesday (May 26).

Similarly, electricity supply from Punj Pulli Road, Taj Colony, Khayaban Garden, Grace Tex and CTM-II feeders emanating from 132-KV University grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. whereas Chhuni Rehan, Sanghara, Wallah and Riaz Abad feeders originating from 132-KV Lalian grid station will observe load shedding from 9 a.m. to 12:30 noon on May 26.

Meanwhile, power supply from Bakkar Mandi, Lakkhar Mandi, Liaquat Abad, Ali Hosing, Khalid Abad, Nazim Abad, Sadhar, Gulshan-e-Hayat and ABC Road feeders emanating from 132-KV Jhang Road grid station will also remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. while Jalal Abad, Naradada and Sain Wazir Ali feeders originating from 132-KV Samundri grid station will observe shutdown from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Wednesday (May 26, 2021). — APP

NTDC starts
restoration of
transmission
towers

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The National Transmission & Dispatch Company (NTDC) has launched restoration work of the two transmission towers, collapsed in Jamshoro in a recent storm, quoting a spokesperson.

Two transmission pylons of 500 KV high power transmission lines were collapsed in Jamshoro in a recent dust storm, a spokesperson of the NTDC said.

The repair work has been initiated under the supervision of NTDC engineer Muhammad Ayub. The collapse of the towers was resulted in an outage of 1200 megawatts of electricity from the system, spokesperson said. The repair staff has been directed to complete the repair work within next four days, said the spokesperson. A severe dust storm accompanied by a bout of rain lashed Hyderabad and other districts of Sindh on Saturday.

Trees, electricity poles, and signboards were uprooted in various parts of Hyderabad while strong winds blew away corrugated roofs of many houses in various cities of Sindh including Hyderabad.

Power supply to several towns in the area was disrupted following the dust storm. The Ministry of Power Division in a statement said that several towers of NTDC's Matiari-Port Qasim 500KV transmission line have been damaged due to the storm in Jamshoro and adjoining areas.

CPO holds
open court

FAISALABAD: City Police Officer (CPO) Captain (Retired) Muhammad Sohail Chaudhry arranged an open court (Khuli Kachehri) in his office on Monday and listened to public complaints. A large number of people were present in the open court who presented their applications. The CPO listened to all the complaints and issued on-spot directives for redressal of the same on priority basis. He also directed the officers of police department to evolve comprehensive strategy for arrest of criminals and provision of full safety and security to the lives and properties of the people. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong met Hamad Azhar, federal minister for energy. Both sides agreed to enhance smooth operation of CPEC energy projects, and explore new opportunities of cooperation in the energy field. — DNA

Briefs**Edu. Ministry, Tech Valley to make Schools digital**

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Federal Directorate of Education, Google and Tech Valley to make Islamabad the benchmark of digitally enabled government schools.

The initiative has been taken under the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan of 'Digital Pakistan' and following the directions of Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mehmood.

Under the first phase of this initiative, Tech Valley would install Google Work Space based on Cloud Based Infrastructure in 200 male and female schools of Islamabad Capital Territory. While, the Google would provide tools to these schools for distance education along with chrome book.

In second phase, all teachers would be imparted virtual training for effectively use and take benefit from these tools.

The aim of this step of Ministry of Federal Education was to ensure the professional development of teachers and students.

Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education Wajiha Qamar has termed this initiative a milestone in the history. — APP

PNCA announces result of talent hunt

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) on Monday announced the result of week-24 talent hunt music edition. The first jury award was bagged by Aqdas Hashmi, second by Anil Mattu and third by Hashaash Yousaf. PNCA Director General Dr. Fouzia Saeed has announced the results in online video on PNCA official page of the council. She said PNCA would also provide opportunities to the winners and special nominees in its upcoming concerts and music functions. PNCA has started the programme for the promotion of classical and semi-classical to folk, modern tunes and pop singing among the younger generation and to groom their hidden talent at the National Art Gallery. Renowned artists in different specialized music fields were taking auditions of registered participants at PNCA online.

PTA for consent of consumers before VAS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Monday directed Cellular Mobile Operators (CMOs) to send mandatory confirmation messages to their consumers to get explicit consent for opting in or activation of Value Added Services. CMOs have further been directed to submit compliance report within three weeks from issuance of the order, said a news release issued here.

PTA has issued these orders after receiving consumers' complaints that Value Added Services (VAS), including Third Party Content/games, were sometimes activated by mobile operators without prior consent of consumers. PTA has taken serious notice of such complaints as activation of any Value Added Services without explicit consent of consumers is violation of Clause 9 (3) (vii) of "Telecom Consumers Protection Regulations, 2009". This step is expected to provide great relief to mobile consumers. PTA is committed to protect the interests of users of telecommunication services in Pakistan.

Pak Navy, RCCI mull joint manufacturing ventures

Capt. Asif Maqsood said that the Pakistan Navy wanted complete indigenous production of frigates and its other systems that would also be beneficial for the local industry. He said that the local firms with good capability and expertise in electrical and mechanical fields having the potential will be collaborated with Pakistan Navy to meet its defense needs and achieve better growth

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of Pakistan Navy paid a visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) here on Monday. The delegation includes

Capt. Asif Maqsood Director Technical Development, Cdr. Tasneem Ahmad Director Indigenous Technical Development and Lt. Cdr. Amir Bin Hamid Staff Officer Indigenous Technical Development.

The meeting was aimed for the Potential investment proposal to be engaged for Manufacturing/Production/development capabilities in Hull Structure, Hull Outfitting, Main Propulsion Systems, Auxiliary Systems, Electrical/Electronic and Control Systems, Command Sur-



RAWALPINDI: RCCI President Nasir Mirza presenting Chamber memento to Capt. Asif Maqsood Director Technical Pakistan Navy during his visit to RCCI. — DNA

veillance Systems to be used in constructions of Frigates and other Ships.

The Meeting was attended by President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce

and Industry (RCCI) Mohammad Nasir Mirza, Former Presidents Manzar Khurshid Shaikh, Syed Asad Mashadi, Osman Ashraf - Senior Vice Pres-

ident RCCI, Shahraiz A. Malik - Vice President and members.

Capt. Asif Maqsood said that the Pakistan Navy wanted complete indigenous production of frigates and its other systems that would also be beneficial for the local industry. He said that the local firms with good capability and expertise in electrical and mechanical fields having the potential will be collaborated with Pakistan Navy to meet its defence needs and achieve better growth.

RCCI President Nasir Mirza assured all kind of support and assistance in this regard. He said RCCI already collaborating with DEPO and will disseminate the said information among the members. He gave a short summary of RCCI current and upcoming events.

NAVTTTC for enhancing of vocational and technical training

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) is striving for improving the standards of vocational and technical training in Pakistan. In this context NAVTTTC is giving prime importance to the international collaboration and consequently inked a MoU with high ranked Turku Vocational Institute, Finland in the field of technical and vocational education and training at the beginning of 2021. The MoU between the two organizations covers wide areas of cooperation including the establishment of joint institutions for training and skill development in Pakistan. In order to implement the MoU in letter and spirit an inaugural ceremony for the launch of Pak-Finland School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts will be held today in NAVTTTC HQ. The establishment of Finland School of Hospitality and Culinary Arts will pave way to provide state of the art facilities to Pak's youth to enhance skills in the field of hospitality and culinary arts.

DMA takes action against illegal stalls in G-8 Markaz

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Directorate of Municipal Administration (DMA) has removed illegal stalls and encroachments from footpaths and open spaces of the sector G-8 Markaz. The operation was carried out under the supervision of Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) Administrator Syeda Shafaq Hashmi, who paid surprise visit to the area following the direction of CDA Chairman Amer Ahmed Ali. She warned the officials of strict actions in case of laxity against the encroachment. They were asked for keeping a check on re-emergence of encroachers in the area. The

operation would continue till the clearance of Markaz from encroachments. Meanwhile, field in charge DMA, Bashir Khokhar talked to Islamabad Post and expressed his concerns over serious SoPs violations. Member of trader's union Shahzad Khan had a dialogue with field in charge. He tried to stop the action against encroachment.

He said to field in charge "DMA should let us know before these actions, if you people coordinate we will do so as well, if you fight with us, then get ready for it." Mr. Khokhar smoothly rejected the notion by saying "we do not need to serve any notice to do our job."



ISLAMABAD: Ms. Sameena Fazil, Group Leader, Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, offering flowers to Former Vice President of FPCCI Zafar Bakhtawri on being elected as the Vice President, United Business Group. Farida Rashid, Sameena Akhtar, Sajida Anwar, Shumaila Naz, Mumtaz Akhtar, Rubina Shafiqat, Shaheena Hafeez, Aneela Jawad, Ms. Rosina, Misha Nadeem are also accompanying her. — DNA

DG Pak Post orders immediate placement of scanners at GPO

Due to non-availability of scanners, the shippers and even the staff deputed for scanning of the goods, had to wait for hours in case of heavy shipments

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Director General of Pakistan Post has ordered immediate placement of scanners at the GPO Melody Customers section. This newspaper had highlighted this issue few days ago. The Director General has directed the Postmaster General of FC, GB AND AJK to immediately look into the matter and resolve the issue. It may be recalled that

the this newspaper had published a news that the General Post Office located in the Capital Territory speaks volumes for the apathy of the high ups at the GPO lacks in even basic facilities. A survey conducted by this scribe revealed that most of the staff do not even have chairs to sit on. And the chairs available are in an extremely dilapidated condition. The staff consequently has to discharge its duties throughout the day and by sitting on the edge of

the chair. So much so, the Customs section located in the backyard of the main building does not have a scanner to scan items meant for onward transportation to various countries.

Due to non-availability of scanners, the shippers and even the staff deputed for scanning of the goods, had to wait for hours in case of heavy shipments. The manual scanning always takes a heavy toll on the staff and the shippers as well.

People still had to stand in long queues simply because there were not enough counters and staff. If that is the situation in the GPO, which is located right in the heart of the Capital, then what would be the situation in the rest of the country, he questioned.

Sources said the GPO Rawalpindi and IMO Rawalpindi are facing same problems. Customers have demanded of the high ups to provide scanners at these locations as well.

COVID-19 claims 5 lives in 24 hours

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: As many as 44 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 25,908 in the district while five lost their battle of life against the deadly virus. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here on Monday, the total infected cases included 23,929 from Rawalpindi and 1979 from other districts.

The report said among the new cases, 10 reported from Rawal Town, 6 from Potohar town, 13 from Rawalpindi Cantt, 8 Taxila, 3 Islamabad, and one each from Gujjar Khan, AJK, Attock and KPK. "Presently 101 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 15 in Holy Family Hospital, 16 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 38 in Institute of Urology, 25 in Fauji Foundation Hospital, one in Hearts International Hospital and three each in Bilal hospital and Akhtar Rukhsana Memorial trust," the health authority report said.

