



# Islamabad POST

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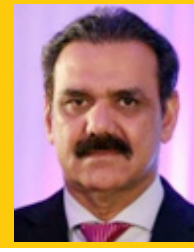
Price Rs. 20

**SCO Secretary General Vladimir Norov lauds Pakistan's role in SCO**

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## Briefs

**Rs100b start-up loans announced**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday announced an allocation of Rs100 billion for start-up loans and 170,000 Skilled Education Scholarships to overcome the challenge of unemployment. The prime minister, in a special televised message for youth, said the government is focused on promoting contemporary skills through scholarships and courses in a bid to help the youth become self-reliant in earning and businesses.

**PPP, ANP should apologise**

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman said Tuesday PPP and ANP could rejoin the alliance if they apologised to the anti-government movement for going against its decisions. The PDM chief's comments came during his meeting with PML-N President and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shabbaz Sharif at the latter's residence in Lahore. Fazl, addressing a press conference after the meeting, said both parties - PPP and ANP - had been given sufficient time to get back to the PDM leadership, but they have not done so.

**Shafqat tests positive for Covid-19**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture Shafqat Mahmood has tested positive for coronavirus. The federal minister, in a tweet on his official handle, revealed that he has tested positive for the virus; however, he feels fine with mild symptoms. On the other hand, Pakistan has reported 92 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 905,852.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs meeting of Federal Cabinet. -DNA

## Army concerned over cross-border attacks

Reviewing recent developments in Afghan peace process, the forum reaffirmed Pakistan's support for regional peace

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: The top brass of Pakistan Army has asked the government in Afghanistan to deny any space to the spoilers of the peace process, expressing the hope the Afghan soil will not be used against Pakistan. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa chaired the Corps Commanders Conference at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Tuesday. The forum was briefed on

## COAS, US defense chief hold talks

SAIFULLAH

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa had a telephonic conversation with US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. According to the details, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin in a tweet said that he spoke with Pakistan Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. During the conversation matters of mutual interest, regional security situation, developments in Afghan Peace Process, and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed. Gen. Austin reiterated his appreciation for Pakistan's support for Afghanistan peace negotiations and expressed his desire to continue to build on the US Pakistan bilateral relationship. The US dignitary also shared the development on his official handle.

national and regional security situation. The participants took comprehensive review of global, regional and domestic security environment with particular focus on situation along borders especially Line of Control (LOC) and Working Boundary and Pak-Afghan Border. The forum was apprised on evolving operational imperatives and the corresponding strategy to meet the upcoming challenges. Gen Bajwa expressed satisfaction over the army's operational readiness in view of emerging security threats.

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**Covid-19 infects 2253 more persons**

The number of positive cases has surged to 905,852

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 92 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 905,852. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 20,400 on Tuesday. According to the latest figures by the NCOC 2,253 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 9,839 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab 4,936 in Sindh, 3,970 in KP, 746 in Islamabad, 532 in Azad Kashmir.

## UK's ruling party accused of Islamophobia

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Anti-Muslim feeling within Britain's governing Conservative Party continues to be a problem at both an individual and local association level, an independent investigation concluded on Tuesday. The center-right party has been dogged for years by accusations of Islamophobia that have been levelled against figures including Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "Anti-Muslim sentiment remains a problem within the party. This is damaging to the party, and alienates a significant section of society," the investigation led by Swaran Singh, a former commissioner at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, found. The independent probe said since 2015 the "bulk" of discrimination complaints had been made over anti-Muslim allegations. Of 1,418 complaints relating to 727 incidents of alleged discrimination, more than two-thirds of the incidents - 496 cases - related to Islam. While the report found "there were examples of anti-Muslim discrimination by individuals and groups at local association level," it said those problems fell short of claims of "institutional racism." The report also found there was no evidence that complaints related to Islam are treated differently from those related to other forms of discrimination. Incidents including a column written by Johnson before he became prime minister about Muslim women had suggested to respondents "a party and leadership that is insensitive to Muslim communities."

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## UAE keen to invest in maritime sector

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi on Tuesday called on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Syed Ali Haider Zaidi here. During the meeting, matters of mutual interests were discussed, said a press release. The main discussion took place regarding a joint working mechanism and on keeping close coordination between Pakistan and UAE ports. The Ambassador showed keen interest in Pakistan's Maritime sector. Minister Ali Zaidi also shared his vision for Maritime and apprised the ambassador about the progress that has been made in this sector since he took office. Various ideas and opportunities were also discussed on potential collaboration.

## Senate slams Israeli crimes in Palestine

The House also urged the international community to take immediate steps to save Palestinian people from further miseries at the hands of fascist Israel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Tuesday passed a unanimous resolution condemning crimes against humanity committed by Israeli occupation forces in Gaza. The resolution moved by Leader of the House Dr Shehzad Waseem, also expressed its deep resentment at the hypocrisy and double standards of various countries, whose condemnation is missing but still talk of humanity; despite being complacent with the aggressor. It said we reject any attempt to equate the aggressor Israel with the victims of aggression, the Palestinian people as it is not a conflict rather a one-sided war. The Senate of Pakistan welcomed the government of Pakistan's initiative to dispatch humanitarian assistance to the encircled people of Gaza. The House also urged the international community to take immediate effective and concrete steps to save Palestinian people from further anguish and miseries in the hands of fascist Israeli war machine.

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## Federal Cabinet committee to review TLP ban

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet with Prime Minister Imran Khan in the chair has referred the review of the ban on Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) to a committee of the Interior Ministry. A three-member review committee of the Interior Ministry will now hear the request to withdraw the ban on Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry, briefing the media about the cabinet's decisions in Islamabad on Tuesday, said "The review committee of the Interior Ministry will include officials from the Interior Ministry and the Law Ministry."

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ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, the UAE Ambassador in Islamabad, meets H.E. Ali Haider Zaidi, Minister of Maritime Affairs, and discusses bilateral work and joint projects between the two countries. - DNA

## Maryam Nawaz rules out any new alliance

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice-President Maryam Nawaz has ruled out the making of any alliance, saying the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) is still the same. Talking to media after attending a hearing in Islamabad High Court on Tuesday, Maryam Nawaz fully endorsed PML-N leader Khaqan Abbasi's point of view regarding his objection to the inclusion of PPP into the PDM without giving a pretty good reason as why it had ditched the PML-N and other opposition parties on the issue of Senate elections. She said Abbasi was absolutely right and the PML-N stance was not different from that of Abbasi's. To a question, Maryam said no new alliance was in the making as PDM was still the same.

## Khaqan opposed PPP return to PDM

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Shahid Khaqan has threatened to resign after from PDM if PPP was taken back. He is also not happy with the decision to invite PPP back in the fold as according to him PPP has betrayed the PDM. Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi remains concerned over the invitation of the PPP to join the PDM again. Shahid Khaqan Abbasi told informal stories in Islamabad that the PDM should seek new secretary general as part of the PPP re-alliance.

## Inside...

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NUST, FAST team as National winner of MSH - Page 03

CDA to give 1500 cart vendors licenses by end of the year - Page 04

An earthy solution to heavenly Jerusalem - Page 05

Tayyip Erdogan warns against rising Islamophobia in West - Page 06

Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover reaches US\$10.32b - Page 07

Poverty alleviation: Pak to benefit from China - Page 08

## SCO Secy General lauds Pak role in the SCO

Vladimir Norov says member states firm against challenges; Pak hosts 16th session of Forum

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Vladimir Norov, Secretary-General of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has appreciated Pakistan's role in SCO. He further indicated that SCO states stand firm against the regional challenges. He mentioned that the recommendations of the forum will contribute the official documents presented to SCO for its future initiatives. The SCO Secretary General expressed these remarks during the XVI Meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Forum which took place on Wednesday. The forum was conducted virtually and representatives of the SCO Member states participated. The sixteenth session of the SCO forum was hosted by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad being an active member of the SCO Think Tank forum participated in the forum.



From Pakistan, representatives of Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad and South Asian Strategic Stability Institute (SASSI) also participated. The session was commenced with the opening remarks of Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad of Islamic Republic of Pakistan. He extended his gratitude CGSS and SASSI and highlighted that in the contemporary era of globalization, there is a need of regional cooperation to produce sustainable outcomes. He was of the view that SCO provides its member states with a platform to work and cooperate together on various platforms and sectors. Ms. Aisha Farooqi, National Coordinator SCO, Islamic Republic of Pakistan mentioned that SCO is successfully operating in the region and more states are applying for its observer status. She highlighted the contribution of SCO towards the security and

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## Pak committed to 'Engage Africa' initiative

ISLAMABAD: In a statement issued on Africa Day 2021, FO Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry said Pakistan reaffirms its full support to the aspirations of African nations for peace, progress and prosperity. He said Pakistan extends its heartfelt felicitations on 'Africa Day 2021' commemorating the 58th Anniversary of the establishment of the African Union. The Spokesperson said Pakistan has been making sustained and meaningful contributions towards peace and security efforts in Africa. He said since 1960s, Pakistani blue helmets have been engaged in peace-keeping and peace-building initiatives across the Continent. - DNA



## Briefs

## FESCO issues shutdown programme

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown programme for Thursday for necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the programme, power supply from D-ground feeder emanating from 220-KV Jarawal Road grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. while Chenab Nagar feeder originating from 132-KV Chiniot grid station will observe shutdown from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Thursday (May 27). Similarly, electricity supply from Islam Nagar feeder emanating from 132-KV University grid station will remain suspended from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. whereas FIEDMC, Multan Chemical, PABC and Kamal feeders originating from 132-KV FIEDMC grid station, Scarp-1 and Darul Ehsan feeders emanating from 132-KV Chak Jhumra grid station will observe load shedding from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on May 27. Meanwhile, electricity supply from Muslim Colony, new Factory Area and College Road feeders originating from 132-KV Chenab Nagar grid station, Mochiwala Road, Kathoor, Painsara Road, Dawakhari, Hamza Board, Jhang Road and Maqbool Pur feeders emanating from 132-KV Gojra grid station will remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. while Faisalabad Road feeder originating from 132-KV Chiniot Industrial grid station and all feeders emanating from 66-KV Shams Textile Mill grid station will observe shutdown from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Thursday. — APP

## FCCI hails restoration of Pak-Iran trade trains

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) President Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed has welcomed the restoration of trade trains between Pakistan and Iran after suspension of many days. He said that Iran is an important neighbor country of Pakistan. "We must enhance bilateral trade between the two countries through road and rail links", he said and added that the present railway track between Pakistan and Iran is in shambles and both countries must focus on its immediate repair and up gradation so that regular and fast freight trains can operate on it. He said that Pakistan could further enhance its trade volume with Iran in addition to expanding the freight train up to Turkey through safe and affordable means of communication. President FCCI demanded that Pakistan railway should also launch a connecting trade train to link Faisalabad with Chagai so that the business community of Faisalabad could also benefit from this railway link. — APP

## Punjab to reopen all medical schools from May 27

LAHORE: Punjab government has Tuesday announced to open all public and private medical colleges across the province starting May 27 with all Covid-19 SOPs strictly in place. All medical universities, medical colleges and dental colleges falling under the rubric of the notification will now open from May 27 according to the notification released by the Specialized Healthcare department of Punjab. Allied health sciences school of the province will too be opening side by side with medical colleges, the notification said. The decision has been taken in consideration of the ongoing pandemic situation with mandatory adherence to COVID SOPs. In the first step, the notification said, the third year, fourth year and final year MBBS students alongside the BDS students will be able to take classes. Separately today in a similar development earlier, Punjab government also allowed elective surgeries and out-patient department (OPD) services to be resumed at all public hospitals in the province. — DNA

## UNODC releases free legal aid support to more than 500 UTPs

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Speaking at the fourth provincial Legal Aid Network Coordination Meeting on 25th May 2021 – organized by UNODC Country Office in collaboration with the Prison Department of Sindh in Karachi Ms. Shamim Mumtaz, Chairperson, Sindh Child Protection Authority and MPA Sindh Assembly appreciated the transformative role played by the Legal Aid Project of UNODC. Among others, the provision of speedy justice to more than 500 Under Trial Prisoners (UTPs) through free legal aid was hailed as an exemplary initiative in prison reforms. These UTPs include a large proportion of women, children, juveniles, minorities, people with disability, elders, including poor and marginalized groups who are unable to afford representation



in a court of law or access the legal system. Implemented by UNODC in 22 districts of Sindh with support from the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs from the US Department of State, the Legal Aid Project has been providing free

Legal Aid to the UTPs in Sindh prisons since 2017. The efforts are complemented through training of investigation officers and prosecutors on enhancing their cooperation in criminal cases for free and fair delivery of speedy justice. Mr. Jeremy Milsom, Rep-

resentative of UNODC – Pakistan commended the vision and cooperation by the Prison Department, Government of Sindh and contribution of the Project towards strengthening the foundational building blocks of a free and fair legal aid service for eligible and

needy inmates in the prisons of Sindh. The project has also built successful referral linkages with civil society organizations, pro-bono legal practitioners and services to uphold the rights of vulnerable prisoners, developing a unified roadmap

on the provision of free legal aid in Sindh. This has helped to engender a community of responsible legal aid service providers.

