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PM Imran rules out trade with India until Kashmir issue resolved

Detailed News On Page-01

Boris weds his fiancée in secret ceremony

Detailed News On Page-07



Dr. June, New Indonesian Consul General

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

400,000 receive Covid jabs in a day

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development and head of the National Command and Operation Centre (NOC) Asad Umar on Sunday said that Pakistan set a new record of most vaccinations in a day after nearly 400,000 people received COVID jabs on Saturday. Taking to Twitter to make the announcement, Asad Umar said that over 383,000 people received COVID jabs on Saturday, setting a new record of most vaccinations in a day.

Bozkir's statement bombshell for India

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The remarks by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) chief, Volkan Bozkir that the UN policy on the Kashmir dispute is governed by UN Charter and applicable Security Council resolutions have unnerved Modi-led Indian government. A report released by Kashmir Media Service said that the statement issued by Volkan Bozkir during his recent trip to Pakistan was no less than a bombshell for the Indian government. The UNGA President supported Pakistan's right to raise the Kashmir dispute at the United Nations.

Sarfraz denied clearance at airport

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Quetta Gladiators captain Sarfraz Ahmed was unable to leave for the UAE on Sunday after he was denied clearance to travel to the country. The former Pakistan skipper was scheduled to leave for Abu Dhabi via a commercial flight this morning at 4:00 am. Five people, including fast bowler Mohammad Hasnain, left Karachi for Abu Dhabi. However, Sarfraz and 10 other persons from Lahore could not get clearance.

PM rules out trade with India

Imran Khan also said that Pakistan needs good relations with India and with this the trade would significantly surge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday said that the Opposition in the country had asked the Pakistan Army to oust the elected government because they wanted an NRO from day one. The prime minister also said that any trade with India at this moment will tantamount to treason with the Kashmiri people. Taking calls from people to answer their queries on phone, Imran Khan said the opposition is trapped in their own words as they termed the PTI government ineligible and now they are baffled with the economic growth rate statistics. "Contrary to the hopes of our opponents, we have been blessed that GDP growth surged and there are predictions of above 4 percent GDP growth," Imran Khan said. Answering a question of a caller Zubair from Multan, Imran Khan quoted a Holy Quran verse: "So, surely with hardship comes ease," and said when you compete in life there would be ups and downs. "I would have to pay the loans and for that I have to increase my country's revenue. I told my nation about the difficult time ahead as when a country became bankrupt it needed time to rise again," Imran Khan said. Imran Khan also said that Pakistan

needs good relations with India and with this the trade would significantly surge and he even tried with sincere efforts to have good relations with India. Imran Khan said that keeping in view today's situation, especially after the August 2019 move by India, having a normalization and trade with India at this time would be tantamount to treason with Kashmiri people. He announced that Pakistan is with the Kashmiri people and trade would not be resumed at the cost of the Kashmiris' sacrifices. The Prime Minister commented that the Palestine issue is the same as the Kashmir issue. "The recent movement in Palestine, amid the social media uproar, will lead to settlement of Palestine dispute which is a two-state solution," he added. "Just like when European Union was formed, everyone benefited," Imran Khan said. "There is no doubt that if we have good relations with India – and on the other hand we have such a big market when it comes to China – if we begin trade and there is greater connectivity, it's a proven fact that trade benefits all," he said. The prime minister said that if India takes back the steps it took on August 5, "then we can definitely hold talks" and build a road map to sort out the Kashmir issue.

Continued on Page 06



BAGHDAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi met with Defence Minister of Iraq Juma Nad Saadoun to further strengthen ties. – DNA

Pakistan values its ties with Iraq: FM Qureshi

DNA

BAGHDAD, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said Pakistan gives immense importance to its brotherly relations with Iraq. He expressed these views while talking to Iraqi Minister of Defense Juma Inad Saadoun Al-Jubouri, at Ministry of Defense, Iraq. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan values the sacrifices of the people of Iraq people in the war against terrorism. He offered all

Kuwait opens visas for Pakistanis

NEWS DESK

KUWAIT: Kuwait has restored family and business visas for Pakistani citizens after ten years. This was announced by Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Sabah Al-Khalid Al-Sabah while talking to Pakistan's Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmad in Kuwait (Sunday). The Interior Minister handed over a special letter written by Prime Minister Imran Khan to his Kuwaiti Counterpart. The meeting also decided to

Continued on Page 06

possible assistance and cooperation from Pakistan in the development and defense sectors to the Iraq. The participation of Iraqi paratroopers in Pakistan Day parade was a manifestation of stronger bilateral defence ties between the two countries, he added. He said Pakistan lauded the sacrifices of Iraqis in the war against terrorism. The two sides reaffirmed the commitment to work together for regional security and stability.

Continued on Page 06

Fawad says PML-N, PPP responsible for crisis

– Wonders at Opp's protest call at time of economic revival

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Sunday held Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the PPP for the country's economic crisis. Fawad Chaudhry said the country had to face economic hardships due to bad economic policies of previous stints of PML-N and PPP governments and when the economy is stabilizing the opposition's protest call is preposterous. In his tweet on Sunday, Fawad Ch said due to bad policies of the PPP and PML-N governments in the past, the country had to suffer economic hardships.



He said after a long time, the PTI government's sagacious economic policies have started bearing fruit. He said for the first time in Pakistan's history, more than Rs4,000 billion tax was collected. He eulogized the efforts of overseas Pakistanis who actively contributed to the efforts to put Pakistan to its feet economically. He said the overseas Pakistanis sent Rs1,000 billion in

remittances. He said wheat, sugarcane and maize witnessed bumper production contributing to Rs1,100 billion to the agricultural economy which enhanced the purchasing power of farmers remarkably. He said sale of tractors rose by 64% and added that there was an increase in the use of fertilizers and insecticide medicines. Fawad said that stock market created a new record on May 27 after it witnessed a trade of 2.21 billion shares. He said Pakistan's market was one of the best markets in the world. He wondered at this time when the economy of Pakistan was going up and the (economic) condition of a common man was being changed, then why opposition was giving a protest call.