District Health Authority updated that so far 24,131 patients were discharged after recovery while 1740 were quarantined including 1012 at home and 728 in isolation.

Petroleum imports reduced by 8.26%

ISLAMABAD: Petroleum group imports during first ten months of current fiscal year reduced by 8.26 per cent as compared to the corresponding period of the last year.

According to Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the petroleum group imports came down from US \$ 9,480,954 thousand FY 2019-20 of last financial year to US \$ 8,697,822 thousand of the same period of current financial year.

During the period from July-April 20-21, imports of petroleum products reduced by 10.27%, worth \$3,865,766 thousand as compared to the imports valuing \$4,308,302 thousand of same period of last year, it added. Meanwhile, petroleum Crude imports decreased by 4.12%, worth \$ 2,407,420 thousand as compared to the imports of valuing \$2,510,900 thousand of the corresponding period of last year.

During the period under review, Natural gas and liquefied imports also came down by 15.17%, valuing \$2,026,252 thousand imported as compared to the imports worth \$2,388,655 thousand of same period of last year. — APP

Lollywood actor 'Rangeela' remembered

ISLAMABAD: Legend lollywood comedian actor Mohammad Saeed Khan, widely known as Rangeela was remembered on his 17th anniversary on Monday to pay tributes for his lifetime services in entertainment industry.

He died on 24th of May, 2005 at the age of 68 and left hundreds of thousands of fans mourning after a lustrous career spanning over four decades in Pakistan film industry. Aficionados of Urdu and Punjabi movies, who are now in their late fifties, remember actor, director, producer, writer and singer Rangeela as the best comedian of his time.

He was born in Parachinar, Kurram Agency on 1st of January, 1937. His family migrated to Peshawar when he was still a kid. Later Rangeela moved to Lahore at a young age and earned his livelihood by painting billboards for the Pakistani film industry, private channels reported.

His love affair with the silver screen goes back to those poster-painting days. By the stroke of luck when he was 20 Rangeela was asked to substitute an absent comedian at the set. His career formally started at the age of 21 with a Punjabi feature film Jatti (1958). — APP

ICCI calls for lifting all restrictions on businesses

He said that the cost of lending is still very high in Pakistan, which is also a major hindrance in the better growth of investment and businesses and the government should reduce policy interest rate to three percent

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Achieving a GDP growth of around 4 percent in the first nine months of the current fiscal year from negative GDP growth of 0.47 percent last year seems to be a remarkable claim of the government for turning around the economy, however, the government should consider lifting all restrictions on businesses that would help in achieving further higher economic growth of the country. This was stressed by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). He said that the supernatural duties on the import of goods, services, machinery and equipment of many sectors including tourism and health-care were the major hurdles towards the growth and investment in new

projects, therefore, the government should withdraw high import duties in the coming budget to facilitate the growth of tourism and other sectors. He said that the cost of lending is still very high in Pakistan, which is also a major hindrance in the better growth of investment and businesses and the government should reduce policy interest rate to 3 percent. He said that the government should also reduce the utility charges in the next budget to bring down the input cost of businesses and make them more competitive in the international market. The ICCI President said that Pakistan achieved best ever GDP growth of over 10 percent in the fiscal year 1953-54, but after that our economy could not repeat such performance as yet, which was unfortunate. He said that Pakistan has tremendous potential to achieve far higher eco-



nomical growth and the only requirement was that the government should focus on formulating conducive and consistent economic policies in consultation with the business leaders to unleash the actual growth potential of various sectors of the economy. He said that the next budget is around the corner and the Finance Minister should consult Presidents of all major

chambers of commerce & industry to get the input of the business community for finalizing a growth-oriented budget. He was of the view that constant liaison and regular interaction between the business community and the business-related government departments like finance, commerce, FBR etc. should be the way forward to achieve sustainable economic growth of Pakistan. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that the SMEs were the backbone of the economy as they have 40 percent share in the annual GDP and are making significant contribution towards exports, however, the Covid-19 pandemic related lockdowns and restrictions have badly affected the business of SMEs due to which many of them were facing great problems. He said that according to a survey conducted by SMEDA in collaboration with Asian Development Bank Insti-

tute and Asian Productivity Organization, over 81% SMEs reported lower sales revenue in first half of 2020, over 66% decrease in permanent employees, over 33% reduction in production, over 82% cash flow shortage and over 76 percent were expecting decrease in total sales revenue in 2020. He said that another survey of SMEDA showed that 59 percent of SMEs reported an increase in operating cost and 57 percent increase in raw material cost in the range of 10 to 30 %, which showed that SMEs were facing great challenges in doing business in Pakistan. Therefore, he urged that the government should come up with some special relief measures for the SMEs in the forthcoming budget so that these businesses could recover some of their losses and play a more effective role in the economic development of the country.

Briefs

Musical evening held at Punjab Arts Council

RAWALPINDI: Musical evening 'Sur Sangeet' was held at Punjab Arts Council (PAC) while Young singer Azam Khan Watan Yar performed online due to the corona pandemic.

Azam Khan Watan Yar is an emerging folk singer of Urdu, Punjabi and Pashto. Azam had received music training in music class at Punjab Arts Council.

He has performed on various TV channels and radio as well.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmad said that young artists are assets of the country and they must be encouraged.

He said that Arts Council has encouraged the youth from day one and provided them platform without any discrimination. — APP

Ignite announces winner of startups event

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ignite on Monday announced the winner startups of PakImpact Invest in which 50 individual and institutional investors and six top business incubators and accelerators from 14 countries participated.

First pitching competition of PakImpactInvest was held online on May 22 and May 23 in which 29 startups from Ignite's National Incubation Centers, Ignite funded projects and AP's network pitched their business plans to national and international investors from North America, Europe, and Pakistan, said a news release. PakImpactInvest is an initiative of Ignite - National Technology Fund and Ministry of IT & Telecom in collaboration with Accelerate Prosperity.

It is a national investment platform to connect local startups and national/international investors including commercial and impact investors, venture capitalists, donors and philanthropists.

Earlier through a rigorous selection process, top 30 startups and growth businesses representing various verticals were selected for this two-day online pitching event. These pitching sessions were evaluated by a judging panel comprising of Yusuf Hussain, Head Venture Capital HBL, Kamruddin Shams, Chairman The Shams Group, and Shanul Haq, CEO Accretif Capital Inc.

In his message, Minister for IT & Telecom, Syed Amin Ul Haque congratulated the winning entrepreneurs who are making a contribution to socio-economic landscape of Pakistan through new jobs, revenue, and investments.

DHA seeks Rs 60.7 m for installation of elevators

RAWALPINDI: The District Health Authority (DHA) has requested the Punjab government for the release of funds for the installation of elevators at Wah general Hospital. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Dr. Faiza Kanwal told APP here on Monday that elevators are direly required for the smooth functioning of the hospital, adding, patients and staff of the hospital were facing severe difficulty due to absence of this basic facility.

Dr. Faiza informed that the Deputy Commissioner office has sent a summary to the Punjab government for the release of Rs 60.73 million to execute the project. "A 100 bed hospital was set up to provide best health facilities to the residents of Wah, Taxila for which the Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) Wah had provided 96 kanals of land free-of-cost", she informed. The CEO said more than 200 employees including nine specialists, nine medical officers, seven women medical officers, three dental surgeons and other Para-medical staff were rendering services in the hospital.

She informed that 11 departments were functioning in the hospital including radiology, pediatric, orthopaedic, gynaecology and emergency department to provide quality health facilities to the residents of Wah, Taxila and adjoining districts.— APP



RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Imran Khan, along with his cabinet members and top military officials, being briefed on the national and regional security situation at Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Secretariat. — DNA

Regional cooperation on pandemic response urged

Economic situation of the country did not allow it to impose an extended overall lockdown, it opted for smart lockdowns in most-affected areas, as well as putting restrictions on activities most prone to the spread of the virus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Experts from various countries of South Asia urged greater regional cooperation in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. They were speaking at a webinar titled 'response to challenges of pandemic in South Asia' organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, President IRS Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz stated that the response of the Government of Pakistan towards the challenge of the Covid-19 pandemic was quite balanced. He added that since the economic situation of the country did not allow it to impose an extended overall lockdown, it opted for smart lockdowns in most-affected areas, as well as putting restrictions on activities most prone to the spread

of the virus.

Ambassador Riyaz cited staggered attendance in offices, closing down of indoor diners and gathering halls, initiation of online classes in educational institutions, and imposition of a timetable for opening and closing of markets of non-essential items as examples of the government's smart approach. The results of the policy, he maintained, were evident from the lower infection rates and casualty figures in Pakistan as compared to other regional countries. Professor Swaran Singh of the Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, was of the view that the democratic and demographic dividend of South Asia was under threat from the virus. He supported the idea of introducing a global treaty for fighting pandemics, which, he shared, was already under discussion. Professor Sin-

gh cautioned against knee-jerk reactions to the pandemic without keeping in mind the domestic social realities of the South Asian countries. He called for evolving long-term SAARC-level responses to the pandemic as he believed that it was not likely to disappear any time soon.

Professor Singh highlighted greater understanding of the scientific nuances with regard to the spread and control of Covid-19. He further stated that humans were social beings and it was highly stressful for them to endure social distancing. He even suggested to call it physical distancing instead of social distancing.

Sri Lankan author and political columnist Mr Assanga Abeyagoonasekera shared research proving that effectively functioning democracies had fared better against Covid-19 than

countries with populist leaders. He was of the view that Covid-19 response of the South Asian countries had exposed their systemic risk factors, such as lack of rational political decision-making on key subjects like the spread of pandemics. He especially highlighted the hubris mentality of the political leaders of South Asia, which, according to him, led to inaction against the spread of the pandemic. He attributed the absence of regionalism in South Asia to a lack of Track II interaction within the region.

Dr Prakash Bhattarai, Director of the Centre for Social Change, Nepal, blamed the government's response to the pandemic for the high casualty figures in his country. He was of the view that the Nepalese government politicized this important subject resulting in misplaced priorities.

He argued that the Government of Nepal was not adequately prepared for the second wave of the pandemic despite warnings issued by various international health agencies. He shared that non-scientific immunity-boosting methods were propagated by the Prime Minister of Nepal himself and that the management of vaccine procurement and distribution was also politicized. Dr. Bhattarai regretted that critical opportunities for regional cooperation were missed in terms of initiating a dialogue on the pandemic in South Asia and commencing joint research on vaccine production and distribution. He added that there was a lack of consolidated regional data on the pandemic resulting in adequacies related to damage assessment and a comprehensive regional response.