The meeting was well-attended by eminent representatives from the criminal justice institutions and legal fraternity, including Qazi Nazeer Ahmad, IG Prisons Sindh, Mr. Abdul Razaq, Registrar Sindh High Court, Mr. Shahid Shafiq, Senior Faculty Member Sindh Judicial Academy, Mr. Naem Qurashi President Karachi Bar Association, Mr. Arif Dawood Vice Chairman Sindh Bar Council, representatives from Sindh Prisons Department, Sindh Prosecution Department, Civil Society Organizations and Legal Aid experts in Sindh. The stakeholders unanimously endorsed the Terms of Reference for establishing and sustaining a Free Legal Aid Service Provider within the Prison Department of Sindh.

## All Sindh cops to receive COVID jobs

DNA

KARACHI: Sindh government has decided to abolish the age limit for COVID vaccination of cops in the province with Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah terming them as frontline workers. The decision was taken in a meeting of the Sindh cabinet headed by Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Tuesday, where it was agreed that all cops across the province will now be vaccinated on a priority basis. The cabinet decided that likewise doctors and other paramedical staff, the policemen will also be exempted from the age limit for COVID vaccination. "The policemen are frontline workers and we have to safeguard them by administering COVID vaccine to them," the chief minister said during the cabinet meeting. According to April's statistics, as many as 6,366 police officers and personnel have been affected by the coronavirus since the pandemic began last year in Feb, out of whom 24 passed away from the disease while 6,297 have recovered. It is pertinent to mention here that currently, the NCOC has allowed vaccination of people aged above 30-year-old.

## Literary forum holds meeting on Pak-China friendship

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An online meeting was held under the auspices of the Pakistan-China Literary Forum on the occasion of 70th anniversary of Pak-China friendship. The meeting was attended by Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters, Munir Ahmad Badini, Mustansar Hussain Tarar, Jami Chandio, Maqsood Jafery, Abasin Yousafzai and representative of Pakistan embassy Ahmad Farooq. While the Chinese delegation consisted of the President of China Writers Association Tie Ning, Chinese diplomat Zhang Heqing, Zhou Xuanpu, Yuan Kang, Wu Xin and Huo Janming, Zhou Yuan. On this occasion the both organizations signed a memorandum of understanding. Chairman of Pakistan Academy of Letters Dr. Yousuf Khushk said in his address that the MoU between Pakistan Academy of Letters and China Writers Association on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of Pak-China friendship is a memorable event. It is very first time in the history of PAL and CWA that a MoU is signed.

## \$13b invested in Pakistan under CPEC

DNA

LAHORE: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Authority Chairman Lt. Gen. (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa said on Tuesday that US \$13 billion had been invested in Pakistan under CPEC while another US \$12 billion investment was in the pipeline, which would revolutionize the country. He was talking to media on the occasion of a visit to Challenge Textile Factory on Lahore-Multan Road with Chinese investment of US \$ 150 million. Asim Saleem Bajwa said that more economic zones

were being established under the CPEC which would bring more Chinese investment in Pakistan and provide all possible facilities to foreign investors. He said that Challenge Group of China had set up an international standard industrial unit which he was happy to see and Challenge Group would also be setting up Challenge Fashion Export Park in Pakistan in future which would provide employment to thousands of people in Pakistan. "My purpose of coming here was just to provide all the infrastructure for Chinese investment and to address the lack of facilities," he said.



Islamabad: Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmood Khan and Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Khalid Khursheed call on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

## Govt trying to make Lahore clean, green: Dr Yasmin

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid on Tuesday said the Punjab government was trying its best to make the Lahore metropolis clean and green as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. She was chairing a meeting to review arrangements to keep the Punjab clean on directions of Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar, held at the Chief Minister Secretariat, here. She reviewed roles, responsibilities and measures to keep Lahore clean. The minister said the Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) would soon complete the hiring of 3,000 employees to enhance its capacity. She said that waste was being regularly disposed of on daily basis from key spots in the city. "The LWMC is also working on night operations to keep the city clean," she informed. On average, around 6000 ton waste was disposed of from the city daily, she said. "We have planned to make Lahore beautiful in the next 15 days," the minister vowed. She said that all institutions were working to make the city clean. The minister appealed to the people to place their waste in LMWC containers instead of throwing them on roads. She said that an awareness campaign would be launched in the provincial capital. She said that another meeting would be called in 15



days to see the progress. She said the Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA) was taking measures to beautify the city and it must develop an integrated strategy to make the city clean. She directed all institutions to notify the focal persons for coordination and effective service delivery and the drains of the city should be specially focused. "We are also working on strategy to reduce pollution level in the city besides enhancing aesthetics of main roads," she said. Addressing the meeting, Punjab Education Minister Murad Raas said that sweeping operations were underway for a clean Lahore and the cleanliness was being regularly monitored. Senator Ejaz Chaudhry said all institutions were working jointly to make Lahore clean and the city could be cleaned only by joint efforts of all stakeholders. The Chairman Lahore Waste Management and the MD PHA presented road map to keep Lahore clean. Commissioner Lahore Division Captain (Retd) Usman Younis, Secretary Local Government Noor-ul-Amin Mengal and other officials attended the meeting.

## Solid measures to be taken for Anti-dengue campaign

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: In order to ensure responsible implementation on anti-dengue campaign in the district and relevant measures should not be delayed in this regard. This was stated by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali while reviewing the implementation of anti-dengue measures in the weekly meeting of District Emergency Response Committee. CEO Health Dr. Mushtaq Sipra, District Health Officer Dr. Bilal Ahmed, District Coordinator for Infectious Diseases Dr. Zulqarnain, Education,

Health, Social Welfare, Environment, Civil Defense, Livestock, Industries, Labor, WASA, PHA, Officers of Punjab Police and other departments were also present. District Coordinator briefed about the results of surveillance and performance of anti-dengue teams. The Deputy Commissioner directed that the hotspots for breeding of dengue larvae should be surveyed frequently and there should be no delay in chemical treatment. He said that dengue activities should be made clear and concerned departments should ensure their attendance in the meeting

of Tehsil Emergency Response Committees and the DC office should be kept informed of the proceedings report of the meeting. He directed to seek clarification from some officers who were absent from the meeting. During the meeting, the departments also apprised the performance report regarding anti-dengue while the PITB representative briefed on the results of surveillance activities from Android mobile phones.

**10,385 health workers get vaccinated**  
Corona vaccine was administered to 10,385 health workers at the vaccination centers in Faisalabad

district yesterday, while 209,730 public and health workers have been vaccinated so far. The first dose was given to 154,299 and 29,660 persons were administered second dose and 16,238 health workers were given first and the 9528 were administered second dose. District Health Officer Dr. Ata ul Moenun informed that new center at Social Security Hospital has established and now total of 18 centers are functioning where staff are also on duty. He said that shady seating arrangements, drinking water, parking, toilets and guidance staff was available from 8 am to 8 pm.



RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa presides over Corps Commanders Conference. — DNA

## Experts suggest to ensure transition to clean energy

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Right steps should be taken at every level to ensure transition towards clean energy in Pakistan. The experts in oil and gas sector said this while sharing their views with the participants at the public private dialogue 'The role of Oil and Gas Sector in clean energy transition of Pakistan-Rural Sindh,' jointly organized by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Khairpur, here on Tuesday. Senior Manager & Energy and Low Carbon Specialist, ICF, Mr Enrui Zhang, remarked that the employment opportunities and the situation of power shortage in Pakistan has been significantly improved due to the CPEC under Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He opined that the

oil and gas will play a critical role in Pakistan's future mix and it provides multiple areas for Pak-China collaboration such as upgrade of infrastructure, exploration of reserves, and production. However, now the targets of CPEC should be aligned with climate and energy targets of Pakistan. Prof Dr Taj Muhammad Lashari, Dean Social Sciences, Shah Abdul Latif University (SALU), Khairpur, was of view that it should be the responsibility of oil and gas companies to provide power access to people below poverty line. Such initiative would help in improving their living standards besides building a sense of security amongst them, he added. Director Planning and development, Mr Sajjad Hussain Talpur, highlighted that the living conditions of people in Badin and Khairpur districts are dismally poor despite the area

being producer of the significant volume of oil and gas. Therefore, the funds under CSR should be used on the development projects in these areas. Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI, informed the participants about the renewable energy policy of the government and said that it is very encouraging to shift country towards climate friendly projects. He added further that the investments in renewable sources should remain a priority and transmission and distribution challenges should be addressed. Moreover, he said, we need to incentivize the demand side so that there is a large consumer base for clean energy. Ms Nimra Wasim, from Engro Vopak Terminal Limited, highlighted that Engro is focusing on renewable substitutes and has started green initiatives recently. Dr Faheem Akhtar,

from IBA Sukkur, was of the opinion that the major bottleneck currently Pakistan is facing is the transmission sector due to which Pakistan is only able to evacuate 22,000 MW despite having a generation capacity of 37,000 MW. To overcome the barrier of grid absence, micro-grids can be installed in rural areas. Associate professor, SALU, Dr Naveed Sheikh, while describing the role of Academia in Clean Energy Transition, said that the curriculum of academic studies should be revised to include courses on 'Clean Environment' and 'Quality of life'. Dr Bilal Shams Memon, from Mehran University of Engineering & Technology, Khairpur, emphasized that the curriculum should also be linked to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), CSR, and entrepreneurship projects. Dr Abdul Shakoor, representing Be-

nazir Bhutto Shaheed University of Technology and Skill Development, Khairpur, local manufacturing of solar PV panels should be explored, and Oil and Gas sector companies could take lead in encouraging such initiatives. Each individual should be aware of his carbon footprints and ways to reduce carbon emissions. Ms Maha Kamal, Teaching Fellow, Information Technology University, opined that we need to move away from thermal based fuels to come in line with Paris Agreement, and be cognizant of the social and economic impacts of clean energy transition. Earlier, Dr Hina Aslam, Research Fellow, SDPI, highlighted the role of oil and gas companies in supporting the growth of deep decarbonization technologies for the sector at the company and industry level, adopting green business models and initiatives.

## FWMC distributes masks and sanitizers

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Waste Management Company (FWMC) distributed facemasks and sanitizers among its workers for their safety and protection from corona virus. In this connection, a formal ceremony was held at Union Council No 70 People's Colony where MPA Chaudhry Lateef Nazir attended it as chief guest while Chief Executive Officer FWMC Kashif Raza Awan, Deputy Manager Mutayyab Virk, Assistant Manager Huzaifa Jaleel, Zonal Officer Zafar Awan and others were also present. MPA Lateef Nazir said that workers were precious asset of the company and all possible steps would be taken for their protection and safety. CEO FWMC Kashif Raza said that company's workers were working on front line to serve masses. Therefore, the company was utilising all available resources for their protection.

## AC visits vegetable market

Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari visited fruits and vegetables market Ghulam Muhammad Abad and checked availability of items. He also observed process of the auction and directed the market committee staff to keep eye on supply of fruits and vegetables so that prices could not be increased. He also checked security arrangements in the market and directed the market committee to ensure strict implementation on anti-corona SOPs. — APP



**Briefs****1701 professional beggars arrested**

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police on Tuesday arrested as many as 1701 professional beggars from the city during its ongoing campaign.

The Incharge Anti-Begging Squad, City Traffic Police (CTP) informed that traffic police has arrested 1701 professional beggars from various areas of the city.

The City Traffic Police (CTP) has lodged a number of first information reports (FIRs) in different police stations against beggars caught from different areas, he said.

He further informed that 17 beggar children netted from the city roads were handed over to Child Protection Bureau (CPB), the police officer added.

Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rai Mazhar Iqbal said that they had been trying to eliminate begging from the city roads and many professional beggars had been caught and sent behind the bars.

The Chief Traffic Officer urged the citizens to play their role in discourage professional beggars. — APP

**4,586 vehicles fined for tinted glasses****STAFF REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has penalized some 4,586 vehicles by imposing fine of over Rs 1 million for using tinted glasses and non-pattern number plates.

The ITP special squads took action against the violators during the last one week, following directions of Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Traffic, Farrukh Rashid, said a news release.

Inspector General of Police, Islamabad (IGP) Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman had constituted the squads some days ago for the purpose, besides to take action against those vendors preparing such number plates.

The SSP Traffic appreciated the officers and Jawans who were striving hard to reduce the number of accidents in the Capital city through enforcement of traffic laws.

The ITP personnel, he said were being trained on high moral values so they could demonstrate gentle attitude while interacting with motorists at the roads.

The behavior of citizens on the roads reflects the social norms of the society, he said while appealing the motorists to abide by traffic laws as a minor mistake on the road might lead to a fatal accident.

"Obeying traffic rules can save your life and the lives of others, never violate traffic laws and be responsible and patriot citizens," the SSP maintained.

**No hot words exchange between members**

ISLAMABAD: The Spokesman Indus River System Authority (IRSA) has strongly contradicted exchange of hot words between the members during the today's meeting.

Khalid Idriss Rana said the meeting was convened to review the water situation in the dams.

Keeping in view water situation in the rivers, it was decided to continue the water distribution as per the decisions taken in the meeting on May 21.