PDM parties seem to be confused, says Bilawal

Bilawal was addressing media men after meeting with leadership of ANP in Charsadda

BUREAU REPORT

CHARSADDA: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday vowed not to let the 'IMF budget' passed by the National Assembly, urging the opposition parties to join hands to stop the passage of the upcoming budget. Bilawal Bhutto was addressing media men after meeting with senior leadership of the Awami National Party (ANP) in Charsadda. The meeting was aimed at holding discussions on the evolving political situation, after Saturday's Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) huddle in Islamabad. On the occasion, the PPP chairman said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially the youth were facing acute poverty. He said PPP has an ideological and political relationship with Awami National Party (ANP). He said both par-



ties— PPP and ANP —would join hands inside and out of the parliament for political activities. He said the PPP had launched the PDM. He said there should be no confusion in the parliament, adding that there was confusion in yesterday's meeting of the PDM. The masses are facing difficulties due to the incapable government of Imran Khan. He said they would struggle for riddance from the incapable government. Earlier, Bilawal visited Wali Bagh in Charsadda to mourn the demise of ANP veteran leader Begum Naseem Wali Khan.

Bilawal visited Wali Bagh on Sunday to express his grievances over the death of ANP leader Begum Naseem. The ANP leaders welcomed Bilawal Bhutto. The PPP chairman met ANP Senior Vice President Ameer Haider Khan Hoti, ANP KP President Aimal Wali Khan and Longeen Khan and expressed his sorrow over the passing of Begum Naseem. He prayed for the forgiveness of the departed soul. ANP Secretary General Mian Ifthikhar Hussain, Treasury Secretary Senator Haji Hedayatullah, ANP spokesman Zahid Khan and Haji Ghulam Bilour were also present on the occasion. Bilawal was accompanied by Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, provincial minister Hamayun Khan, former senator Nayyar Bukhari, Farhatullah Babar, Robina Khalid and others. The ANP leaders thanked Bilawal for his visit to Wali Bagh.

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Inside...

- COVID-19 cases going down in Punjab: Health Minister – Page 02
- Institute of tourism and hotel management inaugurated – Page 03
- "Ecosystems degradation peaks up food security" – Page 04
- Elephant in the room – Page 05
- World leaders call for action at Seoul climate summit – Page 06
- Israel FM in Egypt for Gaza ceasefire talks – Page 07
- Gov't focusing on targeted sectors for sustainable growth – Page 08

Briefs

'Role of tech vital to prevent pandemics'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The AJK President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the importance of new technologies in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic cannot be overlooked as these technologies have a huge potential for detection, timely diagnosis, effective treatment, and future prevention of the COVID-19. Addressing a webinar on "Coronavirus and the role of technologies" organized by computing and engineering department of the University of Kotli, he said that though vaccines and medicines are being used to treat COVID-19, major reliance has been on prevention, surveillance, and containment of the pandemic. Enumerating the technologies being used to curb the viral spread of coronavirus, the State President said that geospatial technology, artificial intelligence (AI), big data, telemedicine, blockchain, 5G technology, smart applications, Internet of Medical Things (IoMT), robotics, and additive manufacturing are substantially important for COVID-19 detection, monitoring, diagnosing, screening, surveillance, mapping, tracking, and creating awareness about the pandemic.

Nanga Parbat, Himalaya Parks to boost tourism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The two new high-altitude national parks of Nanga Parbat and Himalaya being inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan in Gilgit Baltistan (GB) under his Protected Areas Initiative will boost adventure tourism, sustainable employment opportunities for local communities and ecosystem restoration. The newly launched national parks were sprawling over an area of 3,600 square kilometers that comprised of five percent of the total area of GB, an official of the Ministry of Climate Change was quoted by state run official media as saying. He said these national parks owing to their unique geographical location and topography had exotic species of flora and fauna making the region a heaven of various natural organisms belonging to animal, plant and bird life species. "Nanga Parbat and Himalaya National Parks will serve as a nature corridor among Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, GB and Azad Jammu and Kashmir where the wildlife and birds species will have an unimpeded migration and displacement places to create their habitats with changing weather patterns and ecological conditions," he added.

PTI govt turns huge CAD into surplus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Sunday said incompetent government of PML-N had left \$ 19.2 billion current account deficit (CAD) which was today \$ 773 million surplus due to pro-active policies of present government. Reacting to the statement of PML-N spokesperson Maraym Aurangzeb, he said the courtiers of PML-N have a high degree of lies and arrogance. He said PML-N during its five years of the reign carried out the funeral of exports. Dr. Shahbaz Gill said country exports were risen by 13.5 percent reaching to US \$ 21 billion despite COVID-19 pandemic. He said the incompetent N-League government had reduced foreign exchange reserves from 18 billion to 7 billion. He said today, the country's total foreign exchange reserves have reached to \$23 billion. Dr. Gill said remittances have also reached 24.2 billion due to the confidence of overseas Pakistanis.

COVID-19 cases going down in Punjab: Health Minister

The number of people going home from hospitals after recovering from the COVID-19 has increased

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid on Sunday said that the coronavirus cases going down in the province. Talking to media here, health minister said that in last 24 hours 696 positive cases of coronavirus and 22 deaths reported in the province. The number of people going home from hospitals after recovering from the COVID-19 has increased.

"People being admitted to hospitals are fewer than the number of patients being discharged", she said. Giving details about the occupancy rates of beds, the minister said in Multan 67 percent, Lahore 38 percent and in Rawalpindi 16 pct beds have been occupied. Only three districts in the province, Multan, Rahim Yar Khan and Khanewal, have positive cases rate higher than five per cent, the minister said. Lahore, which was earlier considered a coronavirus hotspot,



having positive cases rate reduced to 1.5 percent, the minister said. Health Minister said that only six areas in Multan have been currently under smart lockdown. All restrictions decided by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC)

would remain in place, she said. These include a ban on all commercial activities after 8:00pm, ban on indoor weddings while outdoor weddings can be held, ban on indoor dining while outdoor dining and takeaway is allowed, and a complete ban on sports. Rashid said the provincial government was reopening swimming pools while tourism has also been reopened subject to SOPs. The NCOC would take a decision on reopening cinemas and theatres next week.

She said if people properly maintained SOPs and got vaccinated – then the government would be able to "control the pandemic" within the next three to four months. The minister stressed that the government had adequate stocks of vaccines. "The vaccines available to the government are Sinopharm, SinoVac, AstraZeneca and CanSino," the minister said. She said that the government has presently 1.4 million vaccines in available stock.