HEC, PASTIC sign MoU for enhanced cooperation

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Higher Education Commission (HEC) and Pakistan Scientific and Technological Information Centre (PASTIC) via a virtual signing ceremony at HEC Secretariat and PASTIC National Centre. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akram Sheikh, Director General PASTIC and Dr. Shaista Sohail, Executive Director HEC, signed the MoU. Prof. Dr. Shahid Mehmood Baig, Chairman Pakistan Science

Foundation, also graced the ceremony by his virtual presence. The ceremony was also attended by senior officials of both the organizations. PASTIC is engaged in serving researchers and professionals, with an objective to develop information repositories and disseminating them to scientists and researchers of Pakistan. In order to benefit the academic fraternity of Pakistani HEIs, the MoU will help to establish a strategic partnership for enhanced cooperation through outreach, policy engagement activities and effective information sharing.



ISLAMABAD: A vendor displays potteries to attract the customers at Bari Imam. — APP

The UK and IRC helped over 47,000 vulnerable families

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The UK in partnership with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) delivered cash assistance to 47,891 of the most poor and vulnerable families impacted by recurrent and recent disasters. The pandemic, loss of livelihoods and further devastation due to heavy floods and locust invasion in the targeted districts harmed the ability and capacity of vulnerable populations to access basic services.

Cash assistance was provided to vulnerable families in Jhal Magsi, and Chaghai Districts of Balochistan, and Peshawar, Swat, and D.I. Khan Districts of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa, in close coordination with the Government's Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), National Socio-Economic Registry (NSER) and EHSAAAS Program. Primary focus of the assistance were marginalized communities, 80% of whom were women, who received a total of PKR 877 million. These benefi-

ciaries were not receiving support from any other government or private social protection and safety net programs. A digital payment transfer mechanism with biometric verification was used for the disbursements to ensure safer, more transparent, cost-effective, and swift transfers of bulk payments. While delivering the cash assistance, IRC ensured the safety and protection of the target beneficiaries by following the safeguarding and do no harm principles across the project cycle.

A survey conducted by an external team noted the effects of these cash grants on increased food consumption and reduced negative coping strategies. The evaluation illustrates that more than two-third (77%) of the beneficiary's households did not use negative coping strategy to buy food during the assistance period. Vast majority (93%) of the households used the cash grant on purchasing food while a small proportion of the grant was spent either on returning a loan or health of a household member.

Andersen Global expands into Pakistan with tax, legal firm

ISLAMABAD: Anderson Global enters Pakistan through a Collaboration Agreement with tax and legal firm Septentrio Global Consulting (SGC), adding coverage to the organization's global platform in South Asia. "At the core of our business we are relationship driven and aim to set the standard for tax and legal services in Pakistan" founded in 1985 by Managing Director Farrukh Karim Qureshi, SGC (formerly Samdani & Qureshi) began as a full-service law firm, and recently, enhanced their capabilities by integrating a tax practice, led by Rashid Ibrahim, and establishing an International Centre for Appropriate Dispute Resolution and Prevention, led by Dr. Nudrat E. Piracha. The Islamabad-based firm offers a vast range of services in tax, legal, management and financial consultancy, human resource management, risk management and appropriate dispute resolution & prevention solutions, working with clients in the public, private and social sectors, both at a national and international level. "We are transparent and committed to providing best in class solutions to our clients, which aligns with Andersen Global's values and vision. — DNA

Railways to come out of losses within 6 to 9 months

The minister said that the trains will run under public-private partnership as we do not have the capacity to run the railways

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Railways, Azam Khan Swati on Monday said Pakistan Railways will come out of heavy losses within the period of six to nine months.

Addressing a news conference, the minister said that he has been in the Ministry of Railways for the last five months and it has become a for-profit institution for the first time in 50 years. He said earlier, Railways was carrying four percent freight which would hopefully be increased up to ten percent. The purchase of space, bidding and other matters for

the construction of the terminals at different places were also in process. The minister lamented that Pakistan Railways got zero income from its most valuable land during the last seventy years. The minister said that Railway officers, Railway police and some other people were involved in illegal occupation of Railways land. The minister questioned that if the minister's expenditure is zero, then what should the media think? Swati said that he would never talk about the Railways deficit. He said that the Royal Palm Club was occupied by the Mafia while the Supreme Court of Pakistan relinquished its possession af-



ter which the Royal Palm Club had turned a loss into a profit. The whole process is being run on the orders of the Supreme Court and if someone would say anything about it on YouTube will be brought to justice, the minister warned. How happy the people will

be to see when Railways will go into profit from the deficit under the leadership and vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said. The minister said that 132,000 people are paid pension in railways. The Prime Minister and the Finance Minister have set

aside a separate account for pensions. The minister said that the trains will run under public-private partnership as we do not have the capacity to run the railways. How can we run loss-making trains at a loss? He said all bogies will be auctioned under this project. The minister said that recommendations have been made to the Prime Minister, Imran Khan regarding 150 colonies for employees. The laborer will also be happy, he will get the best education and housing facilities. The railway land will be auctioned for which the bidding system was developed in accordance with the interna-

tional standards. The investor will mark the railway land and come to our sale and submit his bid. Swati said that a system has been in place under which any officer who commits corruption will be caught. He said that the railway lands worth many billions have been retrieved. Lands were retrieved in Karachi and Hyderabad through Rangers as we do not have a government in Sindh, he said. The minister conveyed that 2.5 billion electricity thefts have been controlled through strict monitoring. He clearly stated that the employees of Railways will not be made permanent as he is not doing politics.

CDA sets up outdoor gym in sector I-9

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is setting up an outdoor gym in the sector I-9 to promote healthy lifestyle among its residents.

The establishment of the gym was in final stages and would be made operational for fitness enthusiasts shortly, said the CDA in a tweet. "Good news for fitness freaks! Open air gym facility is being introduced very soon in sector I-9 by Environment staff west. The progress of work is underway by staff. Gym would be operational after some necessary upgraded facilities," the civic agency tweeted.

Crypto fall; Waqar says no need to panic

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: As the cryptocurrency is witnessing a tremendous fall in value, Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka had advised everyone in his Facebook group to withdraw money. Recently, the value of bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies has dropped by 50%. There are many reasons behind this decline. However, Waqar Zaka, who introduced the word crypto in Pakistan and fought to legalize crypto in Pakistan, had warned everyone that the prices of cryptocurrencies would come down significantly in the coming days. Waqar Zaka had also said that now is the time for all people to withdraw their capital and buy again when the prices go up. It may be recalled that Waqar Zaka had warned all Pakistanis on a major Pakistani TV channel that the price of bitcoin would come down for some time.

PWDs lauded MoHR for video in sign language

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) on Monday appreciated the Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR)'s initiative for developing a special video message in sign language that conveys necessary precautions for differently-abled citizens to stay safe from Covid-19. In a statement, the PWDs said that this video message is very helpful to create awareness among them about the pandemic.

Moreover, the ministry has developed such video to create awareness amongst those with hearing impairments. The video message describes the precautions that are necessary to follow to stay safe from the COVID-19 pandemic. The video also informed the hearing impaired persons about the symptoms of corona virus and advised them to timely inform their care takers in case they have fever, cough and problem in breathing.

Police arrests a refugee in blind murder case

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Police on Monday have solved a blind murder mystery and arrested an Afghan refugee who had killed his employer, a retired Major, few days ago in Attock.

According to the police, Major Younis Omer (Retd) was found dead at his residence in mysterious circumstances. DPO Attock Syed Khalid Hamdani soon after the mishap, had constituted a team to arrest the killer and dig out the motive behind the murder. The team investigated the case in a professional manner and arrested the killer Abdul Hakeem s/o Abdul Raheem, an Afghan refugee living in Mohala Awan Sharif Attock. The accused during the interrogation, confessed to his crime and told police that he had borrowed Rs 50 thousand from his employer and was now unable to return the borrowed money.

Managerial inefficiencies

THE Drug Regulatory Authority Pakistan (DRAP) has been accused of incurring a loss of over Rs180.81 million by the audit authorities. The primary causation of such a hefty loss to the national exchequer, not to mention the risks posed to the public's health, is severe managerial incompetence. These are incidences that can easily be prevented through minor changes within the system. If the authorities fail to act quickly, we may put undue pressure on our already strained financial resources. According to the report issued by the Directorate General of the federal government, DRAP is guilty of non-compliance to equipment inspection requirements, lack of upgradation along with performance reviews and the use of technical expertise in installations for the operations of the Central Drug Testing Laboratory. In fact, two firms—Technology Links Karachi and Kamstec International Karachi—have even taken advantage of this lacklustre management to obtain tax exemptions worth Rs16.62 million. This is an institution that is supposed to be at the forefront of the medicinal sector due to its role in providing safe-to-use medicines to the country at large. It is shameful that such prevailing circumstances put into question the quality of the work being carried out within the jurisdiction of the DRAP. If we cannot rely on leadership to ensure adherence to federal policies, how can we count on expertise in the field? So far, members of the management have not issued a reply to the accusations levied against them. Instead, the audit continues to stress the importance of assuming responsibility and taking corrective measures to counter the many irregularities that have resulted in expensive losses. Furthermore, extra caution must be exercised considering that there is a very real possibility of risking national health as a result of such inefficiencies.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

ABC CERTIFIED

Vol: 02 Issue: 19

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



A safer place

WITHOUT the right to tell the whole story, journalism that challenges entrenched power may become a thing of the past. This is why the new bill tabled before the National Assembly to protect journalists in Pakistan – ranked by international media watchdog bodies as one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists – is welcome. Sindh has also put forward a bill in its provincial assembly to keep journalists safe. The federal bill, which covers the whole of Pakistan, essentially gives journalists the right to be granted complete protection of security and life. The bill also bars harassment or threats to journalists, and we assume this includes the enforced disappearances we have seen recently with a number of journalists 'picked up' not-so-mysteriously. In this context, the federal bill also says that the national security excuse cannot be used against journalists, when they file stories which are fair and backed by evidence. The Sindh law too contains similar measures and strongly protects the rights of journalists to avoid making the sources of information provided to them public in any fashion. Pakistan badly needs such laws in a time when journalists are facing more harassment than at any other time in the country's history – with some saying it is reminiscent (or even worse) of the Zia era. There must also be the recognition and realization that passing such laws should also entail undoing other legislation and regulation that seeks to stifle a free press or act as a tool of censorship. We hope then that the draft bills will be turned into law and will be implemented fully across the country, as has been promised by the human rights ministry while also hoping that it is implemented and journalists are protected from censorship via unofficial directives, or through the power of the purse, or through violent intimidation.