He said member Sindh objected use of 500 cusecs water by the Punjab from Taunsa-Panjab Link Canal.

However, Member Punjab pleaded under Article 14 (b) of the Water Accord, every province could take water share from any canal. — APP

**Pakistan, African brothers stand shoulder to shoulder****ZUBAIR AHMAD**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) had a Web-Celebration on the occasion of Africa Day. The distinguished speakers included: Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, Ambassador Sohaih Mahmood, Ambassador Ali Javed, Additional Foreign Secretary Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan, Maj. General Zahid Mehmood from the Ministry of Defence and Mr. Mohammad Nasir Mirza, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce.

Representatives from African missions in Pakistan, Pakistani missions in Africa, non-residential African missions to Pakistan, academics, members of the business community and students also joined the web-celebration.

Videos on Pak-Africa Ties and Frontier Works Organization were also played on the occasion.

During his remarks, the Foreign Minister first extended heartiest felicitations to the people of Africa.



African Union has indeed come a long way and represents hopes and aspirations of the most promising region of the world. He called the African continent the economic powerhouse of the future. He went on to outline Pakistan's relations with African nations and said that deep ethics have always elevated Pakistan's support to Africa. From colonialism to apartheid, Pakistan has stood shoulder to shoulder with its African brothers and has always extended its political support towards Africa. He briefed the audience of how

phase one of Pakistan's Engage Africa Policy has been executed. New missions such as the one in Rwanda, have been established and more are in the process of being set up. He said that we now look forward to implementing Phase two and three of the Engage Africa policy. The Foreign Minister stated that Pakistan aims to expand its diplomatic footprint across all 54 African partners. He also talked about targeted support being provided by Pakistan to African countries. The Foreign Minister said that

still a great deal of work remains such as activating, institutionalising contacts with African regional communities, upgrading bilateral relations through joint missions, working in harmony with parliaments, think tanks and academia, elevating bilateral political missions through higher levels and promoting scientific, technical cooperation and enhancing maritime connectivity. He also briefed the audience on how Pakistan has been at the forefront of peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions in Africa and said Pakistan's

commitment towards Africa never has and never will falter. He also outlined how despite having modest financial resources, during the covid pandemic, Pakistan was able to extend support to African nations. He concluded by saying that while people say Africa is the continent of the future, in fact the future is here now.

The Foreign Secretary said that Pakistan's engagement with Africa is expanding due to Government's visionary leadership. He said going forward we remain fully committed to enhancing our diplomatic presence on the African continent. He applauded CAMEA at ISSI's efforts towards developing a documentary framework where proposals have been consolidated and must now be implemented.

During the opening session, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director General ISSI extended his welcome to all participants and outlined how CAMEA at ISSI has been helping to highlight the Pakistan Government's Engage Africa Policy. These events helped generate consolidated documents regarding pragmatic ideas aimed at improvement of economic linkages between the two sides.



ISLAMABAD: Khalid Siddiqui member of National Assembly with Palestinian Ambassador to Pakistan, Ahmed Rabeel at the Embassy of Palestine. The delegation expressing solidarity with the Palestinian people against the heinous actions of the Israeli occupation against the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. — DNA

**Arid University become member of AAUA of SCO****KHAYAM ABBASI**

RAWALPINDI: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) has officially become a member of Agricultural Associated Universities Alliance (AAUA) of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), partner states.

Alliance of Agricultural Associated Universities of SCO states was initiated during an online meeting on Tuesday which was attended by Heads of Agricultural Universities of SCO member states.

While addressing the forum, PMAS-AAUR Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Qamar Zaman highlighted issues of the arid region of Potohar and scope of this Alliance for this region. He emphasized to improve the bilateral ties that bind our brotherly countries. As the University is situated in the arid region of Potohar, therefore our main focus is to address the farming issues of the region, he expressed.

Dr. Zaman highlighted the weaknesses of agriculture in Pakistan and also China's past achievements in its future agriculture development. These collaborations, he said, can

help improve Pakistan's agriculture to address its shortcomings and adopt modern ways to overcome them. The Vice Chancellor also showed the significance of rain-fed agriculture and said that rain-fed agriculture is capable enough with an appreciable potential to cope up the increasing food requirement for the rising population of the Potohar region. Dr. Zaman highlighted the special potential for growing vegetables, olive products, grapes, citrus, avocado and flora. He also claimed that the University is already focusing on use of modern agricultural practices, particularly in the arid region by running mega projects on precision agriculture, industrial biotechnology, medicinal use of hemp, application of drones and satellite based technologies to maximize the agricultural productivity.

He also hoped to uplift rain-fed agriculture by benefiting from this forum. Later, the Vice Chancellor thanked Prof. Zhang Zhengmao for including PMAS-AAUR in the Alliance and lauded the efforts of Director ORIC Dr. Zahid Akram and Director External Linkages for making this meeting successful.

**UBG striving to solve issues of business community****DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Together with UBG, we will protect the rights of traders. Mian Akram Farid Islamabad traders and industrialists have an important role to play in the federation. Abdul Rauf Alam UBG stand for traders right and strive hard to solve the issues of Business Community Zafar Bakhtawari.

A delegation led by Mian Akram Farid, former President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Chairman, Founder Group, called on the newly elected Secretary General of United Business Group (UBG) and former Vice President, FPCCI, ICCI congratulated former President Zafar Bakhtawari Expressing his views on the occasion, Mian Akram Farid said that the role of United Business Group is very important in the election of Federation of Pakistan Chambers. The group was damaged due to sometimes technical faults.

He further said that two former presidents Abdul Rauf Alam and Malik Zubair Ahmad are from Islamabad and every year he is the vice president of Federal Area.

Inshallah, chambers and associations across Pakistan are united under the leadership of Malik Iftikhar and SM Munir. Former President of FPCCI and former President of ICCI Abdul Rauf Alam expressed their views on the occasion ICCI Founder Group is united and Zafar Bakhtawari's appointment as UBG Secretary General is an honor for traders and industrialists in the federal capital.

Newly elected Secretary General UBG and former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said on the occasion that they are proud of the business and industrial community of Islamabad and time has proved that we are united,

SM Munir, Iftikhar Ali Malik And under the leadership of Zubair Tufail, the UBG will play an active role in the next elections. He further said that the love and trust shown by the business community and Founder Group of Islamabad is indescribable and he would take everyone along and solve the problems of the business community without any discrimination.

Expressing his views on the occasion, former ICCI President Khalid Javed said that the appointment of Zafar Bakhtawari as Secretary General is an honor for the founding group of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and inshaAllah



he will play an active role in unity and betterment of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry.

The delegation includes senior vice president Fatima Azeem, former ICCI presidents Khalid Javed, Mian Shaikat Masood, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Iqbal Malik, Ahmad Hassan Mughal, Nasir Khan, Zahid Maqbool, Sheikh Amir Waheed, former senior vice president Shakeel Munir, Khalid Chaudhry, Karim Aziz Malik, Ahsan Bakhtawari, Muhammad Hussain, Saif-ur-Rehman Khan, Babar Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Hafiz Bilal, Umar Hussain, Muhammad Shakir, Shaikat Hayat, Chaudhry Javed and others.

**Workshop held to assess risks in health sector**

The aim of the Centres of Excellence Initiative is to help partner countries mitigate risks and build a culture of safety, security and preparedness

**DNA**

ISLAMABAD: A virtual workshop was held to ascertain risks connected with handling and disposal of chemical and biological substances, especially in Pakistan's health sector, which is even more crucial during the pandemic.

The workshop was conducted under the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence initiative. It was attended by representatives and from various

government ministries and the National Institute of Health. The EU CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative was launched in 2010 by the European Union and provides a platform for voluntary regional cooperation on all CBRN-related hazard issues. The aim of the Centres of Excellence Initiative is to help partner countries mitigate risks and build a culture of safety, security and preparedness. EU support is provided to implement a wide range of CBRN Risk Mitigation activities including needs and risk assessments, national and regional ac-

tion plans and trainings in all 62 Partner Countries. At the opening session, EU Ambassador to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara, said: "Cooperation is key to addressing and mitigating CBRN risks. These workshops offer the possibility to have an open and substantial discussion on risk mitigation. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre has developed tools for this purpose including the Needs Assessment Questionnaire, being discussed today, which could contribute to a wider national strategy. Pakistan is committed

to strengthening prevention, mitigation and response to Chemical and Biological risks and the EU stands available to support Pakistan throughout the whole process."

In the Central Asia region of the CoE, several countries have already completed the CBRN National Action Plans including Uzbekistan and Afghanistan, while others are underway. Pakistan has been involved in seven Centre of Excellence projects implemented in the Central Asia region, on topics including strengthening Public Health Laboratories for miti-

gating risks linked to climate change, addressing chemical and biological waste management and preparedness and response to mass gatherings and other health threats.

Promoting EU-Pakistan cooperation in science, technology and innovation is also a priority under the EU-Pakistan Strategic Engagement Plan to further enhance engagement between both sides. This includes through knowledge sharing, development of links between research institutions and exchange of information on opportunities for research cooperation.

**PTA Issues MDM to 19 Companies****DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has issued Mobile Device Manufacturing Authorizations to 19 foreign and local companies for the production of mobile devices (2G/3G/4G) locally. Initially valid for next 10 years, the manufacturers may also establish their own new brand under the authorization, helping in promotion of 'Manufactured in Pakistan' culture. Mobile devices produced by these manufacturers shall not only be sold in the country but can also be exported to other competitive markets of the region and beyond.

The device manufacturing plants shall be instrumental in providing new job opportunities and low priced handsets for the Pakistani users. Aimed at encouraging manufacturers to set up their plants in Pakistan, the Government has introduced a comprehensive and supportive Mobile Manufacturing Policy, subsequent to which PTA issued Mobile Device Manufacturing (MDM) Regulations in 2021.

These developments made way for the issuance of manufacturing authorizations, a major milestone in the journey towards "Digital Pakistan".

**Satrang Art Gallery to organize exhibition****STAFF REPORT**

ISLAMABAD: Satrang Art Gallery would organize an exhibition titled "Left A Mark" by renowned artists including Ameen J, Faizan Naveed, Humayun Memon, Madyha Leghari and Sana Durrani on Wednesday (May 26).

Curator Satrang Zahra Khan said Gallery is dedicated to support and promote arts and artisans, particularly young contemporary artists. The founder director Satrang Gallery Asma Rashid Khan would also participate in the exhibition.

The COVID-19 pandemic SOPs will be mandatory for the participants by wearing masks and social distancing.

Faizan Naveed is a Lahore based Visual Artist. He has exhibited work in Pakistan and internationally, for group and solo exhibitions, including biennales and festivals.

Faizan's art practice is filled with ideas of reality in displacement and coexistence where they are parallel to each other in a particular setting of time and space. His investigation includes how technology culture, light, sound, color, and other agencies have shaped our vision and how it continues to evolve through time.

As an artist, Humayun has shown his work in multiple group shows in the country. He was shortlisted to be a resident artist in Picture Berlins summer programme in 2014 and was invited as a participating artist in Canvas Gallery / Pioneer residency in 2019.

**Impersonator held for involvement in fraud****DNA**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have arrested a person impersonating himself as a retired government servant and involved in defrauding people and looting them, a police source said on Tuesday.

He said the suspect, identified as Javed Nadeem, used to take money from people promising to give them jobs abroad. Police source said that he took over Rs2.1 million from a man in return for employment in Europe and then fled away. Multiple receipts and documents have been seized from Nadeem.

He said that First Information Report (FIR) has been registered and further investigation was underway from the nabbed accused.



## Briefs

## Online Katchary for redressal of complaints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: IESCO Spokesman said that our maximum efforts are to provide best and speedy services to our valued customers. Continuing the same line, online Katcharies are being conducted regularly and successfully. Chief Executive Officer IESCO Ch. Abdul Razaq will hold online katchary on Wednesday dated 26st May 2021 at 10:30 AM to 12: 30 PM on Telephone Number 051-9253105. IESCO requested valued customers relates Islamabad, Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantt, Attock, Jhelum Chakwal Circle and surrounding areas to participate in open katchary for immediate solution of their complaints and for submission of their valuable suggestions.

## Committees settle 535 cases, says IGP

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police Islamabad, Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman on Tuesday said the reconciliation committees has successfully resolved some 535 cases of public nature with efficacy during the on-going year. In a statement issued here, the IGP said the committees received around 651 applications out of which 535 were reached to a logical conclusion. Most cases were related to disputes like land, money transactions and owner-tenants' problems, he added. The reconciliation committees were set up by Islamabad police to resolve public matters with consent of both the parties without direct involvement of police. Expressing satisfaction over the performance of Committees, the IGP said it [committees] were remained very helpful to ease the burden of police. He hoped that it would continue to perform their duties with more diligence and honesty to provide maximum relief to the citizens. The IGP sought unflinching support from capital residents and other segments of the society to bridge gap between force and the public. It may be mention here that the committees were functioning at all the police stations across the city under the supervision of DIG Operations Afzal Ahmad Kausar. At least 431 people both men and women having good repute including ex-government officials, traders and senior citizens were members of the committees. — APP

## IESCO issues power suspension program

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance/Development Work is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 26th May, From 05:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Scheme-1, Burma, Tramri, ISI, Bahria, Al Noor Colony, Waheedabad, Chhatta Bakhtawar, Comstick, CM Pak, Khanna East, Rahara, Azad Shaheed, Ghauri Garden, Khanna-2, Sohndran Road, Lehtar Road Feeders, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., Mong City, Kanchri, Patan Sher Khan Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Fatehpur, Kohar, Kot Dhamik, Sandal, Sohawa City Feeders, From 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM. Al-Rizwan Mill, Al-Qadir Mill, Chakral, Sarkal, Mureed Feeders and surrounding areas will be remain without power. IESCO management apologizes to its esteemed customers for the power outage. If the work is completed ahead of time, the power supply can be restored even before the scheduled time.