Irsa finds no bungling in Punjab water data claim

DNA

LAHORE: The members of Indus River System Authority from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan have inspected Punjab canals and barrages in the wake of undue water share allegations against the province by Sindh and found no irregularity in the data provided by the Punjab officials. Irsa members from KP and Balochistan on Sunday conducted a surprise raid of Punjab's canals and barrages to assuage the veracity of data provided by Punjab regarding the inflow and outflow of water from these barrages. The Irsa members from two small provinces checked the water flow on four big canals and two barrages in Punjab and reposed confidence in the fair apportionment of water. They observed that on Chashma barrage, 90,000 cusecs water was flowing. They also checked the inflow and outflow of water at the Jinnah barrage. They found that the water data was perfectly correct. Impartial experts checked water statistics at CRBC, CJ Link Canal. They also assessed the quantity of water being given to Thal canal and the Atomic Energy Commission.

'Country moving forward'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Sunday said the country was moving forward on the path to development and progress under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Talking to a private news channel, he said the government was focused on deliverance, improving economy, distribution of health cards, Kamyab Jawan programme and national entrepreneurship programme. He said the incumbent government was not feared from any tactics of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) as it was badly disintegrated and its all political parties were busy to leveling allegations against each other. The minister said PDM was an unnatural alliance of 11 political parties having 11 different fictions and stories, adding that PDM was facing situation like story of "Tot Batot".



FAISALABAD: Under Khidmat Aap ki Dehleez Par program Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali supervising the washing of roads through mechanical process. – DNA

Nazir Chauhan says stand by his stance

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) MPA from Punjab Nazir Chauhan reiterated that he stood by his 'stance' against Adviser to the Prime Minister on Interior and Accountability Mirza Shahzad Akbar. Nazir Chauhan on Sunday reached Lahore's Race Course Police Station for surrendering after Shahzad Akbar lodged a complaint against him. Earlier, a first-information report (FIR) was registered against MPA Nazir Chauhan, who is a member of the party's estranged Jahangir Khan Tareen (JKT) group, on the complaint of Shahzad Akbar. Shahzad Akbar accused Chauhan of making allegations concerning his religious beliefs during an appearance on a television channel, adding that these statements had put his life at risk. Talking to the media persons in Lahore on Sunday, PTI MPA Chauhan said that he wanted to state some facts in front of Prime Minister Imran Khan. Chauhan said Shahzad Akbar is playing a leading role in the political party and our friends should consider the hereafter and should not support Shahzad Akbar. Chauhan said multiple times people had asked Shahzad Akbar about his sect and belief and as PTI Parliamentary Secretary Punjab and MPA he wanted to ask about beliefs.

SC forms 2 larger and 6 regular benches

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed has constituted two larger benches and six regular benches at the principal seat Islamabad to hear a number of important cases during the next week, starting from Monday. On Monday, a five-member larger bench headed by the Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah will hear case petition filed by former Islamabad High Court judge Shaikat Aziz Siddiqi against the Federation seeking setting aside of report/opinion of Supreme Judicial Council and notification issued by Ministry of Law dated October 11, 2018. On Wednesday, a five-member larger bench headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice MAQbool Baqar, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Sajjad Ali Shah and Justice Mumtaz Akhtar will hear service matters of different government employees. The first bench is comprised of Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal and Justice Sayeed Mazhar Ali Akbar Naqvi while the second bench is comprised of Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Amin-Ud-

Din Khan. The third bench is comprised of Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Mumtaz Akhtar. Justice Qazi Faez Isa and Justice Yahya Afridi will be members of the fourth bench, while the fifth bench will consist of Justice Maqbool Baqar and Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed. The sixth bench will comprise of Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Sajjad Ali Shah. The benches will hear many important cases including service and pension matters of government employees, educational institutions matters, labour cases, appeals against death sentences and life imprisonment, appeals against acquittal of accused in murder and corruption cases, bail appeals in NAB cases, election petitions of different politicians, appeal filed by Shafiqat Wali, President Gilgit-Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Bar Association seeking de-notification of illegal appointments made by the Supreme Appellate Court, Gilgit-Baltistan, petition filed by Khush Dil Khan Advocate, MPA, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar against the Provincial Government, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa regarding discriminatory allocation of funds by the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to MPAs and MNAs, post-arrest bail plea filed by former Leader of Opposition in National Assembly Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and NAB appeals seeking cancellation of bail of Syed Khurshid Shah's family members. According to NAB on receipt of multiple complaints against the petitioner Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah Member National Assembly, that he is richest man in the Sindh beyond his known sources of income, NAB conducted inquiry and investigation whereby collected the evidence against him and filed a Reference in NAB Court Sukkur. He was nominated as the accused No.1 in the Reference No.17/2019 along with seventeen others. The Petitioner/accused in connivance with other co-accused persons accumulated assets beyond their known sources to the tune of Rs.1,229,449,803/-, which were disproportionate to their known sources of income. NAB's appeals seeking cancellation of bail of different parliamentarians and according to NAB the assets of accused were beyond sources of income earned being MPA and MNA in different terms of year 1998 till date, appeal filed by Sharafat Ali against life imprisonment conviction awarded by military court. – APP

FCCI to help SCCI for industrial estate

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) will help Sahiwal Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) to have a well-organized and scientifically planned industrial estate by providing it necessary guidance and technical know-how through Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development & Management Company (FIEDMC), said Engineer

Hafiz Ihtasham Javed President FCCI. He was talking to a delegation of Sahiwal Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) who visited FCCI here yesterday. Introducing Faisalabad, he said that FCCI is the third major and important chamber of Pakistan which is contributing its key role in the overall development of Pakistan. He said that textile is the mainstay of the national economy and Faisalabad alone is contributing 60-70% share in its exports.

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(01-Position)

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Candidate holding CISM, CISA certifications will be preferred.

Age & Experience:

Age (max) (As of last date of submission of application)	Relevant Experience (min) (Post Qualification)
40 Years	5 Years

2. Manager - Internal Audit, Lahore
(01 - Position)

Eligibility Criteria

Qualification:

ACMA, ACCA, CA - Inter, Masters / Bachelors Degree (16 years education) either in Finance, Accounting, Commerce or related field from HEC recognized institutions.

Candidate holding CIA certification will be preferred.

Age & Experience:

Age (max) (As of last date of submission of application)	Relevant Experience (min) (Post Qualification)
40 Years	5 Years

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Note:

- For job description and competencies of above positions, please visit HBFC website.

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Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview. Incomplete or applications received after the last date will not be entertained.

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Misinformation and/or any attempt to influence the selection process will be considered a definite disqualification at any stage of the process for current as well as for all future recruitments in HBFC, even if the candidate is otherwise qualified.