Cease-fire is no excuse for the world to look away

Jehad Abusalim

It was the violence of time passing in isolation in one of the world's most-densely populated territories. Two million people currently live in Gaza. (The UN predicts that by 2050 the population of Gaza will rise to 4.8 million. Gaza is already one of the most densely populated areas in the world, but this will more than double the population density from approximately 13,000 people per square mile to 34,000 per square mile.) It was the violence of living with intense and lingering trauma between periods of bombardment. As this latest cease-fire takes hold, Palestinians in Gaza have yet to recover from the traumatic impact of the previous assaults of 2008, 2012, and 2014.

ON Friday, across the occupied Palestinian territories, and especially in the cities and towns of the Gaza Strip, Palestinians are taking to the streets in celebration – honking horns, shooting fireworks and sharing sweets. They're celebrating a belated Eid, the holiday marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, and one they were deprived of this year because of the brutal violence unleashed on Gaza by the Israeli military. They are able to do this because of the cease-fire that took effect Friday morning at 2 a.m., putting a halt to the Israeli airstrikes. For my friends and family in Gaza, the cease-fire represents the end of 11 days of extreme and pervasive violence that killed at least 243 Palestinians, including 66 children. Some are celebrating mere physical survival. Others are in disbelief that they are still alive at all. Entire families were buried under rubble. Israel flattened important apartment buildings, homes, press offices, book stores and even health clinics. For me, here in the United States, the cease-fire puts an end to 11 agonizing days of barely sleeping at night because of the fear of what I'll wake up to. I've been checking my phone constantly for texts from my family that confirm they are still alive. And yet I celebrate the cease-fire with ambivalence. That's because, even though it puts a temporary end to the spectacular violence of the past 11 days, it will not end the everyday violence in Gaza and across the occupied territories that has been going on for 73 years. Along with other Palestinians, I've been surprised by the wave of global outrage at the Israeli military and solidarity with Gaza over the

past few days. But I can't help wondering whether the world will now look away from the slower destruction and death of the continued siege and occupation. For the past 14 years, a suffocating Israeli blockade has trapped people in Gaza within a 140-square-mile area, barring us from even the most basic goods and supplies. Growing up during this blockade, the very passage of time felt violent for me. It was the violence of minutes and hours spent without electricity, access to clean water, the ability to travel to other parts of the country and to the outside world, as cancer patients died while waiting for permits. It was the violence of time passing in isolation in one of the world's most-densely populated territories. Two million people currently live in Gaza. (The United Nations predicts that by 2050 the population of Gaza will rise to 4.8 million. Gaza is already one of the most densely populated areas in the world, but this will more than double the population density from approximately 13,000 people per square mile to 34,000 per square mile.) It was the violence of living with intense and lingering trauma between periods of bombardment. As this latest cease-fire takes hold, Palestinians in Gaza have yet to recover from the traumatic impact of the previous assaults of 2008, 2012, and 2014. I experienced the 2008 attack firsthand, and even as I write this, I remain haunted by its horrors. And all this is the consequence of living and reliving the Nakba – the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes beginning in 1947. Israel's state-building project has involved systematic erasure and removal of an entire people, destroying our homes and communities and rendering us refugees.

In Gaza and throughout our homeland, this process of violent dispossession continues today, as Israel aims to ensure that it remains a Jewish-majority state, with maximum land for the Jewish population and a minimum of Palestinians. Palestinian refugees in Gaza are supposed to be forgotten as they live and die fenced off and suffocating. But the recent explosion of intense violence is also proof that Israel's attempts to erase Palestinians in some areas and fence them off in others, hoping we will vanish, has failed. Palestinians are resisting. In East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah, they are holding on to their land. At the borders of Lebanon and Jordan, they are marching for their right of return. In Gaza, we are celebrating our survival as a people and hoping that the world is waking up to our plight. In the United States, legislation introduced by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) in the Senate and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) in the House to block arms sales to Israel is a welcome move. Yet to stop the sustained violence, we need a new and creative vision for a fundamental change for the Palestinians and for Israel, one rooted in the principles of equality, justice and freedom. We need policies that focus on the Nakba as the root cause and hold Israel accountable for its expansion and erasure of Palestinians. One good example is H.R. 2590, a bill that conditions aid to Israel on a cessation of human rights violations. Most important, we need the world to keep paying attention and speaking out. Until the suffocating blockade ends and we see accountability for the war crimes committed against the people of Gaza, our freedom will remain incomplete.

– Courtesy: Washington Post

Abandoned timeless heritage

Munaza Kazmi



1500 years old Nandana Fort and Vishnu temple, at Baghanwala, PindDadan khan. The word Nandna means 'Lord Vishnu's garden', in Sanskrit. Nandana Fort and Temple always had a beautiful fruit garden at its foothill. The once mighty outpost was now in ruins, and so was the fruit garden. Although rumors are of its restoration, but the question is when?

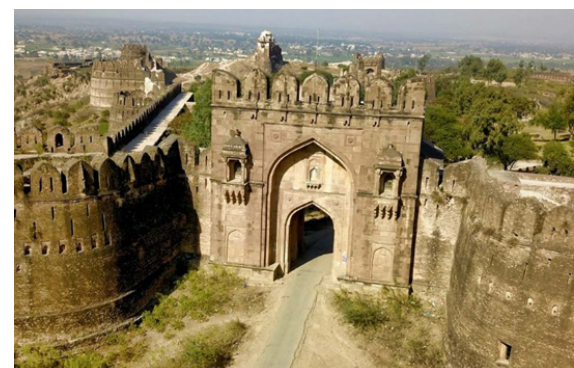
HERITAGE is our legacy. A nation that does not respect its heritage and culture cannot stand with dignity. Our cultural and natural heritages are both irreplaceable sources of life and inspiration. However, a sad truth is that, world heritage sights are negatively being affected by Climate Change, while Pakistan's Heritage Sights are suffering due to negligence. Also, it may not be surprising if people have not even heard the names of a few of these timeless establishments.

Rohtas Fort: Recognized as World Heritage Site by UNESCO was built by General Sher Shah Suri, between 1541 and 1548, Jhelum. A magnificent blend of Turkish and Mughal architecture, that enchant the viewer with its grandeur and splendor. However, due to the negligence of authorities, it's been unkept.

Jain Temples of Nagerparker: A small town situated at the foot of the dramatic and mineral rich Karunjhar hills, and neighbors the Indian border in TharparkarSindh. There are over twelve Jain temples found in the region, date back to as far as the 14th Century, and are now one of the oldest heritage sites of Pakistan. Although it's a precious location for tourism however, before writing this article I've never heard about the place. Why is the negligence? No promotion no development, not a single trusted hotel.

Sheikhupura Fort: The Sheikhupura Fort was built in 1607, during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Once a glorious fort is a symbol of the glory of the Mughal era. But sadly, the once great monument is now littered with graffiti and left vandalized by the ignorant trespassers.

The shrine of Hazrat Shah Burhan Chiniot: Shah Burhanuddin Bukhari was a celebrated Muslim saint, after his death in 1669, Mughal Emperor Shah Jehan commissioned a grand complex spreading over several acres, comprising Burhan's tomb, a well, a pond and a mosque



to honor the saint. The walls and the grand dome are adorned with intricate and colorful fresco work, a hallmark of Mughal architecture. The well and the pond were meant for supplying clean water to the visitors. However, with time the rot set in and people started encroaching upon the shrine land. Although Auqaf department is the keeper of it but the product is quit opposite.

Walled city of Lahore: The Walled City of Lahore, also known as Old City, forms the historic core of Lahore, Pakistan. The city was established around 1000 CE in the western half of the Walled City, which was fortified by a mud wall during the medieval era. The Walled City was bestowed with numerous monuments during the Mughal era, with some of Lahore's most iconic structures being located in the Walled City, such as the lavishly decorated Wazir Khan Mosque, the massive Badshahi Mosque, and the Shahi Hammam. Yet, it's the most colorful city of Pakistan but its splendor was never kept, once the royal alleys are now filled with dirt and filth, on my personal visit I felt embarrassed by what I read about it and what in actual it appeared to. Poor maintenance.

Hindu temple in Hassanabdal: Hassanabdal is a city famous for Sikh worship places. Panja Sahib is one of the historical places, where Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs have co-existed since centuries. The mosques are safe and filled with people five times a day. Gurdwara Panja Sahib, being a source of revenue, is maintained by the government. The four Hindu temples, on the other hand, are in the private custody of people. These abandoned temples situated in different parts of the city are being used as toilets by the claimants. This month I went to see one of the temples, which is inhabited used by some people, they have used the main building as store and kitchen, however it was clean but crumbling. I question the government is this your heritage preservation policy?

Bahram ki Baradari, Attock Khurd: Built by Bahram Khan during his chieftaincy in 1681 or a little after, is situated at the ridge of mountains on the southern side of G.T. Road near Attock Khurd. It was probably a 5-star accommodation of yesteryears. But today it is more of a haunted house, I know this place very well because I use to play in the gardens when I was visiting my aunt there. From that days I wished, maybe someday the government may preserve these precious, unmatched treasures, but to my dismay nothing had happened till yet, even greedy people have made their homes in the backyards.

Nandana Fort and Vishnu Temple: 1500 years old Nandana Fort and Vishnu temple, at Baghanwala, PindDadan khan. The word Nandna means 'Lord Vishnu's garden', in Sanskrit. Nandana Fort and Temple always had a beautiful fruit garden at its foothill. The once mighty outpost was now in ruins, and so was the fruit garden. Although rumors are of its restoration, but the question is when?

Architectural heritage in ruins of Hazro: Another ruin lies in Hazro. Formerly a fortified town with four gates, Hazro is home to many temples, gurdwaras and havelis believed to have been built during the Sikh and British era. It is rather sad to look around Hazro and witness its architectural heritage in ruins. The concerned authorities must take serious steps and designate some of the most important streets as part of a heritage area. Am sure this will help promote local tourism and pump up the Pakistani economy. We have much more, that I can't write in one article but will share time to time. Here I have a petition to the nation to become a helping hand in preserving these precious treasures and become tolerant to other religions and beliefs. This is our heritage and we all belong to it.

Briefs

Shahid Afridi ruled out of HBL PSL 6

LAHORE: Multan Sultans' star all-rounder Shahid Afridi has been ruled out of the Abu Dhabi-leg of the HBL Pakistan Super League 6 due to a back injury. The former Pakistan captain was training in Karachi for the upcoming HBL PSL 6 matches when he experienced pain in his lower back following which he was examined by a doctor who has advised him a complete rest. Afridi, who appeared in Sultans' four Karachi-leg matches, has been replaced by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's left-arm-spinner Asif Afridi who would be joining the Sultans squad in Abu Dhabi. Afridi said on Monday: "While training for the remainder of the HBL Pakistan Super League 6, I felt lower back pain and had to consult a doctor. Unfortunately I have been advised to rest and can no longer accompany my team Multan Sultans for the Abu Dhabi-leg. "I am disappointed that I would be sitting out of the tournament, but my best wishes, support and prayers are with the team to take the trophy." - APP

'Electoral reforms vital for fair elections'

From Page 01

He said that the under Prime Minister's Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme a proposal was under also consideration to give Rs 6 million loans to lawyers and journalists communities for construction of 10 marla house. Chaudhry Fawad said that talks have been held with Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar for establishing vaccination centers in High Courts and Sessions Courts and further progress in this regard was expected in the next few days.