## CDA to give 1500 cart vendors licenses by end of the year

The chair assured that CDA will provide enabling environment and all the technical support in this initiative to make it a successful project

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Chairman CDA Amer Ali Ahmed chaired meeting with the representatives of PIED and Micro finance banks at the committee room of Capital Development Authority regarding the financing of cart vendors. The representative of PIED briefed the micro financing banks about the selection process of cart

vendors through surveys with the help of Ehas program. The meeting was further briefed that selection process will be transparent and data based. The chairman CDA apprised the participants about the pilot project run by MCI at G11 Markaz. The chair explained the licensing mechanism and economic potential of the project to the participants. He elaborated that not only this kind of re-



searched based initiative will increase the income of vendors but will also help in beautification of the city. The meeting was told that in next phase 60 cart vendors will be included in this area where as PIED was conducting surveys in other sectors as well for the selection of cart vendors. The chair told that under this initiative 1500 cart licenses will be issued by

the end of this year. He further urged that the banks should abandon conservative approach and look into this initiative with positive intent as it has the potential to change the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across the country. The chair assured that CDA will provide enabling environment and all the technical support in this initiative to make it a successful project.

## South African envoy briefed about dynamics of Pakistan economy

Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman AIERD briefed the high commissioner; Mthuthuzeli Madikiza admires efforts

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman AIERD, hosted Mthuthuzeli Madikiza, High Commissioner South Africa. Za-

hid Latif Khan briefed Mthuthuzeli Madikiza about economic dynamics of Pakistan. Chairman also shared his ideas to strengthen bilateral economic and people to people relationship.



Mthuthuzeli Madikiza, admired the efforts and assured his full cooperation to further enhance bilat-

eral relations. Excellency also shared that High Commission is committed to enhance bi-

lateral, economic and people to people cooperation and also shared his ideas to strengthen the relation-

ship. Both agreed to work together to achieve the common goals, in future.

## Govt. asked to open Amusement Parks to save businesses

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Khalid Khan, President, Pakistan Amusement Parks Association said that due to the Covid-19 pandemic, amusement parks across the country are closed for more than a year due to which the business community of this sector was now facing bankruptcy. Therefore, he called upon the government to open all amusement parks across the country without further delay to save this sector from total bankruptcy. He said that about 35,000 to 40,000 people are employed in this sector but due to closure of amusement parks, their jobs are in danger. He said that despite the closure of amusement parks since March 2020, business people of the sector are still paying salaries to their employees besides bearing the burden of rents and utility bills but unfortunately the government has not provided any relief to this sector as yet due to which sector is now on the verge of disaster. "If the situation continues like this, many businessmen will go bankrupt, which will also hurt the economy," he said. Khalid Khan said that the Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Azha are peak season for business of this sector and about 70 to 75 percent of the annual reve-

nue is generated during these days. However, the losses incurred due to closure of parks during Eid days will not be recovered in years to come. He said that like other sectors of the economy, this sector also contributes to the national exchequer for the economic development of the country in terms of taxes, utility bills and other payments and provides jobs to thousands of people but due to the government's inattention towards it. This sector is facing deficit of billions of rupees. He said that amusement parks come under the service industry and coronavirus SOPs can be easily adopted in them with social distance in the open air. It makes the amusement parks less likely to spread the coronavirus. He said the business community was expecting that the NCOC will lift restrictions on this sector in its May 19th meeting, which was not done due to which all was disappointed. He demanded that the government should immediately consult with the stakeholders of this sector and take practical steps to solve their problems. Moreover, all amusement parks should be opened soon with SOPs so that with the resumption of business activities, the business community associated with this sector could avoid further losses.

## President stresses for forestation to tackle climate change

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi has called for increasing forestation in the country so as to cope with the harmful effects of climate change and global warming. He emphasized the need for enhanced tree plantation to reduce pollution and improve air quality in urban areas. The President gave these remarks at a briefing, given by Senior Vice President, Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC), Syed Zaheer Mehdi, on Miyawaki Forest, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.



Syed Zaheer Mehdi gave a presentation on Miyawaki tree plantation technique and highlighted its advantages, saying its growth is 10 times faster and 30 times denser than normal trees. He said

that his organization would plant 4000 saplings in the area of Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President said that the Government was making serious efforts to enhance forest coverage by undertaking planta-

tion drive to plant 10 Billion trees in the country. He said that Miyawaki forest was best suited for Pakistan as its trees grew faster and denser which would enormously help reduce pollution in the country. He stated that modern plantation techniques could help provide healthier environment to the residents of urban centers and Miyawaki forest would greatly help in this regard. The President also called for maximizing the utilization of all available resources and spaces in urban areas to achieve a "Clean and Green" Pakistan.

## Israel should end illegal occupation of Palestine land

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Israel should immediately end its illegal occupation of Palestinian land illegally and unjustly. The cries of innocent children are shaking the whole world and the conscience of Muslims. The United Nations, the European Union, human rights organizations, the OIC and other international organizations have remained silent spectators against these atrocities. The international media is

humanity. Israeli army's atrocities on Palestinian Muslims have been going on for decades. Israel has occupied Palestinian land illegally and unjustly. The cries of innocent children are shaking the whole world and the conscience of Muslims. The United Nations, the European Union, human rights organizations, the OIC and other international organizations have remained silent spectators against these atrocities. The international media is

also not raising its voice against the atrocities of Israel. There is a double standard of international organizations and media. Israel has endangered the peace of the whole world. The Palestinian issue may ultimately engulf the whole world. Criminal silence reinforces Israeli atrocities. The Pakistani government, along with other Islamic countries, should play a concrete role in preventing Israeli atrocities and resolving the Palestinian issue.

All Islamic countries should boycott Israeli products altogether. Professor Hassan Hamid Naqvi, Amjad Iqbal Malik and others also addressed the gathering. The protest was attended by religious scholars of all schools of thought, who gave vent to the popular sentiments of sympathy for the oppressed Palestinians and of rage against me Israel. Members of political parties, representatives of traders and a large number of people also attended the protest.

## RCCI gives warm farewell to Malaysian envoy

The Business community, especially the Rawalpindi Chamber, had close and deep ties with Malaysian High Commission. He said that the High Commission would continue to extend full cooperation and assistance to the RCCI



SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: The High Commissioner of Malaysia Ikrum bin Muhammad Ibrahim, has said that Malaysia has deep trade and diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Pakistan has great strategic importance and Malaysia has invested in Pakistan in different sectors. Malaysia focuses on its trade relations with Pakistan. The

position of Malaysia and Pakistan on Palestine is clear. Malaysia strongly condemns Israeli atrocities on Palestine. In a farewell meeting with Chamber President Muhammad Nasir Mirza, Group Leader Sohail Altaf and senior officials during his visit to Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), the Malaysian High Commissioner said that his stay in Pakistan has been wonderful. The Business community, espe-

cially the Rawalpindi Chamber, had close and deep ties with Malaysian High Commission. He said that the High Commission would continue to extend full cooperation and assistance to the RCCI. Former Presidents Raja Amer Iqbal, Zahid Latif Khan, Malik Shahid Saleem, Senior Vice President Osman Ashraf, Vice President Shahraiz A Malik, Chairman Regional Committee Khurshid Barlas and executive members were also present



on the occasion. RCCI President Nasir Mirza said that the Chamber values the services of Akram Bin Muhammad as High Commissioner. With his personal interest and full cooperation, the Rawalpindi Chamber successfully held the Achievement Awards and Business Opportunities Conference in Malaysia in 2019. It was a great honor and pride for RCCI that then Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Moham-

ad was the chief guest of the ceremony. Group Leader Sohail Altaf said that due to the active role of the Malaysian High Commission, relations between the two countries have been further strengthened. Relationships between the business communities have grown. You will continue to act as an ambassador wherever you go. The Rawalpindi Chamber pays tribute to the services of the High Commissioner, he added.

## Hindus protest India's delay in probe of 11 dead

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Hindu community in Pakistan on Tuesday staged a protest outside the Indian High Commission in Islamabad and demanded an inquiry into the mysterious death of 11 migrants of their community in the Jodhpur city of Rajasthan last year. At Diplomatic Enclave, the protestors of All Pakistan Hindu Panchayat chanted slogans against Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janta Party government for their apathy towards the incident.

The members of Hindu community raised slogans of 'Long Live Pakistan' and 'In Modi's India, even Hindus are not safe'. Demanding transparent inquiry, they called upon India to share all details and investigation reports with the Hindu community and the government of Pakistan. The protestors urged the United Nations to take notice of the frequent incidents of extrajudicial killings in India committed against minorities.

## Police arrest accused on charges of aerial firing

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested a man on the charges of aerial firing, displaying weapons and uploading its videos on social media informed police spokesman.

An accused Zohaib resorted to aerial firing, displaying his weapons openly and uploading its video on social media.

Receiving information, a special team under the supervision of SP Rawal Division conducted raid at a place in the jurisdiction of New Town Police Station and arrested the accused. Police also recovered arms and weapon used in crime and a case has been registered against him. SP Rawal Division said that no one would be allowed to violate rule of law adding that those involved in spreading fear and panic among the citizens would dealt strictly. — APP

## IBCC launches online assessment platform

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC) in collaboration with other private organisations have launched a free online assessment platform to aid the students in these challenging times.

The step has been taken under the direction of Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mehmood, said a press release issued on Tuesday.

IBCC, to this affect, has signed a MoU with Learning Pitch, an EdTech company that uses technology and modern practices to impart quality education and professional training.

The MoU has been signed between Secretary IBCC Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah and Syed Wajahat, CEO Learning Pitch.

The platform contains more than thirteen thousand practice questions encompassing all the BISEs across Pakistan, which will help students to prepare for their board exams in a safe and healthy environment.

The platform aims to revolutionize the educational practices in Pakistan and promote a culture of learning and educational equality, through the power of connectivity and information technology, it added.

Students from grade 9th to 12th will benefit from this platform and can access it by visiting [ibcc.minteracademy.com](http://ibcc.minteracademy.com).

The secretary of IBCC stressed the importance of this platform by stating it as a step in the direction of educational excellence in Pakistan.

"I am very optimistic about the future of education in Pakistan and this platform is another step in the direction of educational excellence in Pakistan" said Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, Secretary IBCC.



## E-Voting machines

WHILE the government is looking forward to introducing E-Voting Machines (EVMs), members of the opposition continue to voice their concerns regarding the new technology in mainstream media outlets. Being engrossed in this heated debate is taking away focus from the main issue; tackling electoral reforms and implementing policies that make the election process transparent and free from the perfunctory allegations.

The government already installed the first prototype at the Parliament House to showcase its utility and efficacy, but these qualities were put into question by the opposition. Their declarations of the possibility of result manipulation, exorbitant installation costs, lack of technical expertise, inconsistent electrical supply and unreliable internet services have already been identified.

However, when electoral reform is already an issue where agreement is hard to achieve, such blatant disapproval only sours the environment of change. It is vital that alterations in electoral policies and processes are discussed at the right forum and not just through the media. Only then will innovative solutions come forward since the entire issue will be discussed rather comprehensively and will take into account the stance of all relevant political entities.

It is much easier to reject ideas, especially when they aren't a product of your own creation but proposing avenues for change is much harder. What we need right now are solutions instead of endless berating. If the opposition has concerns, why are they not being voiced and debated in parliament?

Considering the commitment that the government has shown in incorporating the EVMs into the electoral system, there is little doubt that the promise of electoral reform is being taken seriously. Thus, the opposition should contemplate taking the offer extended by the government to argue about solutions on a principle basis from here on out.

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## The vaccine game

THERE is at present a huge amount of confusion over which vaccines could allow travellers to visit other countries without going through a quarantined period or other measures that are at present restricting international travel. This, of course puts people like those in Pakistan at a huge disadvantage. The vaccines on the list are not currently available widely in the country, though the AstraZeneca vaccine is now being delivered at government centres. The EMA or the European Medical Association, which governs the use of vaccines in the European bloc also accepts the same for vaccines.

The PMA then makes a very valid point by asking WHO to step in and help determine which vaccines are acceptable for international travel. There is still a great deal to be determined about these rules, with countries such as the US as yet not demanding any vaccination record for entry, but instead focusing on quarantines and negative PCRs. This could change very quickly. In fact, regulations are changing day by day. However, for countries which have access mainly to Chinese-manufactured vaccines, there needs to be some clarity and some understanding that many poorer nations are not able to afford the more expensive RNA vaccines such as Pfizer and Moderna, and while AstraZeneca has been widely distributed around the world, supplies are now slowing down because it is manufactured in India and is not sufficient to supply both India itself and the world.