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Nader K. Alturk urges world to hold Israel accountable

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Head of Mission of the State of Palestine, Nader K. Alturk has urged the international community to hold Israel accountable for its atrocities against Palestinian people. In an interview published in a newspaper on Sunday, he said the countries should stop providing weapons to Israel because these are being used against Palestinian children and innocent civilians, which violates international laws and human rights principles. He said the Palestinian people under occupation have the full right to defend themselves and resist the occupation to protect their freedom. He said the war crimes practiced by Israel could

not be viewed as self-defence. Targeting civilians, killing children and women, destroying homes and other infrastructures, including schools and hospitals, is not consistent with the principle of self-defence. He said we need to keep in mind that the international laws were established to protect the lives of the oppressed and to uphold peace, justice and equality in the world. The Deputy Head of Mission said we appreciate the strong support by Pakistan and all Islamic and Arab countries for the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights. He said Pakistan has taken one of the strongest positions in support of the Palestinian people and their just cause. He said this support increases our strength and

determination to continue legitimate struggle to establish an independent Palestinian state. He said once Palestine is free we will pray in Al Aqsa Masjid together. Responding to a question about the ceasefire, Nader K. Alturk said it has come as a respite but is not a final solution. He said the final solution will only be achieved by getting justice and dignity for the Palestinian people and holding Israel accountable for its crimes against innocent civilians. He said establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al Quds as its capital, the return of the Palestinian refugees to their properties and homes and compensating them for long years of torment according to UN Resolution 194 is the only solution.

Briefs

17,249 vehicles with tinted glasses fined

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) fined 17,249 vehicles having tinted glasses during the Campaign while special squads have been constituted for effective action against those vehicles having tinted glasses.

Following directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ul Rehman, ITP has accelerated efforts to take action against those vehicles having tinted glasses. Special squads have been constituted for the purpose which have been also directed to remove tinted glasses from vehicles.

Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rasheed has also urged the citizens to follow. He also appealed to avoid using tinted glasses and follow traffic rules to ensure safe road environment in the city.

14 ACs, magistrates to check hoarding

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration has deputed some 14 assistant commissioners and magistrates in various localities to check prices of various commodities, said an official of the ICT administration while talking to APP.

He said the local administration was closely monitoring the hoarding of essential food items. He said the shopkeepers were strictly directed to display the price list at prominent place of their shops. He said 25 mobile shops were also set up in various areas to provide essential items to the people at subsidized rates. The prices and hoarding were being regularly checked under the Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding Act, 1977.

The assistant commissioners/price magistrates persistently visiting food factories, Godown of different food items, Sabzi Mandi and other establishments to check the hoarding. The District Price Control Committee has been established under the District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner comprising stakeholders as its member to monitor and check the hoarders. — APP

Submission date of Seerat, Na'at Books extends

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony has extended the last date for submission of entries for participating in Seerat, Na'at Books, Articles Contests till June 4, 2021.

According to ministry official, the last date has been extended due to COVID-19 situation and Eid Holiday.

The interested authors were required to send their entries for participating in the competition titled "Role of Mosques, Seminaries and Imam Bargahs for Unity and concept of a welfare state in light of the teachings of the Holy Prophet Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH)."

The authors would be awarded prizes ranging from Rs 15,000 to Rs 100,000 in five categories.

The ministry has offered three cash prizes Rs 100,000; Rs 75,000 and Rs 35,000 to the first three best written on Seerah, reference books in national language, while one prize worth Rs 35,000 is reserved for books written in each Regional language of Pakistan. Likewise, three prizes worth Rs 50,000, Rs 40,000 and Rs 30,000 have been offered for Seerat books written for children in National language.

And three prizes worth Rs 75,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 40,000 have been offered for writing books on Seerat in foreign (English, Arabic) language. — APP

Institute of tourism and hotel management inaugurated

Institute is equipped with state of the art infrastructure and has the capability of imparting modern tourism education. The students who will get training from this institute shall serve in the hotel industry of Pakistan: Asif Mahmood



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Adviser of Punjab Chief Minister on Tourism Asif Mahmood inaugurated TDCP Institute of Tourism

and Hotel management in Rawalpindi. The initiative is part of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision to promote tourism in the country. The Adviser told the gathering the Punjab govern-

ment was undertaking a number of steps to promote tourism in the province. He said the Prime Minister had given them the task of improving the touristic infrastructure for the better facilitation of



the people. Asif further said that inauguration of the tourism institute was a step in that direction and added more such initiatives shall be carried out. He said the said Institute

is equipped with state of the art infrastructure and has the capability of imparting modern tourism education. The students who will get training from this institute shall serve in the hotel in-

dustry of Pakistan. Later, he also visited various parts of the Institute and appreciated the arrangement made for student. He also planted a tree in the premises of the Institute.

HEC offers Sri Lankan students to study in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) has offered Sri Lankan students to get higher education in Pakistan's best universities under Allama Iqbal Scholarships Programme. The HEC, in that regard, has announced 250 scholarships for Sri Lankan students to study in Pakistan as per directive of the Prime Minister Imran Khan, under the Pak-Sri Lanka Higher Education Cooperation Programme, an official told APP.

The HEC announced June 15, 2021 as last date for submission of Applications for this opportunity, the official added. Sharing further details, the official said that spread over the course of next five years, Allama Iqbal scholarships provide an excellent opportunity for 1000 Sri Lankan students to visit

Pakistan and pursue undergraduate, postgraduate and postdoctoral degree programmes. The scholarships aim to promote an effective exchange of knowledge and better understanding of cultures and traditions between Sri Lankan and Pakistani students, the official added. Selected candidates will study in top ranked Pakistani universities, learn about Pakistani society and values, acquire leadership skills, and help educate fellow Pakistani students and community groups about their country and culture.