He said that efforts would be made to provide health cards to journalists and lawyers. On the demand of a Housing Society for the lawyers of the Rawalpindi Division, the minister assured arranging a meeting of the lawyer community with Commissioner Rawalpindi. Fawad said, that the next era belongs to digitalization, modern technology and reforms which is vital to strengthening the legal system and workshops would be organized to bring lawyers in line with modern technology.

Pakistan-Malaysia vow...

From Page 01

The Ambassador of Malaysia paid a farewell to Leader of the house in senate here at his residence on Monday. Leader of the House said that unified stance on the conflicts of Palestine and Kashmir testifies the close understanding between the two sides and the economic cooperation is strengthening steadily.

"We want our relationship to grow further by utilizing the potential" Dr. Shahzad Waseem reiterated. Dr. Shahzad Waseem said that Pakistan highly values its cordial and brotherly relations with Malaysia. He said that both the countries have always supported each other at international forums which are testimony to the fact that both value bilateral relations. Leader of the House lauded the efforts of Malaysian ambassador for increased cooperation between the two countries.

Japan begins mass vaccination

TOKYO: Japan on Monday launched a mass vaccination campaign in at least two provinces as Olympics and Paralympics games near. Two state-run COVID-19 vaccination centers were opened in capital Tokyo and Osaka province "in a bid to accelerate an inoculation program that has lagged far behind other developed countries with just two months remaining before staging the Olympics", Tokyo-based Kyodo News reported. - DNA

West weighs action after Belarus diverts plane

The United States and former EU member the United Kingdom called for the immediate release of Protasevich and demanded the council of the International Civil Aviation Organization investigated the incident

FOREIGN DESK

MINSK: Belarus' forced diversion of a plane and arrest of a journalist who was on board has widened a rift between Western powers and Minsk, prompting calls for further sanctions and an international probe over the incident. Minsk forced the Ryanair flight from Athens, Greece, to Vilnius, Lithuania, to land in Minsk, the Belarusian capital, on Sunday after it scrambled a fighter jet, allegedly in response to a bomb threat. On its landing, Belarusian authorities took Roman Protasevich, a 26-year-old journalist who has been critical of the government, into custody. His whereabouts remain unknown. Protasevich is wanted in Belarus on "extremism" charges. He is accused of organising mass riots against the country's longtime President Alexander Lukashenko, as well as inciting social hatred -

allegations he denies. Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda accused Minsk of undertaking a "state-sponsored terror act" and called for "serious sanctions" against Lukashenko's government, while the EU's executive arm labelled the move a "hijacking". But Russia, an ally of Lukashenko, accused Western powers of hypocrisy over their remarks. "It is shocking that the West calls the incident in Belarusian airspace 'shocking'," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova wrote on Facebook. "Either (they) should be shocked by ... the forced (landing) in Austria of the Bolivian president's plane at the request of the United States ... Or (they) should not be shocked by similar behaviour by others." Zakharova was citing a July 2013 incident which saw then-Bolivian President Evo Morales grounded in Vienna for several hours while his plane was stopped and searched for the whis-

tleblower Edward Snowden. The plane diversion is expected to top the agenda at a two-day summit of EU leaders, who were united in their condemnation of Lukashenko, that begins Monday. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell condemned the "inadmissible step" as "yet another blatant attempt by the Belarusian authorities to silence all opposition voices". Borrell also indicated toughened EU sanctions against Belarus were incoming. The United States and former EU member the United Kingdom called for the immediate release of Protasevich and demanded the council of the International Civil Aviation Organization investigated the incident. Ryanair Chief Executive Michael O'Leary said Sunday's incident was "state-sponsored piracy". "It appears the intent of the authorities was to remove a journalist and his travelling companion," he told Irish radio station Newstalk on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Belarus' political opposition voiced growing concern for Protasevich. Opposition leader in exile Svetlana Tikhanovskaya told UK broadcaster Sky News on Monday that she was "afraid not only for his freedom, but for his life". "It is absolutely obvious that this is an operation of secret services to capture the plane in order to detain activist and blogger Roman Protasevich," Tikhanovskaya, who fled Belarus for neighbouring Lithuania last year amid a government crackdown on the anti-Lukashenko protests, posted on messaging app Telegram. The Belarusian foreign ministry said on Monday that Minsk would be ready to let experts visit if needed for an investigation into Sunday's incident, Russia's RIA news agency reported. However, it insisted authorities acted legally when they diverted the plane and accused Western nations of making unfounded allegations against Minsk for political reasons. "There is no doubt that

the actions of our competent authorities ... fully met established international rules," Belarusian foreign ministry spokesman Anatoly Glaz said in a statement. "Unfounded accusations are being made." The development comes amid tensions in Belarus, which saw unprecedented mass anti-government protests after a disputed election in August last year that handed Lukashenko a sixth presidential term. Police launched an immediate crackdown on the demonstrations, reportedly detaining tens of thousands of people and beating many of those who had taken to the streets. The EU and the US have previously sanctioned Lukashenko and dozens of officials and businessmen tied to his government over its actions. Although the protests died down during the winter, Minsk has continued to take action against the country's opposition and independent media. Last week, 11 staff members of the TUT.by news website, an independent outlet, were detained by police.

Second Sherpa guide dies on Everest

KATHMANDU: A second Sherpa guide has died on Mount Everest in a week, an expedition organiser said Monday.

The guide, whose name was not released, was descending from the summit of the world's highest peak on Sunday but died near the South Col, a point at 7,906 metres (25,938 feet).

"We are still getting details but we suspect complications from high altitude sickness. We will try to retrieve his body," MingmaGelu Sherpa of Seven Summits Club told AFP. - APP



GAZA CITY: Gaza launches the largest volunteer campaign entitled "We Will Build It" to clean the streets of the Gaza Strip from the effects of the Israeli aggression. - DNA

Palestinians will win: Khamenei

TEHRAN: Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has responded to letters by Palestinian resistance leaders, hailing their fight against Israel as a divine struggle against oppression and predicting that they will win the battle. "I received your letter in which you wrote with detail and analysis about the recent Palestinian jihad. Your struggle is the resistance against oppression,

heresy and arrogance," the Leader wrote in his letter to Hamas political bureau chief Ismail Haniyeh. "Such a struggle pleases the Almighty, Revered God and is the proof of 'O you who have faith! If you help Allah, He will help you and make your feet steady,'" the Leader wrote, citing verse 7 of the 47th chapter of the Holy Qur'an. "You will be victorious by the power of God and

cleanse the holy land from the filth of the usurpers, God willing," Ayatollah Khamenei added. In a separate letter to Islamic Jihad Secretary General Ziad al-Nakhala, Ayatollah Khamenei predicted that the "final victory" will come to the Palestinians. "I received your brotherly letter. The great and victorious jihad of you Palestinian brothers lit up the eyes of your lovers all over the

world," the Leader wrote. "Our hearts are with you at the scene of your struggles and our prayers for the continuation of your victories are constant," he said. "The divine promise is true when he said: 'Allah will surely help those who help Him', and you will see the ultimate victory, God willing," Ayatollah Khamenei said, referring to verse 40 of the 22nd chapter of the Qur'an. - DNA

Myanmar diaspora in US rally against military junta

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: A student leader during the 1988 uprisings against Myanmar's previous military dictatorship, Nay Myint was imprisoned and tortured for his efforts. "I gave a speech to the public about democracy, human rights and freedom. Shortly after, the military intelligence arrested me and then they gave me a life sentence. I stayed in the prison for 15 years, 10 years in solitary confinement," he told media. Last weekend, rather than giving a speech to crowds in Yangon, the US-based activist addressed the Myanmar community in New York City, which had gathered at Union Square to protest against February's military coup. The power grab ended a brief experiment with democracy and removed civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD), which won a landslide victory in November's election; a result the military says is fraudulent. The coup sparked a significant protest movement and a brutal crackdown, with the military still unable to secure full control over the country more than three months later.

Suu Kyi makes first appearance

FOREIGN DESK

YANGON: Myanmar's ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi attended a court hearing on Monday, according to local media reports, in her first public appearance after being detained in the military coup this February. Prior to the hearing, she had only been allowed to speak with her lawyers through a video link in the presence of security personnel. Speaking to her lawyers before her hearing at the Naypyidaw Council, Suu Kyi said, referring to her party, which the coup leaders declared dissolved: "The NLD [National League for Democracy] was founded for the people and it will exist as long as those people are there." The Myanmar military staged a coup on Feb. 1 by overthrowing Suu Kyi's elected government.

US lauds Pak role for Afghan peace

From Page 01

and the role expected by both in the future. "Pakistan has played an important role in Afghanistan. They supported the Afghan peace process. Pakistan also has allowed us to have overflight and access to be able to support our military presence in Afghanistan," Helvey said. He said the US will continue its conversation with Pakistan because of its support and contribution to the future of Afghanistan. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told lawmakers in New York that Pakistan was seeking a broad-based, strategic partnership with America, which would also cover Afghanistan.

He had emphasised on the need for "a broad-based strategic partnership" in the interest of both countries. Last month, US President Joe Biden announced to withdraw all troops from Afghanistan by September 11 this year. The US and the Taliban signed a landmark deal in Doha on February 29, 2020 to bring lasting peace in war-torn Afghanistan and allow US troops to return home from America's longest war. Under the US-Taliban pact signed in Doha, the US agreed to withdraw all its soldiers from Afghanistan in 14 months.

Interpol seeks details of 'wanted'..

From Page 01

The CTD had requested the foreign ministry to share the JIT report with the Embassy of Belgium. Earlier in February, the Counter-Terrorism Department of the Sindh Police had arrested Wahid Hussain aka Guddu, during a raid conducted in Karachi's Gulistan-e-Jauhar area.