One of these problems is highlighted by the situation in Taiwan, a country which has been able to inoculate only one percent of its population. There is now a demand in Taiwan that Chinese vaccines be brought into the country so that the growing Covid cases can be controlled. However, all kinds of political factors are affecting this. The PMA has sought help from the WHO in ensuring Pakistanis are able to travel for business, work, education, or for pleasure. If Chinese and Russian vaccines are not accepted, this will become increasingly hard for travellers from the country.

# An earthy solution to heavenly Jerusalem

Mohammed Almezal

In his book, *Once Upon a Country*, Palestinian academic, politician and prominent Jerusalemite Sari Nusseibeh, writes: "The Jerusalem I was raised to love was the terrestrial gateway to the divine world where Jewish, Christian and Muslim prophets, men of vision and a sense of humanity, met – if only in the imagination." His words, 'the terrestrial gateway' to heaven, are echoed by Arab poet Nizar Qabbani, who writes in his famous poem, *Al Quds*: "O Jerusalem, the city that spews prophets. Oh Jerusalem, the shortest path between earth and heaven." So which Jerusalem we are talking about here? Is it the city in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians live and work?

THE guns may have fallen silent, but the powder keg sitting among us could explode yet again. Yes. As long as the root cause of the Palestinian question remains unresolved, bloodshed seems to be this region's destiny, its reoccurring tragedy. And it is mostly about Al Quds or Jerusalem, the holy city claimed by the three 'heavenly' religions, and the cause of wars, crusades, and misery for thousands of years.

So, what is in a city that evokes such strong emotions and makes men so willing to slaughter fellow men? The real Jerusalem, by the way, is a mere one square kilometre. That makes it the most expensive piece of land of all time as it has been paid again and again with precious blood of perhaps millions of people over the course of history.

In the summer of 2000, we reached the closest as it gets to finally resolving the Arab- Israeli conflict. The Camp David talks, between the late Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and then Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak, headed by US president Bill Clinton, were going, we were told, according to the final status were ironed out. Then came up the question of Jerusalem. Israel was supposed to relinquish control it had seized in the 1967 war over East Jerusalem. But at the last minute, Barak reneged on this commitment. The talks collapsed and Arafat walked away. I, like many of those who followed the conflict closely over the past few decades, think that all issues of the Arab- Israeli struggle are bridgeable. Arafat-Barak in 2000, Arafat- Isaac Rabin in 1994-1995, were almost there. The status of Jerusalem, however, will always stand in the way.

In his book, *Once Upon a Country*, Palestinian academic, politician and prominent Jerusalemite Sari Nusseibeh, writes: "The Jerusalem I was raised to love was the terrestrial gateway to the divine world where Jewish, Christian and Muslim prophets, men of vision and a sense of humanity, met – if only in the imagination." His words, 'the terrestrial

gateway' to heaven, are echoed by Arab poet Nizar Qabbani, who writes in his famous poem, *Al Quds*: "O Jerusalem, the city that spews prophets. Oh Jerusalem, the shortest path between earth and heaven."

So which Jerusalem we are talking about here? Is it the city in which hundreds of thousands of Palestinians live and work? Or is it the gateway to heaven, the imaginary one that lured countless of invaders, conquerors and heroes?

What complicates the conflict is that even today's politician think of Jerusalem as "the house of the one God, the capital of two peoples, the temple of three religions and she is the only city to exist twice—in heaven and on earth," as British author, Simon Sebag Montefiore, the son of a known Zionist family, writes in his book, *Jerusalem, The Biography*.

Jerusalem is thus the essence of the Middle East conflict. The latest war between Israel and the Palestinian was sparked by the occupation's plan to evict 28 Palestinian families from their homes in the holy city and give the land to an association of Jewish settlers. For the Arabs and Muslims, Jerusalem is the first Qibla and houses the third holiest shrine in Islam. In 2000, Arafat reportedly told Clinton that if he were to accept the Camp David offer, he would not live long to implement it – he would have been considered a traitor by Arabs.

Therefore, Jerusalem must be looked at in the political context. We all need to disengage from the historically emotional narrative and address its question in today's instrument. In its most update resolution on the status of Jerusalem, the United Nations – both the General Assembly and the Security Council – affirmed in 1997 that "the decision of Israel to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration on the Holy City of Jerusalem is illegal and therefore null and void and has no validity whatsoever." In the same year, the European Union, unequivocally declared that "East Jerusalem is subject to the principles set out in Security Council resolution 242 (1967) of 22 Novem-

ber 1967, notably the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and is therefore not under Israeli sovereignty" stressing that "the Fourth Geneva Convention is fully applicable to East Jerusalem, as it is to other territories under occupation." Since June 4, 1967, when Israel occupied East Jerusalem, it tried to expand the city limits and add more lands, mostly from the western areas, to ensure a Jewish majority.

It also surrounded the holy city with more than a dozen Jewish settlements to separate it from the rest of the West Bank. All these measures, regularly condemned by the international community, failed to change the status quo of the city. The Israelis today have a historic opportunity to be part of this region, a constructive player in the Middle East. Several Arab countries have signed peace accords with Israel in the hope that these deals will prompt the Israelis to commit to peace, in which a free independent Palestinian state exists with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Clinging to an imaginary idea of Jerusalem- 'one square kilometre of heaven on earth'- will only prolong the conflict and lead to more bloodshed. It is time that all give up this idea and realise it is an occupied land, but at the same time a place where followers of different religions coexist.

Leave the past in the history books and off the negotiating table. The Palestinian question is not about history; it is a struggle for freedom and independence.

In his book, Sari Nusseibeh sums up the conflict: "One day the Israelis may realise that the reason for the never-ending turmoil disrupting their lives has nothing to do with our opposition to the Jewish state but is rooted in the more mundane fact that human beings are not constituted to accept injustice." As long as the root cause of the Palestinian Question remains unresolved, bloodshed seems to be this region's destiny.

– Courtesy: Gulf News

# Japan: A land of technology and traditions

Prof. Dr Nusrat Majid



Japanese cultural distinctiveness and the manner in which it developed are instinctive to understand how Japan came to be the first non western country to attain great power status. The arts are an important part of Japanese life. Traditional arts and crafts such as tea-ceremony, flower arrangement and dance that express Japan's cultural heritage are greatly valued and designated as living national treasures

KNOWN for its success in fields such as quality, industry, art and education, JAPAN also attracts attention with its traditional values. Japan is an archipelagic state consisting of 6852 islands and is known for its cities such as TOKYO, OSAKA and KYOTO, located in a geographical location that deserves to be an attraction centre with its gardens reflecting the huge respect for nature with traditional clothes and cuisine.

Today it comes to the forefront in many areas especially science and technology and it also stands out regarding its urbanization patterns despite the volcanic texture of its land, but still holds its rich culture and tradition.

Japanese cultural distinctiveness and the manner in which it developed are instinctive to understand how Japan came to be the first non western country to attain great power status. The arts are an important part of Japanese life. Traditional arts and crafts such as tea-ceremony, flower arrangement and dance that express Japan's cultural heritage are greatly valued and designated as living national treasures. Most of these colorful festivals take place mostly from spring to autumn. Spring starts from March to late May and is the time of HANNAMI, which means cherry blossom viewing. Everyone rushes to gardens and parks to enjoy this unique national beauty.

According to Japanese belief, heroic warriors that commit suicide to protect their country, reincarnate as the cherry blossom trees bloom.

These festivals are celebrated in all parts of the



country, the famous ones being in Tokyo, the capital, its colorful, and welcoming and is ranked as the safest city in the world.

Located right outside Tokyo is the Majestic Mountain, the famous MOUNT FUJI. It is unusually symmetrical snow-capped

The cone is a well known symbol of Japan and is frequently depicted as authentic artworks. It is a famous place where many festivals are steeped in tradition and offer visitors a glimpse of Japanese culture that you won't find in the average museums.

What makes these festivals special in Japan is the fact that many of these are perfectly preserved customs that have been passed down through the generations. Even the holidays are traditional, like Golden Week, from 29th April to 5th May is a collection of four national holidays with 7 days in combination with well placed weekends.

On 5th May they celebrate THE BOY'S Day for the health and happiness of male children in the family it is known as TANGO NO SEKKU. It is celebrated for over a millennium.

Originally it was celebrated in the houses of warriors. It celebrated boys' courage and strength. Eventually the day became important to all households in Japan with boys.

Large carp windsocks called KOINBORI are displayed outside houses of families with boys. The largest windsock is for the eldest son of the house. The carp is considered strong and determined. They are able to swim upstream against the flow of water. This is the day to celebrate their son's strength and character. Traditional food eaten on this day is KASHIWA MOCHI (rice-cake steamed with sweet beans and wrapped in oak leaf).

Another type is the rice wrapped in bamboo leaves. To celebrate the female children, the festival called HINNA MATSURI (doll's festival) is observed on the 3rd of March. They pray for the health, happiness and successful life of the female children of the family. It is also known as MOMO NO SEKKU (peach festival). Families display ceramic dolls dressed in ornate decorative robes of imperial court. It is a religious holiday in Japan each year.



Platforms covered with a red carpet-material are used to display a set of ornamental dolls representing the Emperor, Empress' attendants and musicians in traditional court dress. As with all holidays, special foods and seasonal delicacies are also meticulously prepared and eaten during HINA MATSURI. The treats are beautiful and meaningful foods like, tri coloured rice-cake, coloured rice crackers, a trio of white fish tempura coated in pink, green and yellow popped rice and are topped with white foam reminiscent of snow. So these are the most famous festivals besides cherry blossoms viewing in spring, the HANNAMI.



## Briefs

## Pakistan to miss Asian Boxing C'ship

## SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will not be able to participate in the upcoming Asian Boxing Championship due to travel restrictions in Dubai. According to the Pakistan Boxing Federation (PBF), seven men and two women boxers were all set to feature in the Asian event, scheduled from May 24 to 31, but travel restrictions on Pakistanis will cost them this extravaganza.

In the men's category, Mohammad Saeed, Mohibullah, Suleman Baloch, Amir Khan, Saifullah Mannan, Mohammad Ajmal, Sanaullah were lined up to represent Pakistan whereas Rakhsana Ghaffar, Rukhsana Parveen were the female contestants.

"We got special permission from the UAE government for participation but due to limited flight operations we can't go there in time," informed the General Secretary of PBF, Nasir Tang.

## SCO Secy General lauds Pak...

## From Page 01

economic development of the region, especially during the pandemic. She stated that collective efforts are required to deal with the rising challenges and Pakistan will continue to play its regional role to maintain peace and stability in the region.

Maj. Gen. Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery, (Retd), President, Centre for Global & Strategic Studies, Pakistan chaired the second session on "SCO and the Geopolitics of Eurasia: Prospects of Security Cooperation between SCO Members". The session included speakers from Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and India.

Maj. Gen. Syed Khalid Amir Jaffery, (Retd), President, Centre for Global & Strategic Studies, Pakistan also addressed the forum in the second session and shared his views on the topic. He stated that SCO represents hybrid model of regional organization as it cooperates in the field of agriculture, information and technology, health, environment, climate, economy and security. He mentioned that the COVID 19 situation has negatively impacted the economic development of many SCO states. Furthermore, in order to ensure smooth economic cooperation, trade should be carried out with transparency and without any discrimination. He emphasized that economic plans cannot be implemented smoothly until the security is ensured in the region. He viewed stability in Afghanistan to be of utmost importance, especially with regards to the illegal trade and cultivation of poppy after the US withdrawal. He mentioned that SCO holds unique position to help in the development; it sets an example of how intrastate relations can be maintained and improved between the states.

## Army concerned...

## From Page 01

While reviewing recent developments in the Afghan peace process and its attendant effects on the security situation especially along the Pak-Afghan border, the forum reaffirmed Pakistan's support for regional peace and stability. Taking serious note of the recent cross-border firing incidents from Afghanistan and regrouping of terrorist leadership/outfits across the border, the forum expressed the hope that Afghanistan's soil will not be used against Pakistan.

In light of the emerging regional security situation, Pakistan has taken effective border control/management measures, the same is expected from Afghanistan to deny any space to the spoilers of the peace, the forum reiterated. The forum also especially reviewed the situation in the newly-merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan and stressed upon the fast-paced socio-economic development of these areas to capitalize on the hard-earned peace to bring enduring stability. The COAS appreciated the formations for all-out support to the civil administration amidst the ongoing third wave of COVID-19 that has contributed in bringing significant reduction in the spread of the pandemic and controlling its adverse effects.

## Tayyip Erdogan warns against rising Islamophobia in West

"Instead of discussing the dimensions of the Western threat, those who fall under the influence of racist and discriminatory trends take the easy way out," he underlined

## FOREIGN DESK

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan Tuesday warned against the rise of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment in Western countries as he said states are now openly embracing far-right and Islamophobic political movements and anti-Muslim policies. Speaking at the First International Media and Islamophobia Symposium in the capital Ankara, Erdogan stated that Islamophobia has become a serious concern as Western states fail to take action against it. "Islamophobia and anti-Muslim sentiment have been spreading like cancer cells in many parts of the globe, primarily in the West," the president said, adding that far-right groups once considered radical and marginal have now become mainstream political movements in western countries.