The Allama Iqbal scholarships are part of HEC's internationalization initiative to encourage international students to study in Pakistan. The scholarships offer full tuition fee of the programme for study in Paki-

stani universities, accommodation allowances, study allowances and one-time return air ticket. Women candidates are highly encouraged to apply for these scholarships. The scholarship offer is open for all disciplines at BS, MS and PhD levels in Engineering Sciences, Basic and Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, including all subjects like Architecture, Fine Arts, Business Education, Computer Sciences, Engineering, Information Technology, Agriculture Sciences, Media and Communication Studies, Languages, etc. As per instruction of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, 100 scholarships have been specifically allocated for MBBS studies. The eligibility criteria to apply for the scholarships is MBBS, Engineering,

Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree Programmes, PhD Programme, (Pre-Medical) (Pre-Engineering) in required subjects with 60% marks at with CGPA 3.00/4.00 at MS level is required. All students are encouraged to must apply through HEC e-portal <http://eportal.hec.gov.pk/paksl>. For further information, Programme details are available at HEC website: <https://hec.gov.pk/site/paksl>. All registered candidates must appear in scholarship test organized by HEC in collaboration with Pakistan High Commission at Colombo and the Government of Sri Lanka. Shortlisted candidates will appear in interview to be held at Pakistan High Commission at Colombo with the Government of Sri Lanka. — APP

RCCI to organize National Health Summit on June 16

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) is going to organize the National Health Summit on June 16 aiming to provide a platform to address challenges faced by developing countries like Pakistan for mass vaccination and bringing back trade and economic activities. RCCI President Mohammad Nasir Mirza, in a statement said that the summit will also help us to highlight the challenges of mass vaccination and related health services to address the challenges of the COVID-19. The Rawalpindi Chamber has been conducting an awareness campaign on the prevention of coronavirus from day one. Due to lack of awareness in our country, a large number of people have reservations or hesitation regarding Covid vaccines. We need a strong and aggressive awareness drive and use maximum resources to get everyone vaccinated as early as possible, he added. — DNA

MoCC registers 0.12 million volunteers

ISLAMABAD: The increasing population pressure in urban centers of the country demand civic responsibility among the general public to keep environment clean and healthy where under Prime Minister Imran Khan's flagship initiative of Clean Green Pakistan Movement for making the country a scenic tourist attraction, the Ministry of Climate Change has launched

a citizen engagement program in which 120,000 Clean Green Pakistan Champions (CGPC) have been registered so far. An official of the ministry told APP that CGPM has managed to get 0.12 million Clean Green Champions who would collaborate and participate in the government initiatives of improving clean and green efforts under the project. — APP

AIOU uploads date sheet for final exams

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has uploaded date sheet for semester terminal examinations on its website (www.aiou.edu.pk). Semester terminal examination question papers for BA (Associate Degree) programs would be uploaded on the university website on June 5. However, question papers for the rest of the programs would be uploaded on students' existing LMS accounts of Aaghi portal. University has devised a unique procedure for these programs and the students may access the university website or contact their respective regional centers for any information in this regard. — DNA

Development work on health projects underway

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer District Health Authority Dr. Faiza Kanwal has said works were underway for the establishment of a new hospital, improvement, renovation, and up-gradation of various health projects.

Giving details of the projects, the CEO told APP, 74 percent of construction work of setting up a new Tehsil Headquarter Hospital (THQ) at Potohar Town has been completed for which the provincial government has so far spent Rs 355.2 million.

She informed that in the first phase the construction of 1st floor has been completed while the flooring of 2nd, 3rd floor besides Mumty, garages, canteen, laundry, boundary wall and residences for officials are being completed to help ailing segments of the society.

"The Rs.656.028 million health project, inaugurated in September 2017 will hopeful-

ly be completed by June 2021, adding the provincial government has so far spent Rs 355.2 million out of the total Rs 473.31 million allocated for the construction while Rs 182.7 million would be spent on purchasing of necessary equipment", she said.

Dr. Faiza further informed that renovation work of Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Murree is in the final stages as 91 percent of construction work has been completed at the cost of Rs 45.24 million out of the total Rs 49.255 mln allocated for the project.

She said that after the installation of the heating system which was in progress the work on the project would be finished. Giving details about the Up-gradation of Basic Health Unit (BHU) to Rural Health Center (RHC) level hospital at Thoa Khalsa in tehsil Kahuta, she said 88% of construction work of the main building has been completed at a cost of Rs 20.39 million. — APP

CDA confident to complete nullahs' dredging, banks'

The campaign, worked out some 3 months ago, has entered the 2nd stage as nullahs passing through different sectors including F-6, F-7, G-5 and G-6 had been completely cleansed and stone pitched

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has cleansed and stone pitched banks of multiple natural water drainage channels (Nullahs) flowing through various parts of the city, under its ongoing drive meant to prevent the sewage and waste dumping on permanent basis.

The campaign, worked out some three months ago, has entered the second stage as nullahs passing through different sectors including F-6, F-7, G-5 and G-6 had been completely cleansed and stone pitched under its first phase, the CDA Member Finance Rana Shakeel told APP on Sunday. Under the second phase, he

said the cleansing and rehabilitation work was being carried out in more natural streams flowing through other sectors including F-8, F-11, F-10 and G-7. He added that rest of the streams would be cleansed before the arrival of monsoon season as the CDA's Machinery Pool Organization in collaboration with other wings was executing the drive on fast-track basis. To a query, he said over a dozen stream flowed from Margalla Hills, but all of them eventually turned filthy due to disposal of waste and sewage into the Nullahs by the people residing along their embankments.

However, the CDA was utilizing its all-out resources to enhance beauty of the federal capital by clearing the nullahs of garbage and sewerage water. Giving details of the drive, he said proper places were being built along the nullahs to enable the machinery use for removing blockage and clearing them of all sort of trash.

Termining the nullahs cleansing a herculean task due to their depth, he said bedding of the streams was also being ensured under the drive so as to enable the sanitary workers for its cleansing. Stone pitching of their banks was also being done to block and identify the

sewage lines of the restaurants and houses opening in those streams, he added. He said the sewerage lines, after their maintenance, were diverted to the Sewage Treatment Plant of the Sector I-9 to treat the filthy water for its onward use for different purposes.

"We are moving towards a permanent solution of the nullahs cleansing," said Rana Shakeel, adding regular cleaning of the streams would be ensured to resolve this problem for once and all. To another query, he said strict action was being taken against those who are illegally using the places along the banks of streams. — APP

Over 7 mln people administered Covid vaccine

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary of National Health Services Dr. Nausheen Hamid Sunday said that more than 7 million people have been administered COVID-19 vaccine in the country so far and the number of beneficiaries being vaccinated every day is showing progressive increase.

Talking to a private news channel she encouraged eligible public to get themselves registered for vaccination at the earliest.

She said government was giving full coverage to various groups of the population for coronavirus vaccination drive.

"Government remains confident that we will meet our plan of large-scale immunisation over the coming months this year, adding, walk-in vaccination against coronavirus for citizens aged 30 and above and teachers older than 18 years started", she added.

"It is also really important to give common people information about the vaccine, how safe it is and effective it is", she added.

"People have uncertainty about all the different types of vaccine being developed right now around the world, but citizens should have to trust and get vaccine on time as it is safe and secure for the protection of human health", she said.

Lok Virsa resumes 'Open Mic Program'

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (NIFTH), Lok Virsa on Sunday resumed next session of Open Mic program at its Rooftop theatre with strict COVID-19 SOPs.