KUWAIT CITY: Pakistan ambassador to Kuwait Sajjad Haider called on Commander Kuwait Naval Force, Brig. General Hazza Al-Alati at the Office of Naval Commander. - DNA

Father, daughter honoured for Sino-Pak friendship

DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese father and his daughter, who are famous in China and have contributed to Pak-Chin friendship for 65 years, were respectively awarded the Hala-I-Pakistan and Sitara-I-Pakistan across 33 years, according to a report published by Chinese media. To mark the 70th anniversary of China-Pakistan diplomatic ties, CEN had an interview with the daughter, Geng Ying. She recalled how she and her father, Geng Biao, has fought for Pak-Chin friendship. Geng Biao (1909-2000), the former vice-premier of China during 1978-1983, is rarely mentioned as another position - China's former ambassador to Pakistan. However, during his lifetime, he opened the epoch and extended the roots for the "Iron brotherhood" between Pakistan and China. His eldest daughter, Geng Ying, also follows her father's footsteps and continues to work for their lofty aspiration. She said, "I hope I can step on all the places where my father works and do more for the people of Paki-

stan in my lifetime." Because there was no professional diplomatic team in the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, Geng Biao was transformed from a general into an ambassador. In 1956, Geng Biao was appointed as the

has friendly relations in history. The establishment of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan is a great opportunity to enhance bilateral exchanges and friendship, "Then, Geng Biao began to read the relevant materials carefully, hoping to



Chinese ambassador to Pakistan, and the appointment coincided with the founding ceremony of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He wrote in his memoir: "... Pakistan is a close neighbor of China and

"advance the appointment" and make a good start for the friendship between the two countries during the founding ceremony and the inauguration of the first president, Iskander Mirza.

Bangladesh beat SL in Covid-hit ODI

SPORTS DESK

DHAKA: Spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz claimed four wickets as Bangladesh overcame a late fightback from Wanindu Hasaranga to beat Sri Lanka by 33 runs in the first one-day international on Sunday. Mehidy returned figures of 4-30 from 10 overs of his off spin to help bowl out Sri Lanka for 224 in the tourists' chase of 258. Number eight Hasaranga hit a valiant 74 off 60 balls. Mustafizur Rahman took three wickets with fellow fast bowler Mohammad Saifuddin claiming two. Earlier Mushfiqur Rahim (84) and Mahmudullah Riyad (54) put on 109 runs for the fifth wicket to guide Bangladesh to 257-6 after they opted to bat at the start of the three-match series. In reply, Sri Lanka were in trouble at 102-6 before Hasaranga put on 47 runs with Dasun Shanaka and then 62 with Isuru Udana for the eighth wicket to revive their hopes. Saifuddin (2-49) bowled Shanaka for 14 and then claimed the wicket of Hasaranga, who hit three fours and five sixes in his 60-ball knock.

Exams from June 5 under strict SOPs

From Page 01

education ministers of all provinces attended the meeting via a video link along with the health authorities. Earlier, Shafiqat Mehmood said that the NCOC had allowed them to conduct professional exams. He said that if all arrangements were satisfactory permission would be given promptly.

The education minister tweeted: "Please apply to the Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education, Islamabad with details of exam centres, number of students and SOPs to be followed.

On Wednesday, the NCOC issued new coronavirus guidelines for the country and allowed schools in districts with less than a 5% coronavirus positivity ratio to be reopened. NCOC Head and Planning Minister Asad Umar presided over the meeting while Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan, provincial chief secretaries, and other members of authorities were also in attendance.

Briefs

Black Lives Matter activist critically ill

WEB DESK

LONDON: An activist who has played a leading role in anti-racism demonstrations in Britain is in critical condition in a London hospital after being shot. The Taking the Initiative Party said Sasha Johnson, who played a leading role in Black Lives Matter protests last year, was shot in the head on Sunday.

Police and a friend said it did not appear to be a targeted attack, though the party said Johnson had received "numerous death threats" related to her activism. The party said Johnson was "a strong, powerful voice for our people and our community."

The Metropolitan Police said officers were called to reports of gunshots in the Peckham area of the city just before 3am on Sunday. Police said the shooting took place near a house where a party was taking place and a 27-year-old woman was in a hospital in critical condition after being shot.

Rare protests in Oman over jobs

WEB DESK

MUSCAT: Scattered protests in Oman over layoffs and poor economic conditions have drawn a massive police presence in at least one city in the sultanate, with protesters throwing stones at one point and police firing tear gas. Videos posted to social media showed several dozen Omanis in the city of Sohar trailed by a long line of riot police vehicles on Monday. Other images appear to show a line of police in riot gear near a government labour office in the city, 200km (125 miles) northwest of the capital, Muscat. Other images appear to show Omanis fleeing and others being arrested. The images correspond to known landmarks around Sohar, the first major city people enter in the sultanate after coming over the border from the neighbouring United Arab Emirates (UAE). Similar scattered protests on Sunday brought another mass police presence, activists said online. That demonstration was acknowledged by Oman's labour ministry in a tweet, which said it was aware of people gathering there to try to "find new job vacancies and to solve the problems of those who were fired".

Baku to set up national park in Karabakh

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan will set up a new national park in the territories liberated from Armenian occupation, Arzu Samadova, Deputy Head of the Biodiversity Protection Service of the Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources, told media. According to Samadova, currently, the territory for the national park is being cleared of mines. "After de-mining, the borders of the new national park will be determined. Also, new specially protected natural areas will be created in the region," Samadova said.



GWADAR: A group of Ambassadors visited Gwadar on Monday. Ambassador of EU Androulla Kaminara thanked the Pakistani authorities for organising such an interesting trip for a small group of ambassadors. She Tweeted, it gave us an opportunity to see the available infrastructure and learn about future plans. – DNA

As US pulls back in MENA, China, Russia may step in

"The Middle East writ broadly is an area of intense competition between the great powers. And I think that as we adjust our posture in the region, Russia and China will be looking very closely to see if a vacuum opens that they can exploit"

WASHINGTON: As the United States scales back its military presence across the Middle East, it risks giving China and Russia a chance to fill the gap and expand their influence around the Gulf, the top US commander for the region says. While travelling through the Middle East over the past week, Marine General Frank McKenzie, who heads US Central Command, fielded a persistent question from military and political leaders he met: Is the US still committed to their country and the region, and what more support can they get. From the battlefields of Syria to rocket-pummeled neighbourhoods in Iraq, regional leaders worry the US's pivot to Asia means they will be left without the troops, ships, aircraft, and other military aid they need to battle Iran-aligned armed groups. And if the United States is slow to respond, they may look elsewhere for help. "The Middle East writ broadly is

an area of intense competition between the great powers. And I think that as we adjust our posture in the region, Russia and China will be looking very closely to see if a vacuum opens that they can exploit," McKenzie told reporters travelling with him.

"I think they see the United States shifting posture to look at other parts of the world and they sense there may be an opportunity there," McKenzie said. Weapons sales would be one need Moscow and Beijing could exploit. Russia, he said, offers to sell air defence systems and other weapons to whomever it can, and China has a long-term goal to expand its economic power and ultimately establish military bases in the region. In the few short months since President Joe Biden took office, he has ordered the full withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and begun to review the military presence in Iraq, Syria, and around the globe. His administration is



cutting US military support for the Saudi-led offensive against Houthi rebels in Yemen, and the Pentagon has moved ships, forces and weapons systems out of other Middle East countries.

At the same time, however, Biden this month dispatched senior administration officials to the Gulf region to reassure nervous allies as the US looks to reopen talks with Iran on the 2015 nuclear deal, which former President Donald Trump scrapped three years ago. The effort to restart talks with Iran triggers worries in a number of Middle East nations who rely

on the US to maintain pressure on Tehran and its campaigns to fund and supply weapons to armed groups in the region.

But there is ongoing discussion within the Pentagon about sending more assets to the Pacific to fight a rising China. And US military commanders around the globe, including McKenzie, may lose troops and resources as a result. Those could include warships such as the aircraft carrier now sitting in the Gulf, providing security for the Afghanistan withdrawal. The Biden administration views China's rapidly expanding economic influence and military might as the US's primary long-term security challenge. Officials say the US must be ready to counter threats to Taiwan and China's development of military outposts on man-made islands in the South China Sea.

Military commanders caution that China's growing assertiveness is not limited to Asia, noting Beijing is aggressively seeking footholds

in Africa, South America, and the Middle East. "I agree completely that China needs to be the pacing threat we orient on," McKenzie said. "At the same time, we are a global power and we need to have a global outlook, and that means that you have the ability to consider the globe as a whole."

In meetings on Sunday, Saudi leaders were "very concerned" about the ongoing US military posture review, McKenzie said. Houthi rebels continue to attack Saudi Arabia with a variety of missiles and small drones. McKenzie said his message to them was that the number of American troops and weapons is not as important as the overall capability of the integrated US and Saudi air and missile defence system arrayed around the country. And more broadly, he said, that strategy of doing more in the region with less military presence may prevent China and Russia from cashing in on any US void. – Agencies

Iran, IAEA extend agreement

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran and the global nuclear watchdog have extended a technical agreement reached in February for another month, providing a vital window to negotiators in Vienna in their efforts to keep the 2015 nuclear deal alive.

Rafael Grossi, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), announced in the Austrian capital on Monday that the three-month agreement, which was agreed in February, has been extended by one month under the same conditions. Iran's envoy to the Vienna-based organisation Kazem Ghariabadi also confirmed the extension until June 24.

The agreement allows the watchdog to maintain its monitoring equipment at Iranian nuclear sites, but Iran will keep the tapes until the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers is restored and United States sanctions are lifted. Former US President Donald Trump walked out of the deal in 2018 and slapped new harsh sanctions on Iran. Grossi reiterated that the "stop-gap" measure had to be put in place as a way to prevent the agency from "flying blind" in implementing its comprehensive safeguards in Iran.

"The IAEA never accepts any conditions on its mandate and activities," he stressed, in reference to reports in Iranian media claiming that the country's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC) would greenlight the extension contingent to "conditions" that were not named.

US journalist detained in Myanmar

YANGON: An American editor of a Myanmar-based news outlet was detained by authorities in Yangon Monday as he attempted to board a flight out of the coup-hit country, his employers said. United States citizen and managing editor of Frontier Myanmar Danny Fenster was detained at Yangon International Airport, the outlet said in a statement on its verified Twitter account.

Myanmar has been in uproar since the military seized power in a February 1 putsch, with near-daily protests and a nationwide civil disobedience movement. More than 800 people have been killed by the military, according to a local monitoring group.

The press has been caught in the crackdown as the junta tries to tighten control over the flow of information, throttling internet access and revoking the licences of local media outlets.