"Instead of discussing the dimensions of the Western threat, those who fall under the influence of racist and discriminatory trends take the easy way out," he underlined. Racist attacks targeting Muslims or immigrants increasingly make the headlines as white supremacists become more efficient in an age where their ideals, or at least parts of them, are going mainstream. There is no single large group orchestrating these attacks against Muslims and immigrants. Rather, individual attacks lead to more copycat attacks. The tolerant political climate under the pretext of freedom of speech has helped far-right

sympathizers with violent tendencies expand their support. Erdogan said that those who once targeted the Jewish community now have turned Muslims into the main target.

"We clearly know that this new racism against Muslims is actually a hostility against Islam despite the efforts by Western societies to soften it by calling 'Islamophobia,'" he said. "The U.S. administration's strategy to demonize Muslims post-9/11 has served as a means to further trigger anti-Muslim sentiment that already existed in the cultural structure of many Western societies," he also underlined. Erdogan continued by urging all countries and societies to join forces and establish a strong communication network against the rising threat.

"Efforts to prevent Islamophobia, which play an important role in peace and security of the whole of humanity, should be carried out through common sense mechanisms that should be set up." "We need to mobilize all politicians, intellectuals and media workers with a conscience and our own religious officials against the threat of Islamophobia," Erdogan said. He noted that

efforts against Islamophobia need to be conducted by joint mechanisms to ensure peace and security for all. Turkish officials, including Erdogan, have frequently urged European decision-makers and politicians to take a stance against racism and other types of discrimination that have threatened the lives of millions of people living within the bloc's borders.

Turkey will prepare annual reports on acts of Islamophobia and racism in other countries, Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu said earlier this year. Erdogan last month once again reiterated that Islamophobia has turned into one of the instruments used by Western politicians to cover up their failures. The rising trend of Islamophobia, racism and xenophobia have been disturbing the Turkish community living in Western countries, particularly in Europe.

Germany, for instance, has been recording Islamophobic crimes separately since 2017. In

2018, there were 910 incidents, including 48 attacks on mosques alone, a little lower than in 2017 with 1,095 crimes. In 2019, some

871 attacks targeted the Muslim community in Germany, while the 2020 data has not been announced yet. Every other day throughout the course of 2019, a mosque, an Islamic institution or a religious representative in Germany was targeted in anti-Muslim attacks. More than 90% of these were attributed to politically motivated crimes by the far-right. Germany is home to 81 million people and the second-largest Muslim population in Western Europe after France. Of the country's nearly 4.7 million Muslims, at least 3 million are of Turkish descent.

Islamophobia is being disguised as secularism in France, a French opposition leader had said in criticism of the Emmanuel Macron-led government, which has recently come under fire for policies against French Muslims and just passed an anti-hijab bill. Under the pretext of the "Islamization" of the countries they live in, racist terrorists switched from attacks on mosques to mass killings. Anders Behring Breivik, who slaughtered 77 people in July 2011 in Norway, is viewed as an inspiration for more attacks that followed. Four years later, Anton Lundin-Petersson, harboring similar views as Breivik, killed four students with immigrant backgrounds in Sweden. In 2016, 10 people were killed in Germany's Munich in another racist act of terrorism. On Feb. 19, 2020, in the German town Hanau, Tobias Rathjen, a terrorist harboring racist views, gunned down nine people of immigrant backgrounds, including five Turkish nationals, before killing himself.



## AUL to open Urdu Language center

Azerbaijan's Baku State University has already a department of Urdu language, and Azerbaijan University of Languages' center will become the first cultural center of Pakistan in Azerbaijan

BAKU: A center of Urdu language & Pakistani culture will be soon opened at the Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL), tweeted Ali Alizada, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan. Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL) is one of the country's leading institutions in the education of linguists, journalism, regional studies and international relations experts. AUL offers advanced language and specialist focused education and research programmes with bachelors, masters and PHD degree courses. It was the first university in Azerbaijan to provide education in European and some modern Oriental languages.

The University has special projects and programs on teaching languages and training specialist through modeling of the best practices and latest techniques in training delivery. Azerbaijan's Baku State University has already a department of Urdu language, and Azerbaijan University of Languages' center will become the first cultural center of Pakistan in Azerbaijan. Embassy of Pakistan is currently working to renovate Pakistan Cultural Center in Azerbaijan University of Languages. Once ready, there will be a formal inauguration of the Center, Tweeted Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee. He also request for Prayers and good wishes for this project. - DNA



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmad Khan called on Syed Ishaq Gilani the leading Afghan politician and head of National Solidarity Movement. We had frank discussions for promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan. - DNA

## More COVID-19 Sinovac vaccines arrive in Indonesia

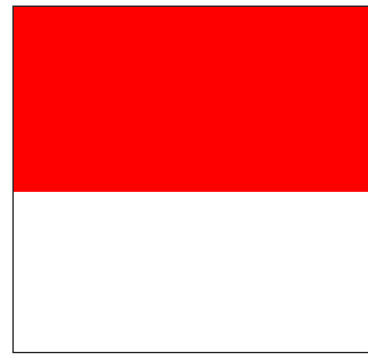
Indonesia has so far received a total of 83.9 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine, both in bulk and ready-to-use

JAKARTA: Another batch of the COVID-19 vaccine in bulk produced by Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinovac arrived at Indonesia's SoekarnoHatta Airport Tuesday morning, a senior Indonesian official said.

"Today we witnessed the arrival of 8 million bulk doses of the COVID-19 Sinovac vaccine," said Coordinating Minister for the Economy Airlangga Hartarto, adding it means that Indonesia has so far received a total of 83.9 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine, both in bulk and ready-to-use.

Besides Sinovac vaccines, Indonesia also received vaccines produced by British company AstraZeneca and vaccines produced by the Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinopharm, according to the official.

Specifically, the Sinopharm vaccine is used for vaccination programs with a mutual cooperation scheme locally called "gotongroyong" initiated by the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where companies or institutions provide COVID-19 vaccines



for their employees for free.

Indonesia, with a population of nearly 271.35 million people, is targeting the inoculation of 181.5 million people to create herd immunity.

Indonesia extends Covid-19 restrictions

The Indonesian government has extended the micro-scale COVID-19 restrictions from May 31 to June 14, and expand the measure to four more provinces, an official said on Monday. "The restrictions are also applied to

Gorontalo, Maluku, North Maluku and West Sulawesi provinces," said Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto.

Hartarto pointed out that the new daily cases of COVID-19 infections this week increased to 5,000 per day, compared to those of last week of 3,800.

Meanwhile, the government is anticipating a spike in COVID-19 cases after the Eid al-Fitr homecoming season, which was estimated to last for the next four to five weeks.

"Currently, the number of COVID-19 cases starts to rise, but the rate is still slow," said Hartarto.

The surge in the number of COVID-19 cases was found in 10 provinces, namely Aceh, North Sumatra, Riau Islands, Jakarta, West Nusa Tenggara, North Kalimantan, South Sulawesi, Gorontalo, Maluku and North Maluku.

So far, 24.81 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in Indonesia, including 9.89 million doses for the second vaccination. - APP

## Conservative Party has Islamophobia 'problem': Report

## MONITORING DESK

LONDON: Islamophobia "remains a problem" within the United Kingdom's ruling Conservative Party despite its claim to have a "zero-tolerance" approach towards discrimination, according to an independent report. Tuesday's study by Professor Swaran Singh, who has served as a commissioner for the UK's Equality and Human Rights Commission, found that most discrimination within the party relates to anti-Muslim racism. The party received reports of 727 incidents of discrimination from the beginning of 2015 to the end of 2020, two-thirds of which alleged Islamophobia.

The study was commissioned by the party, which is led by Prime Minister Boris Johnson,

in response to criticism of its handling of discrimination and complaints.

"Judging by the extent of complaints and findings of misconduct by the party itself that relate to anti-Muslim words and conduct, anti-Muslim sentiment remains a problem within the party," Singh wrote in his 51-page report.

"This is damaging to the party, and alienates a significant section of society," Singh said the Conservatives have not been active enough in challenging discrimination, adding that its complaints procedure needed to be overhauled. The party's sanctions system for those who breached the rules was unclear, he said. However, he also claimed that there was "no evidence" that complaints of Islamophobia were treated differently from other forms of discrimination.

## Senate slams Israeli...

## From Page 01

Minister for Foreign Affairs Shah Mahmood Qureshi stressed the need for continuous efforts to awaken the world conscience, both on humanitarian and ideological grounds, for resolving the Palestine issue on permanent basis.

He was winding up debate in the Senate on a motion regarding systematic Israeli assault on the Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque and Gaza during the holy month of Ramadan, and the apartheid state's terrorism and mass murder in Palestine, as well as the ongoing violent and illegal occupation of Palestinian lands in the world's worst example of settler colonialism.

These steps must include lifting of the blockade in Gaza, sending shipments of humanitarian supplies to the people of Gaza, urge cessation of Israeli aggression, sending independent observer teams to Gaza, contributing to the reconstruction and rebuilding of Gaza, and initiating war crimes trials against Israeli occupation army for their crimes in Gaza and Jerusalem.

The House made it clear that Palestine is facing nothing less than genocide, massacre and ethnic cleansing. Israel is an apartheid state and guilty of war crimes and settler colonialism. Only a two-state solution is acceptable with total withdrawal of Israel from all occupied Arab territories, including Jerusalem and the establishment of an independent homeland for Palestinians with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Senate warned against the dangerous repercussions of Israel's unrestrained and barbaric aggression against Palestinian civilians as well as complete disregard for the sanctity of Al-Aqsa mosque. It deplored the obfuscation of facts and politicization of the situation by a few quarters, creating false equivalence between the Palestinian victims and Israeli aggressors to justify Israel's attack against Palestinian civilians.

## Cabinet committee to review...

## From Page 01

The minister said that there is a process of unbanning any organization and the cabinet has approved the establishment of an Interior Ministry committee to review the ban on the TLP. Cabinet has given approval to a special CPEC Business visa to facilitate the Chinese investment in the country. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said this will enable the Chinese investors to get their visas within 48 hours and get the security clearance in 30 day.

Fawad Chaudhry said, "We want action against the social media team of Election Commission (ECP) and we expect the ECP Commissioner to take action who was responsible for that tweet and explain the position." The minister said, "The federal cabinet expressed their concern on the ECP tweet. Babar Awan briefed the cabinet on the electoral reforms." The federal cabinet meeting also approved two years visas for Chinese investors.

## UK's ruling party...

## From Page 01

In the 2018 article written in the Daily Telegraph newspaper, Johnson described Muslim women who wear the burqa as looking like "letterboxes" and "bank robbers." He was cleared of breaking the party's code of conduct by a separate independent panel.

Johnson told Singh's probe he was "sorry for any offense taken" and added he would not use "some of the offending language from my past writings" now that he was prime minister. The report also considered accusations made by the campaign of 2016 Conservative mayoral candidate Zac Goldsmith claiming his Muslim Labour rival Sadiq Khan associated with extremists.

Goldsmith told the investigation the accusations showed "poor judgment in the way his campaign was conducted" and he denied "harboring anti-Muslim sentiments or using such sentiments for political advantage." Singh said he believed the report was "going to be very uncomfortable for the party," adding he hoped it would "spur them into action."

## Iran approves 7 for presidential vote

Former two-term President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also, as expected by many, disqualified. While signing up, he said he would boycott the elections if he was prevented from running

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Seven candidates have been allowed to run in Iran's presidential elections on June 18, and one of them is a prominent reformist or pragmatist. The interior ministry on Tuesday announced the list handed to it the night before by the Guardian Council, a 12-member constitutional vetting body overseen by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei that is tasked with evaluating potential candidates' qualifications. Incumbent judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi; secretary of the Expediency Council Mohsen Rezaei; former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili; deputy parliament speaker Amir Hossein Ghazizadeh Hashemi; former vice president

Mohsen Mehrizadeh; central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati; and lawmaker Alireza Zakani received a green light from the council. Among the 585 other hopefuls who were disqualified by the council were supreme leader adviser and former parliament speaker Ali Larijani - a pragmatist conservative who has veered more to the centre in recent years - and current reformist First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri. Former two-term President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad was also, as expected by many, disqualified. While signing up, he said he would boycott the elections if he was prevented from running. Tuesday's results only solidify conservative Raisi's position as by far the top candidate, as Larijani and Jahangiri were seen as the only

candidates who could have a remote chance of challenging Raisi in an election expected to have low voter turnout amid public disillusionment. Several candidates have already resigned in favour of Raisi and more are expected to follow suit before election day. Raisi released a short video saying since he heard about the final list, which was leaked by headline news website Fars on Monday night, he has been trying to lobby high-level officials to qualify other candidates in order to make the election more "competitive". Unconfirmed reports on Tuesday also said outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani sent a letter to the supreme leader asking him to allow reformist and moderate candidates to be qualified in order to level the playing field.