In re-opening session, Executive Director Lok Virsa Talha Ali said the program was aimed to bring together the fusion of traditional and modern musical instruments. He said strict COVID-19 SOPs and social distancing would be observed. Anyone found without mask and violating the SOPs shall be escorted out of the venue. Amateur singers also present on the occasion at Rooftop theatre to showcase their skills to a jury. The jury picked the most promising stars and gives them tips for their performances in front of an eager, cheering limited crowd due to COVID restriction. — APP

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Briefs

'Some journalists on foreign agendas'

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Q Punjab Deputy Secretary Information Khawaja Rameez Hassan has said in a press release that Pakistan is emerging as a secure and prosperous state in the region. He said that unwarranted criticism on the law enforcement agencies in the social media channels is a link in the hybrid war against a stable state. He added that some journalists involved in promoting the foreign agenda are engaged in vicious conspiracies against national institutions.

Water shortage grips Adiala locality

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The residents of Adiala road Jahrahi Stop and adjacent areas are facing acute water shortage for the last several days in Rawalpindi district.

The influential of the area were seemed helpless, to resolve the issue.

The residents including, Rizwan Chatta, Zahoor, Adalat, Rab Nawaz, Ghulam Abbas, Riaz, Fayyaz, Said Rasool, Ali Nawaz, Shakeel Ahmed, Sheikh Tasleem, Muhammad Javed, Muhammad Aslam, Muhammad Akram, Wasiq Razzak, Sajjad Sadiq threatened to lodge a protest against Water and Sanitation Agency WASA for not providing the water. A complainant of Adiala road Tariq Khan said "we have to fetch water from far flung areas to meet the daily needs. He said "we can't afford a water tank that is costly and unaffordable and we have to pay Rs 1800 twice in a week to get water from this source".

Combat dengue on emergency basis: ADC

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner Abdullah Mehmood Sunday said that prevailing weather was suitable for the breeding of dengue larvae and there is a need to combat it on an emergency basis. Chairing a meeting to review the anti-dengue campaign, he directed officials of the Health and Rawalpindi Municipal Corporation department to create awareness among the people to keep their houses clean and leave no place wet or with stagnant water. He said the threat of the COVID-19 virus also present and the residents should take precautionary measures from a mosquito bite. Abdullah said there is a need to make collective efforts to implement SOPs in order to check the breeding of larvae with the cooperation of the community. He stressed the need to compile data for ascertaining the actual position and effective monitoring be confirmed by conducting door to door surveillance. — APP

5kg drugs recovered during raid

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested four drug pushers and recovered more than 5kg of drugs from their possession, informed police spokesman. Rata Amral police arrested 2 drug pushers and recovered from Taimoor 01.5kg drug while 01.4kg from Hussain Ali. Similarly, Waris Khan Police arrested drug pusher Adeel Jan and recovered 01.4 kg drugs from his possession. Newtown police arrested drug pusher Zia-ur-Rehman and recovered 01.2 kg drugs from his custody.

Police have registered separate cases against all of them and narcotics act and started investigation.

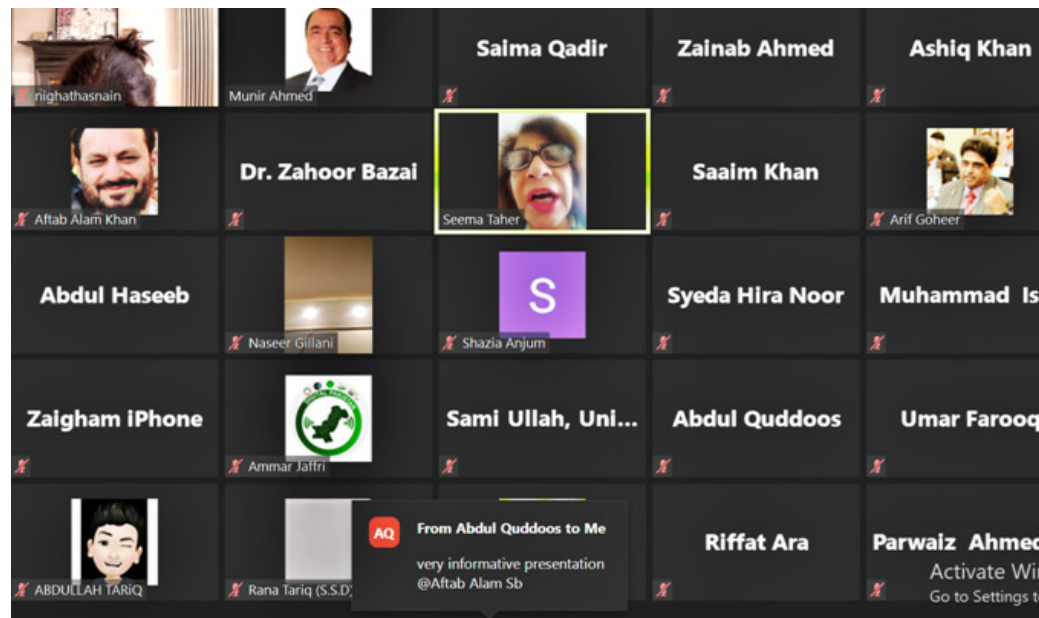
SP Rawal Divison commended police teams said that drug trafficking led to destruction of the young generation, action should be taken against such anti-social elements.

"Ecosystems degradation peaks up food security"

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The experts speaking at the webinar on Saturday opined that the provincial and federal governments have failed to protect habitats despite all policies, action plans and allocation of funds. The core reasons for the degradation of ecosystems they cited were the unchecked deforestation, use of land change and overexploitation of natural resources including subsurface water. Aquifers are depleting causing severe threat to water security as we have already reached below the required water per capita. The unsustainable adaptation mechanisms have led us to a dangerous situation. We among the top five countries most vulnerable to disasters and climate change impact that would immensely affect water and food security.