"We do not know why Danny was detained and have not been able to contact him since this morning. We are concerned for his wellbeing and call for his immediate release," Frontier said in a tweet. "Our priorities right now are to make sure he is safe and to provide him with whatever assistance he needs." Fenster, 37, had been working for the outlet for around a year and was heading home to see his family, Frontier's chief editor Thomas Kean told AFP. The outlet had learned at around 10 am that Fenster had not been allowed to board his flight from Yangon, he added. In a message shared with AFP, Fenster's brother Bryan said the family was "stunned and extremely confused" by the detention. – APP



JOHANNESBURG: Pakistan High Commission organized trade event to introduce Pakistani dates in SA. It was attended by notable dates & nuts importers & distributors Mission assured its full support & assistance to importers of Pakistani products in Southern African market. – DNA

Pak-China co-op, great significance to two countries

BEIJING: Former Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Zhou Gang has said that Pak-China friendly cooperation has been the mainstream of the past 70 years, which is of great significance to the two countries. Zhou Gang joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China in 1962 and successively served as ambassador to Malaysia, Pakistan, Indonesia, and India from 1988 to 2001. Zhou, in an interview with China Economic Net (CEN) on the 70th anniversary of Sino-Pak diplomatic ties, was particularly excited while recalling his working experience in Pakistan from 1991 to 1995, Zhou. He said he would never forget the profound friendship between China and Pakistan. "Friendship, which derives from close contact between the people, holds the key to sound state-to-state relations."

The friendship between local people and the Chinese still moved Zhou to date. On April 25, 1992, Ambassador Zhou Gang went north along the Karakoram Highway on a visit to Gilgit. Since the highway, also called the "China-Pakistan Friendship Highway", was built with the help of China in the 1960s and 1970s, the residents along the road always give the Chinese people warm and friendly reception. "On our way back to the embassy the next day, we had a short rest on a hillside, where a group of children saw us and pointed in our direction. When they walked near and found the Chinese national flag flying on our car, they immediately cheered and shouted in Chinese: 'Chairman Mao! Zhou Enlai!' he recalled. Those children, he said, might have never walked out of the mountainous area or received school education, they knew great Chinese leader Chairman Mao Zedong and Premier Zhou Enlai. "The seeds of Pakistan-China friendship have been deeply planted in their young hearts," Zhou said. It was getting dark as we continued on our way. Unfortunately, we encountered a landslide which hindered our way forward.

Irish Lawmakers to vote on motion to expel Israeli envoy

FOREIGN DESK

DUBLIN: Lawmakers in Ireland have submitted a draft resolution to expel the Israeli ambassador from the country over the regime's latest atrocities against occupied Palestinian territories before it was forced to accept a ceasefire deal. The motion – submitted last week by 11 legislators from four political parties and due to come to vote this week – partially states, "Over 60 children have been murdered by the [IDF]," referring to the Israeli military forces, adding that, "The current esca-

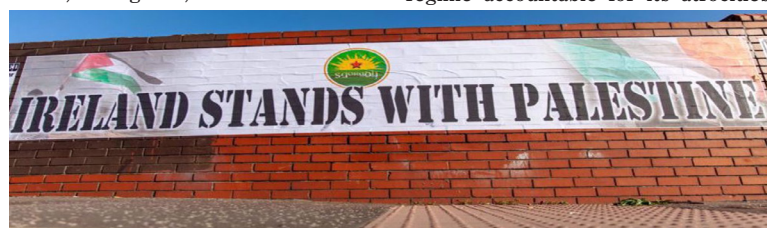
lation of violence was instigated by the attempt to ethnically cleanse 28 Palestinian families from the Sheikh Jarrah area of Jerusalem (al-Quds)." The legislative motion further blasts the Israeli regime for engaging in war crimes, ethnic cleansing and illegal settlement expansion, insisting that "the Israeli ambassador's presence in Ireland is untenable in these circumstances," Israeli news outlets reported Sunday.

Leading sponsor of the motion, Gino Kerry of People Before Profit (PBP) Party, also criticized the European Union for refusing to hold the Tel Aviv regime accountable for its atrocities

in a blog post on the PBP's website, expressing outrage that "the EU has never once envisaged to sanction apartheid Israel economically and hold them accountable for war crimes."

Another major opposition party, Sinn Féin, which holds 37 seats in the lower house of the parliament – the Dáil – also plans to back the motion condemning the Israeli atrocities. The party's youth wing also posted an online petition calling for the expulsion of the regime's ambassador, drawing over 84,000 signatures as of Sunday. This is while the PBP and pro-Palestinian activists are reportedly lobbying those legislators in the Dáil who may have abstained on the motion to expel the Israeli envoy.

Additionally, the coalition is considering allowing lawmakers to vote according to their conscience, making it possible for other pro-Palestinian parties, such as Fianna Fail and the Greens, to vote in favor of the motion.



MAY 2021

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:
www.centrelines.com.pk
www.dnanews.com.pk
www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@Postislamabad / @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST
11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,
G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Briefs

Afghan violence displaces over 8,000 families

DNA

KABUL: Over 8,000 Afghan families have been displaced in at least five provinces as fighting intensifies on multiple fronts between government forces and the Taliban, the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations said. The families are faced with lack of shelter, access to health services, education and other facilities for a normal life, according to the displaced persons, media reported Monday. Baghlan, Helmand, Kunduz, Kandahar and Laghman are the five provinces where the families have been displaced. Heavy clashes are underway in the five provinces over the last few weeks, except for the three days of the ceasefire from May 13 to May 15. "8,500 families have been displaced. Of the figure, 3,500 families have been displaced due to the fresh spat of violence," said Sharifullah Shafiq, the head of the refugees and repatriations directorate in Baghlan. Heavy fighting is underway in three districts of Baghlan for the last two seven days. Taliban on Friday night launched new attacks on the three districts of Baghlan. Parts of the center of Burka district in Baghlan fell to the Taliban. This led to intense fighting between the government forces and the Taliban.

Ex-PIA officials booked over 1.25 bn loss

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Monday registered a case against two former chairmen of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), a former acting CEO, and arrested a former director of the national airline on charges of causing losses of over Rs1 billion to the exchequer. FIA Sindh Director Amir Farooqi told media the investigative body had registered a case against PIA ex-chairmen Nasser Jaffer and Irfan Elahi and former acting CEO Bernd Hildenbrand and also detained former director engineering Maqsood Ahmed. "They caused loss of Rs1.25bn and made advance payments for upgradation of business class seats and entertainment system in years 2014-16," the official said. "The seats were never replaced and the system never installed."

JUI-F preparing anti-PPP alliance in Sindh

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazi (JUI-F) has activated in Sindh to form a new political alliance to give tough time to Pakistan People's Party (PPP), citing sources. The JUI-F has started preparations to form an alternative political alliance of Grand Democratic Alliance (GDA) to challenge the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh province, a private television channel reported Monday. JUI-F central leader Rashid Soomro has contacted key political personalities of Sindh to appease them for joining the new alliance. According to sources, the inclusion process will be based on important political figures instead of traditionally admitting political parties in the alliance. It emerged that JUI-F's Rashid Soomro has held meetings with Ali Gohar Mahar, Zulfiqar Mirza, Sardar Moazzam Abbas, Ibrahim Jatoi, Hasnain Mirza, Agha Taimoor, Sadaruddin Rashidi and Li-quat Jatoi.

Bosnian envoy, AJK President for more people to people links

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: The Ambassador of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Sakib Foric, called on President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan at Awan-e-Sadar, Muzaffarabad on Monday. The AJK President and Ambassador Sakib Foric during the meeting discussed ways to strengthen relations between the people of Bosnia, Pakistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The AJK President expressed his immense pleasure to receive the Bosnian envoy and said that Bosnia is a great nation with a history of the valiant struggle to fight tyranny, ethnic cleansing and genocide. "You have been a beacon of light for other nations in the heart of Europe," he said. Terming Ambassador Sakib Foric as one of the most dynamic diplomats in the diplomatic community in Pakistan, President Masood said Ambassador Sakib's tenure in Pakistan remained very productive in furthering the friendly relations between Bosnia, Pakistan, and Azad Kashmir. "During your tenure the Bosnian President Mr. Sefik Dzaferovic visited Pakistan and I had the



honour of meeting him and discussing the dire situation in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir", the AJK President said adding that he had also discussed with him promotion of closer ties and exchanges between Bosnia and Azad Kashmir. The Bosnian Ambassador said that his country was fully

aware of the plight of Kashmiris and sought full respect for their fundamental rights. President Khan thanked the ambassador for the solidarity shown by the Bosnian People towards the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Ambassador Sakib Foric said that President Sefik Dzaferovic had especially asked him to convey his

greetings and good wishes to President AJK. President Masood Khan reciprocated with warmth and gratitude. Sharing his memories of the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, AJK President said that he had the honor of drafting and steering resolutions on Bosnia in the Third Committee and the General Assembly of the United Nations. He said

that Pakistan, as a member of the United Nations Security Council, had made resolute efforts to stop ethnic cleansing and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina. President Masood Khan said that deep scars left by the crimes against Bosnian people and massacre of innocent Muslims in Srebrenica are still fresh in our

hearts. Pakistan, he said, had sent its peacekeeping forces to the area to help Bosnian people. President Khan said we had supported Bosnians not merely because they were Muslims but because it was a matter of humanity. The President suggested the exchange of students, academics, and journalists between AJK and Bosnia as part of people-to-people contacts to strengthen relations between the people of the two regions. AJK President also expressed his gratitude to Bosnia for providing generous help to build a girls school at Chattar Kalass near Muzaffarabad and constructing a hospital there after the earthquake 2005. The Ambassador thanked AJK President and conveyed his desire to strengthen bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bosnia by promoting cooperation in multiple areas, including defense, particularly training of Bosnia's armed personnel in military institutions of Pakistan. Mr. Sakib Foric acknowledged Pakistan's endeavours for promoting unity among the Muslims and also thanked Pakistan for extending assistance to Bosnia in a number of sectors and widely recognizing its position and sovereignty at the international level.

Sindh bans 'Unnecessary movement' after 8pm

KARACHI: The Sindh government imposed on Monday a sweeping restriction on 'unnecessary movement' after 8pm starting today citing rising COVID-19 cases in Karachi, Hyderabad and Sukkur cities. A meeting of the provincial task force on coronavirus was held on Monday at CM House with Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah in the chair. The decision to further tighten the restrictions came a day after the provincial authorities announced they were extending the current coronavirus restrictions for two more weeks. It was decided to impose a ban on people's movement after 8pm and the provincial police chief was directed to stop people travelling in cars unnecessarily. During the meeting, CM Shah said that if the masses follow the safety guidelines for two more weeks, the sharp post-Eid rise in COVID-19 cases will be limited. "We can ease COVID restrictions in the city when new cases are controlled." The chief minister said that he will pay surprise visits to check the implementation of SOPs, adding that 50% of current total cases in the country are from Sindh. He noted that complaints have been received from Karachi's South and East districts and directed the respective deputy commissioners to ensure the implementation of safety protocols in their areas. — APP

Team formed to investigate Rawalpindi Ring Road scam

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The Punjab Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) constituted on Monday a team to investigate the Rawalpindi Ring Road project scam. Punjab ACE Director General Mohammad Gohar formed the team comprising legal, technical and economic experts, according to a spokesperson for the anti-corruption department. He said the ACE will apprise the nation about facts after the investigation. The investigation into the Ring Road project scam was launched on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Usman Buzdar. It is noteworthy that a fact-finding inquiry committee detected large-scale irregularities in the Rawalpindi Ring Road project.