His government had protested the "removal" of these candidates earlier this month since the Guardian Council had abruptly made a proclamation, which some viewed as illegal, changing election laws. The council had declared that it would only consider candidates aged between 40 and 75, who have no criminal record - including political dissent - and are able to prove at least four years of senior executive leadership experience. That proclamation had automatically disqualified prominent reformist Mostafa Tajzadeh, who was jailed for seven years following the 2009 Green Movement which disputed Ahmadinejad's reelection, and current ICT minister Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, who will be 40 later this year. Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif also

said he will not run shortly after a leaked confidential audiotape of him candidly discussing internal power struggles drew the public ire of the supreme leader. Asked by state television on Tuesday whether all political orientations enjoy representation in the elections, Guardian Council spokesman Abbas Ali Kadkhodaei said "there is no necessity for the council to make decisions based on political groups or factions" since it only considers the constitution. Disqualified applicants are not allowed to appeal the council's decision. Approved candidates can now start campaigning until June 16, two days before the election, allowing for a one-day period when campaigning is banned. Candidates will have three televised debates whose dates have not been announced.



## Briefs

## Biden, Sisi discuss Gaza ceasefire

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has thanked Egypt for "its successful diplomacy" and coordination with the United States to reach a ceasefire to end 11 days of Israeli military attacks on the Gaza Strip and rocket-fire towards Israel. In a statement on Monday, the White House said Biden discussed efforts to rebuild following the deadly assault on the besieged Palestinian territory in a phone call with his Egyptian counterpart, Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. "The two leaders consulted on the urgent need to deliver humanitarian assistance to those in need in Gaza and to support rebuilding efforts in a manner that benefits the people there and not Hamas," the statement read. Monday's phone call came as Biden dispatched US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to the region to meet with Israeli and Palestinian Authority (PA) leaders this week, as well as visit Egypt and Jordan.

## Turkey removes CB governor

## WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey removed one of four central bank deputy governors on Tuesday, two months after President Recep Tayyip Erdogan fired the central bank governor. Oguzhan Ozbas was removed from his post and Semih Tumen was appointed to replace him, according to an overnight decree published in the official gazette. Tumen currently serves as an adviser to Erdogan and is the head of the economics department at Ankara's TED University. He worked at various positions at the Central Bank of Turkey from 2002 to 2018. In March, Erdogan sacked central bank chief Naci Agbal, two days after a sharp interest rate hike to head off inflation, replacing him with a former ruling party lawmaker and critic of tight monetary policy. The move sparked a plunge in the Turkish lira. Later that month Erdogan, who holds unorthodox theories about monetary policy and its effect on inflation, also replaced deputy governor Murat Cetinkaya.

## Japan issues new travel advisory

## FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Japan announced fresh travel measures for several countries with mandatory three-day quarantine for those coming from the UK, Denmark, Kazakhstan, and Tunisia. Katsunobu Kato, chief cabinet secretary and top spokesman for the Japanese government, told a news conference that new measures will apply from Friday to all new entries and returnees, Japanese media reported. Besides, he added, the quarantine period has been extended to ten days from current six days for those coming from India, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and the Maldives. Meanwhile, the US asked its citizens not to travel to Japan "due to the coronavirus situation in the country."

## Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover reaches US\$10.32b

The volume of foreign trade turnover of other states in January-April 2021, compared to the same period of 2019-2020, accordingly decreased and amounted to 60.7% of the total foreign trade turnover

## DNA

TASHKENT: In January-April 2021, Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover (FTT) reached US\$10.32 billion, which, compared to the same period in 2020, decreased by US\$378.8 million (a decrease of 3.5%), the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan said. Of the total volume of the FTT, exports amounted to US\$3.48 billion (a 19.1% decrease was noted against January-April 2020), and imports – US\$6.84 billion (an increase of 7.0%). As a result, the balance of foreign trade turnover amounted to a passive balance in the amount of US\$3.35 billion. Among the 20 large partner countries in foreign economic activity, there is also an active foreign trade balance with six countries, in particular with such countries as Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Ta-

kistan, Turkey, Canada and Iran. The remaining 14 countries maintain a passive balance of foreign trade turnover. Today Uzbekistan carries out trade relations with 156 countries of the world. The largest volume of foreign trade turnover was recorded with the PRC (20.5%), the Russian Federation (17.8%), Kazakhstan (11.8%), Turkey (9.3%), the Republic of Korea (4.8%), Kyrgyzstan (2.4%) and Afghanistan (2.3%). In the structure of the republic's foreign trade turnover, a significant share is noted in Tashkent, which is 41.8%, or US\$4.32 billion, and the smallest share is recorded at the level of 1.2%, or US\$128.7 million, which is marked in Kashkadarya region. The share of foreign trade turnover of the CIS countries, compared to the same period in 2020, increased by 4.9%, and their share in foreign trade turnover, accord-

ing to the results of January-April 2021, amounted to 39.3%. The volume of foreign trade turnover of other states in January-April 2021, compared to the same period of 2019-2020, accordingly decreased and amounted to 60.7% of the total foreign trade turnover. Foreign trade turnover of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the CIS countries reached US\$4.06 billion. Of these, the volume of exports amounted to 1 339.5 million US dollars, and the volume of imports – US\$2.72 billion. The largest volume of foreign trade turnover with the CIS countries was recorded with the Russian Federation (45.2%), Kazakhstan (29.9%) and Kyrgyzstan (6.2%). The foreign trade turnover of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the EAEU countries amounted to US\$3.38 billion. Of these, the volume of exports amounted to US\$1.04 billion, and the volume

of imports – US\$2.33 billion. In January-April 2021, the total number of exporters amounted to 3 986, which ensured the increase in the volume of exports to US\$3.48 billion (a decrease, compared to the same period in 2020, amounted to 19.1%). In the structure of exports, 81.3% are goods, which mainly fall on industrial goods (35.9%), food products and live animals (9.0%), chemicals and similar products (8.8%). Due to a decrease in exports to other foreign countries, the share of exports to the CIS countries increased and their share in its total volume amounted to 38.5%. Compared to 2019-2020, our main partners in the export of goods and services in foreign trade in January-April 2021 were countries such as China, Turkey, the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Their share in the total export vol-

ume reached 73.4%. In the structure of the republic's exports, a significant share is noted in the city of Tashkent, which is 30.0%, or US\$1.04 billion, and the smallest share is recorded at the level of 1.6%, or US\$57.1 million, which is marked in Kashkadarya region. The volume of exports of fruit and vegetable products amounted to 327.9 thousand tons and, in value terms, exceeded US\$186.0 million (the growth rate, compared to the same period in 2020, was 0.5%, respectively). Based on this, 263.0 thousand tons of vegetables were exported in the amount of US\$123.4 million (the growth rate in value terms, compared to the same period in 2020, respectively, amounted to 2.0%), as well as 34.3 thousand tons of fruits and berries in the amount of US\$29.3 million (the rate of decline in value terms, compared to the same period in 2020, respectively, amounted to 13.5%).

## Turkey starts naval drill in Aegean

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: The Turkish navy on Tuesday started the Sea Wolf 2021 drill in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean waters. In a caption with a video of the drill shared on Twitter, the National Defense Ministry called the Turkish navy "the lightning claw of the waters." Sea Wolf 2021, which will run through June 6, aims to test the management, efficiency, judgment, foresight, and decision-making abilities of the naval forces. It will also measure the capabilities of coordination with air and land forces and public institutions. A total of 10 public institutions and the Turkish Red Crescent are part of the exercise. About 25,500 personnel, 132 ships, 10 submarines, 43 aircraft, 28 helicopters, and 14 unmanned aerial vehicles will be on the field for surface warfare, submarine defense warfare, electronic warfare, and rescuing personnel scenarios. In the final phase of the drill, 83 ships will visit 22 ports in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean. The Turkish navy carried out a similar drill, Blue Motherland, in March 2019.

## Bangladesh detains popular preacher

DHAKA: Bangladesh police have arrested one of the country's most popular preachers, whose rallies draw tens of thousands of people, on charges of inciting "militants", a senior officer said. Amir Hamza was detained in a raid at his home on Tuesday in the western city of Kushtia and then transferred to Dhaka, police said. Hamza is the latest high-profile religious leader to be held since March when a visit by India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi sparked protests in which at least 13 people died. A court remanded Hamza for 10 days for questioning, Mohammad Asaduzzaman, head of Dhaka police's counterterrorism unit, told the AFP news agency. "He is an accused in an anti-terrorism case," Asaduzzaman said, adding that investigators had found videos of Hamza's speeches in the mobile phone of a suspect detained this month over an alleged plot to attack Bangladesh's parliament. – Agencies

## Malaysia probes KL metro crash

## WEB DESK

KUALA LUMPUR: The collision of two light-rail trains serving the metro system of Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur left more than 200 passengers injured. The accident happened just before 9 p.m. (1 p.m. GMT) when a packed train collided with a second that was empty and heading in the opposite direction. Pictures circulating on social media showed injured passengers sprawled on the floor of a carriage, which was covered in glass. They also showed people on stretchers being treated by emergency services after the accident, which happened in downtown Kuala Lumpur close to the landmark Petronas Twin Towers. Forty-seven people suffered serious injuries and 166 had minor injuries in the accident, said police official Mohammad Zainal Abdullah.



ISLAMABAD: Swiss Embassy in Islamabad giving farewell to Sofia Esposito and Martin Giezendanner who are going to continue their journey in Cairo and Delhi after 4 years of their excellent service with the Swiss Embassy in Islamabad. – DNA

## Joe Biden hosts Floyd family

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden marks the anniversary Tuesday of the police murder of George Floyd by hosting the African-American man's family at the White House – but without being able to celebrate hoped-for national police reform. Floyd's daughter Gianna, his mother, sister and brothers will be among those attending a private meeting with Biden, Press Secretary Jen Psaki said. "The courage and grace of his family, and especially his daughter Gianna, has really stuck with the president," Psaki told reporters. "He's eager to listen to their perspectives." Former Minneapolis policeman Derek Chauvin, who knelt on Floyd's neck for more than nine minutes until he passed out and died, was convicted of murder last month and is to be sentenced in June.

## European airlines halt Belarus overflights following EU decision

## NEWS DESK

LONDON: Several European airlines announced on Tuesday that they are suspending flights over Belarus after Minsk forced a Ryanair jet to land to arrest a dissident journalist. European Union leaders had urged airlines to avoid Belarus' airspace as they imposed sanctions against the gov-

ernment of longtime leader Alexander Lukashenko. EU Council President Charles Michel shared an image on Twitter showing air traffic cleared over Belarus, with the caption "Europe in action." Western leaders accused Belarusian authorities of hijacking the passenger plane during its flight on Sunday, while Minsk claimed it was trying to secure the jet after

receiving a bomb threat. Air France said in a statement it had "taken note" of the conclusions of Monday's EU summit and had suspended flights over Belarus "until further notice." Finland's flag carrier Finnair and Polish airline LOT also said they would stop using Belarusian airspace. Germany's Lufthansa, Dutch KLM, Scandinavian SAS and Latvian Air Baltic made similar

announcements on Monday. Singapore Airlines is also rerouting flights "that are bound for Europe to avoid the Belarusian airspace" and will continue to "closely monitor the situation," AFP news agency quoted a spokesperson as saying. Exiled Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya on Tuesday called on Western leaders to ramp up pressure on the Belarus government.

## UBG to support govt on crackdown against tax evaders

## ABID RAZA

LAHORE: United Business Group in the federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tuesday announced to fully support the government for launching vigorous crack down against the real tax evaders in the country to provide solace to existing tax payers. Group Patron-in-chief SM Muneer, Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik, President Zubair Tufail, Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari and Secretary Information Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig in a press statement issued here today said broadening tax base is perhaps the most significant challenge facing Pakistan. After 74 years of its existence, Pakistan has nearly around three million income tax payers, one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in the world and tax system is riddled with inequity marred with corruption. Iftikhar Ali Malik said government must bring all non-filers across the board who are supposed to, by law for paying tax, into tax network to increase the revenue and lessen burden on all already taxed segments of the society. He said in many countries tax evaders are punished and sent behind the bar. He quoted Bosnia, Herzegovina, Rwanda and Georgia, a big push was made to get business registered that worded and revenue rose quite quickly. Later they reduced tax holidays and slashed income rate from 30 to 10 percent and ultimately revenue increased manifolds. Entire United Business Group (UBG) unanimously urged the government to make result oriented sincere and hectic efforts through highly transparent system to identify the real people who are not registered or paying taxes including companies hiding in the so-called informal sectors. Pakistan can't progress unless until, all people pay their due taxes timely and clear their financial liability towards government. UBG will continue to safeguard the interests of the business community at all level and this support to government is in their larger interests and govt as well to lessen the burden on already taxed people.