Development Communications Network (Devcom-Pakistan) and DTN organized the webinar on the subject "Ecosystem restoration for water and food security for all" on Saturday to boost the World Environment Day (June 5) theme. The panel of experts included EvK2CNR Senior Scientist and Technical Advisor Ashiq Ahmed Khan, PFAN Country Director



Saima Qadir, former Federal Planning Commission chief for water sector and Chair Development Finance Naseer Gillani, Water Security expert Dr. Zainab Ahmad, Food Security and Climate Change expert Aftab Alam Khan, Global Change Impact Study Centre expert Arif Goheer, environmental expert and activist Seema Taher (Karachi), adventure tourism expert Tahir Imran Khan (Lahore),

Night AdvocacHusnain (UK), Water and Climate Change expert Dr. Zaigham Khan, Balochistan University professor Dr. Zahoor Bazal, and Saam Khan from Fauji Fertilizers Corporation (Lahore). Climate advocacy expert and Executive Director Devcom-Pakistan Munir Ahmed hosted and conducted the webinar. Introducing the topic, he said, "Pakistan's all eleven ecosystems are under severe

threats because of the negligence and inefficient management by the governments. There is no sufficient check on deforestation that has declined to much less than two percent. The 10 billion tree tsunami project is focusing more on plantation of saplings while timber and housing mafias are free to their will for changing the land-use and chopping off trees. Illegal hunting of migratory birds

remained unchecked. Biodiversity habitats are in shambles. There is no integrated and inclusive strategy for ecosystem restoration. It speaks of the priority of government while hosting the international event of World Environment day on June 5."

Saima Qadir said Over 4.7 million hectare of forest lost annually from the global map. Ecosystem loss is destroying natural habitats and biodiversity, and carbon sinks found in forests and peatland, at a critical tipping point for climate change. In addition to mitigating Greenhouse Gases, maintaining biodiversity through restoring ecosystems is equally important for sustaining life on earth. Covid-19 has been disastrous for ecosystem loss and its restoration means repairing billions of hectares of land so people could have access to food, clean water, and jobs.

She said the rapid loss has left with us only six years instead of ten to control and manage the loss of ecosystems in Pakistan. Naseer Gillani said Pakistan Food Security has not been allocated specific investment with respect to restoration of Ecosystems. The UN Decade calls for 3.5 million hectares of land back to its original productivity but we had not announced to reverse soil degradation projects.

Margalla Hills' fire brought under control

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A fire that broke out on Islamabad's scenic Margalla Hills three days back has been brought under control, according to the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

The CDA administration said the blaze erupted at three different locations of the hilly area, including Saidpur, Tilhar Village and Pir Sohawa.

It was doused after hectic efforts of CDA employees. "90% fire has been brought under control at 3 locations at Margallah Hills National Park," the CDA said in a tweet. The fire damaged only bushes and grass itself, it said.

CDA Chairman Aamir Ali Ahmed himself supervised the firefighting operation. The fire engulfed around 25 acres in the Pir Sohawa area, 12 acres in Saidpur, 15 acres in Tilhar Village. As many as 200 CDA firefighters, six bowlers, and different vehicles took part in the operation.

Earlier, Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir tweeted, "Trail-3 fire has been controlled by both staff efforts IWMB and CDA staff, Sterling effort, given the resource constraints and the magnitude of fire."

Chilled summer drinks a pretty common sight

ISLAMABAD: As temperature soars, numerous vendors are offering chilled summer drinks including sugarcane juice, lemonade, dhoondh soda, milk shakes and several other colored drinks to attract the customers during the scorching heat season.

Traditional summer drinks are the best choice of citizens on roadside during hot and humid weather when people tend to sweat more, losing salts and water with perspiration.

Roadside vendors while talking to a private news channel said chilled juices and drinks demand high with rise in temperature as mostly people engaged in physical activity and traveling through roads need more liquid than those having sedentary lifestyles at home during heat time.

With the surge in mercury, huge rush of customers could be witnessed at traditional imli Alo Bukhara drink stalls, said a motorist. It is our common practice to visit Lemon Soda shop and we have become so habitual of this practice that we can't do without it," said a young citizen.

Imli and Aaloo Bukhara juice is better than any other packaged juices and free from any kinds of chemicals", citizens always preferred its stall while visiting the shops of market.

A motorist while enjoying sugarcane juice said that fresh juices could not be adulterated, while packed juices contained elements that caused blood pressure problems and cardiac diseases. — APP

Parents demand to conduct Pre-Board Examinations

ISLAMABAD: A large number of parents have demanded to conduct pre-board examinations of the students to make them well-prepared for the final board.

The parents, worried of their children's future whose admissions in medical colleges or engineering universities depend upon their marks in F.Sc, are demanding to conduct Pre-Board exams which serves chiefly as practice for the final exam of the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE).

According to the parents, they are concerned about how their college going children will perform in the intended board exam in near

future while they have not gone through proper testing and assessment as such in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic. Who will help them understand the nature of questions and the way to respond to those questions, the parents asked while terming it very important that the students should go through at least one week of practice exams in their colleges. All the stakeholders especially parents are wonder struck over the question of examinations without any prior preparation.

Student community which is legitimately the future of our nation has suffered an unprecedented academic loss due to the uncertain situation amid COVID-19 pandemic. It is also questionable how

the students will come up to the expectations of the examining bodies i.e school boards. Ayesha, a student of Islamabad Model College for Girls (Postgraduate) G-10/4 said, "Feeling sickness with sweaty hand palms in the examination hall will be the experience of every student which seems to have made you forget everything that you have been revising for over the year. So in order to become familiar with the exam, a practice exam should be conducted".

Students will be able to assess their performance in the Pre-Board exams and will build new strategies and put more efforts to bring good grades. Hence Pre-Board exams provide students with a very true

picture of how they are doing in their classes, she said while talking to APP.

An Associate Professor of a female college said, "Entering the examination hall, finding roll number on the exam desk and taking a seat with an answer script and facing an unknown question paper is a nerve-racking experience for many students. She pointed out that rigorous training is required before the students sit in the Board exams. Multiple exams are required though yet at least one pre-board exam is directly needed at the earliest.

If students are not made to go through this process, the entire board exam shall remain detrimental to aims of education, she added. — APP

PSC to organize "Online maker summer camp"

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Science Club (PSC) has planned to arrange "Online Maker Summer Camp 2021" to enable young Science enthusiasts to learn science and explore interesting phenomena. Since the COVID 19 continues to affect the children's academics and extracurricular, PSC is presenting all-new exciting hands-on activities that will help students to learn academic science in a better way. An official of PSC told APP that during the camp, the young scientists would also explore various interesting phenomena with fun. The camp would be based on an awe-inspiring theme of "Electricity and Magnetism" during which the young makers would have interactive sessions on how to generate electricity, the relation between electricity and magnetism, and its wonderful applications. There would be step-by-step how-to-do guidance from the experts, conceptual explanation and participants could ask queries during the online camp, the official informed. PSC would share project pictures of all the participants on its social network e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram @ PakScienceClub, and website.