Zulfi Bukhari sinks deeper in scandal

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Ring Road scandal is assuming new dimensions as Prime Minister Imran Khan's former adviser and his Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan connections to the scandal are becoming more evident in the ongoing probe into the mega scandal. Reportedly, the main accused in the Rawalpindi Ring Road scandal, ex-commissioner Rawalpindi Muhammad Mehmood who tried to mislead Prime Minister Imran Khan also got the support of former adviser to the prime minister on Overseas Pakistanis who vouched for him. According to a private television channel report Monday, a former adviser on Overseas Pakistanis Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari who stepped down from his office after his name was surfaced in the ring road scandal, vouched for ex-commissioner Rawalpindi Muhammad Mehmood. Sources informed that in his meeting with Prime Minister Khan, Mr Bukhari had appreciated the services of Mr Mehmood and spoke on his behalf. He requested the PM to restore ex-commissioner's services pleading his innocence. But the prime minister did not buy Mr Bukhari's argument and did not lend his ear to his advice.

The inquiry committee formed by the Punjab government revealed that former commissioner Muhammad Mehmood made illegal changes in the actual plan of the Rawalpindi Ring Road to benefit some influential persons. Former LAC Waseem Tabish and former government officer Abdullah were also involved in the Ring Road project scam, said the report. On May 17, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Zulfi Bukhari resigned from his public office after an inquiry into the Rawalpindi Ring Road project alleged his involvement in corrupt practices. In a series of tweets he posted earlier today, the PM's aide said he has resigned 'owing to the allegations in ongoing Ring Road inquiry' until his name is 'cleared up of any allegations'.

Nisar denied permission to take oath as MPA

DNA

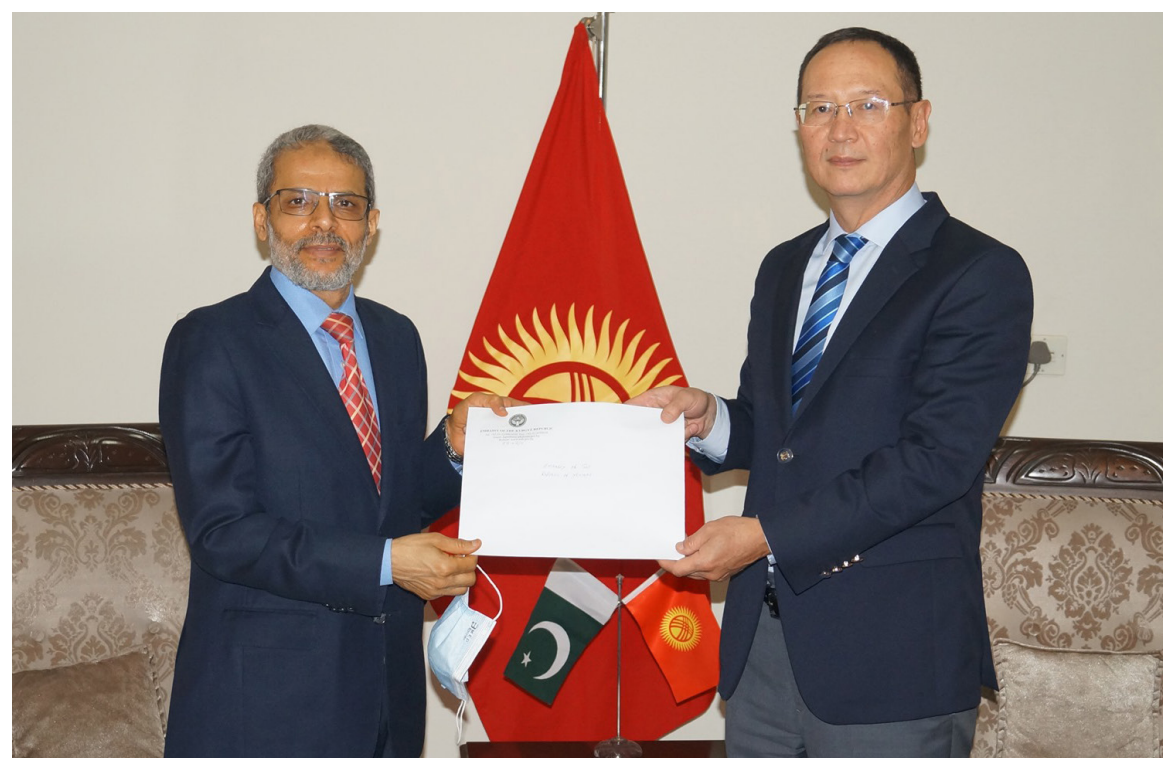
LAHORE: Former Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) stalwart Chaudhry Nisar was not allowed to take oath on Monday as a Member of the Punjab Assembly (MPA) three years after he got elected during the 2018 elections. Provincial Law Minister Raja Bisharhat also met with Ch Nisar. Nisar told the law minister that he came to take oath as a member of the provincial assembly. But he was informed that Speaker Punjab Assembly Ch Pervaiz Elahi was officiating the duties of the acting governor and the deputy speaker could not make it to the assembly owing to some personal reasons. But Ch Nisar insisted that the panel chairman could perform his swearing-in. Nisar who left the assembly



building without taking oath said that he decided to take oath after a political development occurred. "Everybody knows the circumstances which led to my decision regarding not taking oath as the MPA after my success in the National Assembly constituency was turned into a defeat," he said. "The provincial government recently introduced an ordinance despite clearly being stated in the constitution regarding the procedure of election and de-seating of an MPA," he said while expressing his reservation on the ordinance.

Webinar discusses Israeli invasion of Gaza

ISLAMABAD: The Global and Regional Studies Center organized a seminar on "The Israeli invasion of Gaza, the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe, its ramifications for the Peace and Security in the Middle East and policy options for Pakistan". Eminent foreign policy experts which included Ambassadors Najmuddin A. Sheikh, and Mustafa Kamal Qazi were the panelists while Ambassador G Rasool Baluch was the moderator. In his opening remarks Ambassador Baluch stated that, since the current crisis is connected to complex Middle East Question which has many dimensions, however during discussions an attempt will be made to understand the following five dimensions of the issue. The causes of the latest Israeli invasion. Why the recently concluded Abraham Accords did not achieve the objective of finding solutions for the lasting peace between Israel and Palestinians. Reasons of continued US inability to devise a balanced policy regarding Palestinian question. The response of the world in general and of Muslim/Arab world in particular to the Israeli aggression. Policy options for Pakistan. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Erik Beishembiev, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan handed over the copy of the Note of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic on appointment of Mohammed Motaah Alashabi as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Yemen to the Kyrgyz Republic with residence in Islamabad. Erik Beishembiev wished Ambassador of Yemen to the Kyrgyz Republic success in the implementation of all goals and objectives in Kyrgyzstan. — DNA

Regional situation conducive to boost Pak-Iran ties

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The experts from both sides say diplomatic relations between Iran and Pakistan are based on commonalities of language, literature, culture and religion adding the regional situation is quite conducive to strengthen bilateral ties. They were speaking at a webinar jointly organized by Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan), DTN and Tehran International Studies and Research Institute (TISRI) on "Iran-Pakistan diplomatic relations: opportunities for cooperation and convergence". They said enhanced cultural collaboration and heritage tourism can bring the people from both sides closer to each other adding that youth

engagement in a variety of sectors is imperative. They viewed China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) could be another economic and trade bond for closer ties between Iran and Pakistan. Chairman Pakistan Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed said Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize Islamic Republic of Iran. He added Persian was the court language of the sub-continent before the British came into the area. "Iran has been through lot of struggle and Pakistan has always stood by it," he said. Mushahid 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.

Sniffer dogs to track Covid at Peshawar airport

DNA

PESHAWAR: Keeping in view surge in the coronavirus cases and following successful experiment with the use of sniffer dogs to detect the coronavirus patients at Islamabad airport, the National Command and Operation Center (NCOCC) has decided to use sniffer dogs at Peshawar's Bacha Khan airport as well to trace patients of the pandemic. Sources said officials at the airport have started using two trained Covid-19 sniffer dogs to pick out infected passengers. 177 passengers arrived at the Peshawar airport on board a private airline's flight today, they said. When the flyers' samples were tested for Covid-19, one of them was found to be carrying the deadly virus, they added. The dogs helped detect the virus in one of the passengers by sniffing their swabs, the sources said. Dogs specially trained to detect Covid-19 have also been deployed at the New Islamabad Airport. A spokesman for the Civil Aviation Authority has said that sniffer dogs are being used at the airports of different countries to track coronavirus patients.

China in discussion with third parties on CPEC extension

DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson on Monday appreciated Prime Minister Imran Khan's remarks on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and said that the Chinese side was having discussion with third parties, including Afghanistan on the extension of the flagship project. "We have noted the relevant remarks by Prime Minister Imran Khan and we appreciate it," Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing while responding to a question on PM Imran Khan's remarks about

CPEC. While chairing a recent high level meeting, the prime minister had stated that the CPEC will bring economic progress not only to Pakistan, but the entire region. The spokesperson said that the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) was an open and inclusive international economic cooperation initiative that was dedicated to improve connectivity and to achieve common development. "The CPEC as pioneering projects of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has made important and major progress in infrastructure, energy, ports and industrial parks," he added. In the meantime, he said, "We are also extending it to regional countries,

including Afghanistan. This will not only boost faster economic development in Pakistan, but also regional connectivity." Zhao Lijian said that China would like to work with Pakistan for high quality development of the CPEC and extend it to regional countries, improve people's well being and play a bigger role in regional connectivity and economic integration. To a specific question on third party participation in the CPEC framework, he informed that China was having discussion with third parties, including Afghanistan, on the extension of CPEC. The two sides were having consulta-

tions through diplomatic channels, he said and added, "We notice that Afghanistan is importing and exporting goods through Gwadar and Karachi ports. High speed highways are also being extended to Afghanistan." To yet another question, he dismissed Indian claim that the CPEC was passing through a disputed territory and said that China had stated its principled position on Kashmir many times. "The CPEC is an economic initiative that targets no third country. It is not about territorial disputes and does not affect our principled position on the issue of Kashmir," he added. Responding to a question

regarding Myanmar, the spokesperson said he was not aware of fighting between Myanmar military forces and opposition across the river from Ruili, close to China's borders. Zhao Lijian said that China's position on the situation in Myanmar was consistent and clear, adding, "We do not want to see any bloodshed and clashes or any injury to civilians." He asked the relevant sides to try their best to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control and said that China would continue to maintain communication with the relevant sides and try to bring the situation to a steady path at an early date.