Riyadh: Ambassador of Pakistan to Saudi Arabia Bilal Akbar called on Saudi Deputy Minister for Political and Economic Affairs, Eid Mohammed Althagafi at Ministry of Foreign Affairs, KSA. Several matters entailing mutual interest were discussed. – DNA

## Is this just the calm before a new storm in Israel and Gaza?

## SARAH HOFMANN

THE full significance of a ceasefire can possibly be comprehended only by those who have experienced what it is like while the firing is going on. I still get tremors when I think back to the evening barely two weeks ago when the sirens in Tel Aviv started wailing for the first time. The children had just fallen asleep, but we took them in our arms and ran quickly to the shelter a floor down. At that stage, we still thought the children could simply keep sleeping. Then came the first blast as a rocket fired by the Israeli defense system hit a rocket from Gaza. Another came, then another, then another. The children were clinging to us in terror. We had barely left the shelter when the sirens started up again. The whole thing repeated itself four times before calm returned at last. At three in the morning, a fresh detonation

woke me; our bed seemed to shake. This time, the sirens began to wail straight after the explosion. I can barely imagine how deafeningly loud it must have been for families in Gaza during the following days and nights. How scared the children must have been when they heard the countless bomb explosions! And how the ground must have shaken as nearby high-rise buildings collapsed! With this in mind, it seems banal to say that the prevailing truce between Israel and the Islamist group Hamas in the Gaza Strip is a good piece of news. Of course, it really is – for all civilians, especially for children on both sides. Calm at last. Time to catch our breath and get some real sleep again. But it could just be the calm before a renewed storm, as the issues behind this latest military confrontation have by no means been resolved. This is particularly the case in Jerusalem, with the looming eviction of Palestinians from their homes in favor of Israeli settlers in the East Jerusalem

district of Sheikh Jarrah and the clash between Palestinians and Israeli security forces at the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary holy site. And that is to name just two sources of tension. The problems go further still, however. This time, the conflict occurred not only between Gaza and Israel: There were also clashes and violence between Jews and Arabs within Israel itself. Will this stop again now that a cease-fire agreement has been signed? Or was it simply a manifestation of all the tensions between Arabs and Jews that have long simmered in Israel and are not likely to vanish any time soon? Cities like Acre (known locally as Akko) were up to now seen as a positive example of what peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians could look like on a large scale. Israeli friends of ours who have been involved in the peace movement since they were teenagers have named their daughter Akko for this reason.

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**Briefs**

**IHC adjourns Nawaz's appeals till June 9**

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday adjourned hearing till June 9, on appeals in graft references against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and his family members pertaining to Al-Azizia Steel Mills, Avenfield Property and Flagship Investment. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhter Kiyani heard the appeals filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, his daughter Maryam Nawaz and son-in-law Capt (retd) Muhammad Safdar Awan. Maryam Nawaz, her husband Captain (retd) Safdar, Deputy Prosecutor General NAB Sardar Muzafar Abbasi and prosecutor Jahanzeb Bharwana appeared before the court. During the course of proceeding the NAB prosecutor requested the bench to dismiss the appeals of former prime minister against his imprisonment sentences due to non pursuance and absence. Jahanzeb Bharwana prayed the court to hear the appeals of Nawaz Sharif on merit and give the judgment in his absence.

**Bilawal lashes out at PM for 'changing' name of BISP**

ATHAR SUFI



KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Tuesday asked Prime Minister Imran Khan as to what else he had done to reduce poverty in the country apart from 'changing' the name of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), launched by the PPP government almost a decade ago, to help the poverty-stricken people of the country. In a statement, Bilawal said people were well aware that much talked about Ehsaas Kifalat Programme was actually the new name of BISP. Bilawal said his party had launched the poverty alleviation programme when the entire world was confronted with the financial crisis. "Actually BISP was devised as per the vision of my mother, former prime minister Benazir Bhutto (BB)," he said and claimed that by launching the programme, the PPP government had set a precedent for other countries to follow.

**Iraq bans entry of Pakistani nationals**

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Iraq has prohibited the entry of Pakistani and Indian nationals into its territory through air and land from Tuesday (today) until further notice amid an uptick in coronavirus cases. The Iraqi government has placed an entry ban on travellers from several countries including Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Brazil, Colombia and Bahrain. The new list was issued by Iraq's federal government on May 24. As per the new guidelines, from Tuesday the passengers from Pakistan and seven other countries would not enter into Iraqi territory due to the high cases of the mutated coronavirus. Recently, a Canadian ban on direct passenger flights from India and Pakistan after increased Covid-19 cases were detected in travellers arriving from these countries was extended Friday until June 21. The measure, first announced on April 22, was set to expire Saturday. "Our battle against Covid-19 continues," Transportation Minister Omar Alghabra told a news conference.



ISLAMABAD: Renowned dentist of the country and Secretary General Pakistan-Romania Friendship Association, Dr. Abrar ul Hasnain hosted dinner for the outgoing High Commissioner of Malaysia Ikram Mohammad Ibrahim. Among others Ambassadors of Azerbaijan, Morocco, Kyrgyzstan also attended the dinner. President Pakistan, Romania Friendship Association Zahid Maqbool, CEO of Monal Luqman Ali Afzal, Syed Ahmed and Editor Islamabad POST Ansar Mahmood Bhatti are also seen in the picture. (Detailed coverage of the event in the coming issue of CENTRELINE magazine). – DNA Photo

**Poverty alleviation: Pak to benefit from China**

Chinese ambassador meets Dr. Shahzad Waseem; Shahzad thanks China for support; says China's investment in Pakistan will lead to development and prosperity

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will benefit from China's experience to ensure poverty alleviation in the country said Leader of the House in Senate, Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem during the meeting with Chinese ambassador HE Mr. Nong Rong here in Islamabad. Dr. Shahzad Waseem said the strategy and tactics of the brotherly country China in overcoming poverty is very commendable. Pakistan can benefit from China's experience to ensure poverty alleviation in the country. He further said that economic cooperation between the

two countries can be further enhanced and improved. China's investment in Pakistan will lead to development and prosperity. Dr. Shahzad Waseem congratulated the Chinese leadership, government and people on 70th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations. People of Pakistan are proud of Pak-China time tested friendship which has proven its worth in worst of times. He said that both the countries support each other on core issues at different international forums. Pakistan has always maintained a relationship of love and friendship with China. Pak-China relations are perfect example of successful



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Nong Rong and Lead of the House in the Senate Dr. Shahzad Waseem meeting in Islamabad. – DNA

strategic partnership for mutual benefit. Chinese ambassador said that together with Pakistan, we will bring development and prosperity in both the coun-

tries. CPEC will turn out to be the real engine of growth for Pakistani economy and will be a driving force behind development of the country. Leader of the House thanked China for its help during the covid-19 pandemic. Timely supply of corona vaccines by China has saved thousands of precious lives. Meanwhile, Islamabad Council of World Affairs (ICWA) in collaboration with Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA) organised a Seminar to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between China and Pakistan. The seminar reviewing 70 years of extra-ordinary China-Pakistan bilateral rela-

tions, focused on China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), regional and global issues of mutual interests. Both sides exchanged views on regional situation in South Asia in the changing global dynamics. Ambassador Nong Rong, China ambassador to Pakistan and Ambassador Moin-ul-Haque, Pakistan's ambassador to China to made keynote speeches during the opening ceremony. Mr. Wang Chao President, CPIFA and Amb. Khalid Mahmood President of ICWA led the respective delegations. On Pakistan side, delegation comprised, Mr. Amanullah Khan, Vice President ICWA, Amb. Rizwan ul Haq Mahmood, Secretary General ICWA.

**WB assures support to achieve objectives**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank on Tuesday assured to continuous support to the Government of Pakistan (GoP) in achieving the priority development objectives. Minister for Economic Affairs, Omar Ayub Khan, held a consultative meeting with Country Director, World Bank in the Ministry of Economic Affairs Mr. Najib Benhassine, said a press release issued by Ministry of Economic Affairs (EAD) here. The meeting was aimed to discuss ongoing projects and development priorities of Government of Pakistan for the next years. Both the sides also emphasized on the need of improved rural infrastructure including farm to market roads.

In order to improve the rural economy, it was discussed to improve agriculture productivity through provision of improved seeds and efficient water management system. It was highlighted that cold storages are critical to manage short-term demand-supply gaps and price stability. While Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan, emphasizes on agriculture and rural transformation through improved connectivity. The Minister for Economic Affairs highlighted that lack of economic opportunities and limited connectivity of rural area with urban centers has caused the income gap between urban and rural residents. He said that rural development is vital to sustainable socioeconomic development and environmental viability of a country.



ISLAMABAD: PDM chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman welcomes PML N President and Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif. – DNA

**United States to reopen Jerusalem consulate**

DNA

JERUSALEM: Secretary of State Antony Blinken announced Tuesday that the U.S. would reopen its consulate in Jerusalem – a move that restores ties with Palestinians that had been downgraded by the Trump administration. The consulate long served as an autonomous office in charge of diplomatic relations with the Palestinians. But former U.S. President Donald Trump downgraded its operations and placed them under the authority of his ambassador to Israel when he moved the embassy to Jerusalem. Trump's move infuriated the Palestinians, who view east Jerusalem as occupied territory and the capital of

their future state. Blinken did not give a precise date for reopening the consulate. He announced the step after a meeting with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, in the occupied West Bank. "As I told the president, I'm here to underscore the commitment of the United States to rebuilding the relationship with the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people, a relationship built on mutual respect and also a shared conviction that Palestinians and Israelis alike deserve equal measures of security, freedom opportunity and dignity," he said. He promised to "rally international support" to help Gaza in the wake of the war. He later announced nearly \$40 million in aid to the Palestinians,

including \$5.5 million in emergency assistance for Gaza. That brings total U.S. assistance to the Palestinians under the Biden administration to over \$360 million after the Trump administration had cut off nearly all assistance to them.



Blinken has promised that any assistance will be kept out of the hands of Hamas, which does not recognize Israel's right to exist and which Israel and the U.S. consider a terrorist organization. "We know that to prevent a return to violence, we have to use the space created to address a larger set of underlying issues and challenges. And that begins with tackling the grave humanitarian situation in Gaza and starting to rebuild," he said. Earlier, After a meeting with Blinken, Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he appreciated the US military support for Israel. The PM also warned that Israel's response will be very powerful if Hamas breaks the ceasefire and said he discussed with Blinken how to im-

prove the humanitarian conditions in Gaza. Netanyahu commented on Iran, saying Israel would always reserve the right to defend itself against Iran and hoped Washington would not return to the nuclear agreement with Iran. Meanwhile, Blinken said the US fully supported Israel against Hamas attacks and said it would prevent the militia from benefiting from Gaza's reconstruction funds. The US secretary of state also said his job in the region was to reduce tension. In tandem with Blinken's mission, Israeli authorities said they were allowing fuel, medicine and food earmarked for Gaza's private sector to enter the territory for the first time since 11 days of cross-border hostilities started on May 10.

**SC issues notice to Shahbaz over govt's plea**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan (SC) on Tuesday issued notice to Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Shahbaz Sharif on a plea from the federal government, challenging the Lahore High Court (LHC) decision to allow him to travel abroad. The apex court while hearing a plea filed by the federal government directed the Lahore High Court (LHC) to submit the entire record of the case regarding the filing of the petition from Shahbaz Sharif and details into its immediate hearing. In his remarks during today's proceedings, Justice Ijaz ul Ahsan asked if there was a medical emergency that led to an immediate hearing into the case. To this, Attorney General Khalid Jawed Khan said that previously Shahbaz's bail plea on medical grounds was rejected and there is no such record that he had a medical emergency. "Even the Lahore court did not hear the government's argument and gave a one-sided decision besides also directing to implement it," the attorney general said. When the apex court judge asked if a person released on bail is barred from traveling abroad, the attorney general while negating it asked if a person could go directly from jail to the airport.

**Chaudhry Nisar to take oath as MPA**

ABID RAZA



LAHORE: Ex-interior minister and former Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Chaudhry Nisar will take oath as Punjab MPA on Wednesday (today) during the session of the provincial assembly. This was confirmed by the Punjab Assembly secretary. The PA secretariat also informed Nisar about his oath as MPA. The Punjab Assembly Secretary Muhammad Khan Bhatti yesterday issued a clarification regarding the denial of permission to Chaudhry Nisar to take oath as the Member of Provincial Assembly (MPA). While clarifying over the issue, the PA secretary had said that Chaudhry Nisar was not denied to take oath. He added that three petitions regarding the issue are currently under proceeding in the Rawalpindi bench and two in the Lahore High Court (LHC). Bhatti said that he has sought two days for holding legal consultation on the matter in order to ascertain any stay order for avoiding committing a contempt of court action. Punjab Law Minister Raja Basharat has also clarified that the oath taking process was deferred due to proceedings of different petitions against Chaudhry Nisar.

**'Govt to get Shaukat elected as senator'**

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed revealed that the federal government intended to deselect Senator Ishaq Dar and he would be replaced with incumbent Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin. Sheikh Rasheed revealed this update while speaking to a private television channel. The Interior Minister said, "If Ishaq Dar would not come back to the country then he would be deseated from his Senate seat after the government would bring a legislation in this regard. Then, Shaukat Tareen would become a senator." "Certainly, Ishaq Dar will not come back and he would be deseated once the ordinance promulgates," Sheikh Rasheed said. He also commented that Shehbaz Sharif is a "mild person" and a man of negotiations. – DNA