Int'l workshop on tropical medicine, natural product

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indonesian Institute of Science (LIPI) in collaboration with COMSTECH will organize an online international workshop on "Tropical medicine and Natural Products" on June 02 (Wednesday). This workshop is divided into two sessions to discuss biodiversity exploration for traditional medicine and natural products, and natural products and industrial applications.

Natural products from plants, marine organisms, and microorganisms, are the richest source of drug candidates. Currently over 40% of clinically used drugs have natural or

igin. Nature is the sustainable source of biologically active molecules, and recent developments in chromatography and spectroscopic techniques made it possible to fully utilize their potential. The aim of this workshop is to identify and explore the biodiversity potential of traditional medicine and natural products in health and disease management as well as to discuss most recent developments in this field, and to foster productive collaboration between the researchers in OIC member states. This workshop will be open to the public, along with researchers, academia, related ministries/Institutions, universities, and media from OIC member states.



RAWALPINDI: A vendor displaying mangoes on his push cart to attract the customer. — APP

Pedal for a green future: Diplomatic cycling 2021

ZAHRA ALI KHAN QAZALBASH

CYCLING as a mode of conveyance is a low-cost, health-improving way to travel and offers environmental benefits for the cities that encourage it. It is only recently, though, with concerns over climate change, pollution, congestion, and obesity among others that have cities throughout the world begun to implement policies to promote cycling.

The more cars we can get off the road, the better it will be for the environment. Cycling requires no gasoline and, consequently, no harmful vehicle emissions or smog are released into the air when a person is riding his or her bicycle. Opting to use your bicycle a few times a week, instead of your car, is one of the simplest ways to lower your environmental footprint. Idling is not an issue when you are cycling. Noise pollution is reduced as well. Bicycles require no gasoline, no antifreeze and do not require many of the other fluids vehicles need to operate. This helps ensure such fluids do not make their way into local waterways or the environment itself.

Amsterdam is one of the cities that should serve as an example to others where people are constantly using bicycles than others that are using different oil-consuming and carbon emitting vehicles to reach places that are not so far at all. It is worth acknowledging Pakistan's untiring efforts towards climate change and in promoting the fundamental importance of a balanced, healthy lifestyle for its citizens with limited resources, stands exemplary. However, all District Governments need to draw their attention towards the need of cycling tracks across cities and parks, with their respective Division of Streetlights to ensure lights restoration in every nook and corner of the cities, both rural and urban.

World Environment Day is United Nations' flagship day to promote worldwide awareness and action for the environment. This year's observance of World Environment Day is based on the theme of 'ecosystem restoration' and focus on resetting the country's relationship with nature. It will also mark the formal launch of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021 - 2030. The resources from the environment are increasingly being used and depleted. If we do not find a way to restore these materials or conserve them, then there will be no materials left for our future generations to avail. Eco-

logical restoration improves the biological diversity on degraded landscapes, increases the populations and distribution of rare and threatened species, enhances landscape connectivity, increases the availability of environmental goods and services, and contributes towards the improvement of human well-being.

To celebrate, prior to June 5th on May 31st, 2021, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan in collaboration with United Nations Development Program, United Nations Environment Program, Ministry of Climate Change, Green Climate Fund, and Urban Innovation is honored to host a mega Diplomatic Cycling Event "Pedal for a Green Future" for public awareness. On the occasion of United Nations

flagship day on the 5th of June, Pakistan is set to being the Global host of the landmark "World Environment Day". Prime Minister of Pakistan in response to mitigate climate change will make some important announcements related to initiatives that have been taken and mark a shift to domestic actions and increased efforts towards global contribution including 10 Billion Trees Tsunami Programme, Clean Green Pakistan, the Electric Vehicle Policy, National Parks, and Green jobs among others. These initiatives are directly relevant to the achievement of 12 out of the 17 Sustainable Development goals (SDGS). 2020 was more than a year of tragedy. It was also the moment when people everywhere set apart what is possible when

humanity strives to be the best version of itself, even in the face of complexity and intense equivocity. It was a moment when minuscule virus humbled the entire human race and exploded a development emergency. Nevertheless its impacts were felt in different ways. The COVID-19 pandemic was - and continues to be - a uniquely common experience for our generation, with no space for bystanders. And question therefore is: are you doing your due part to mitigate climate crisis? Change only occurs when individuals take action. With minimal effort, you can turn those banana peels and apple cores into gold.

"Pedal for Pakistan" is one such event which also serves as an example that Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan is not only giving vital contributions towards the fight of climate change but also encourages the healthy lifestyle of its citizens regardless of gender discrimination. While the name "Islamic Republic of Pakistan" may not conjure up a wonderland, it is a very happy home to millions of people from multitude of cultures and hundreds of Diplomats from countries around the world.

—The writer is a regular contributor towards Sustainable Development. Email: zahra.ali.khan@outlook.com



IRSA releases 191,300 cusecs water

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 191,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 205,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1401.99 feet, which was 17.99 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 78,300 and 70,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1105.75 feet, which was 65.75 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 56,000 and 50,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 84,000, 80,000 and 18,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 45,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5,900 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

Combating Covid

THE battle against the Covid-19 virus is continuing across the country. Pakistan has shown a distinct decline in its positivity rate, which has fallen to 4.42 percent. But there is still a way to go. While Pakistan now has a considerable stock of vaccine in the country, with over 100,000 doses of Pfizer biotech vaccine arriving in the country under the Covax programme on Friday, the question is whether it can persuade enough people to have themselves vaccinated. So far, most of those who have stepped forward are those who see themselves with risk or who have witnessed at close range people in their homes or communities dying from what is a painful and frightening disease to watch once it truly takes hold of the patient, or those who have refused to give in to the plethora of conspiracy theory regarding vaccination. At the same time, Pakistan must also combat, as the rest of the world is doing, the new variants being reported in the country. The South African variant is said to have already entered Pakistan's borders and has, among others, affected children aged under two years of age. Health experts suggest that the families of these children and other families get adult members vaccinated as quickly as possible so that the children are spared the disease and also so that it cannot spread from young children to others. These are all encouraging measures and need to be taken forward. But we must step up the pace of vaccination. Currently about 245,000 people are being vaccinated across the country each day. Dr Faisal Sultan, the prime minister's special assistant on health, has suggested that this number needs to go up to around 500,000 if we are to save ourselves from the Covid-19 pandemic and prevent it from spreading more widely in the country. He has also mentioned the possibility of reaching out to large private employers, such as industrialists, factory owners, and those running private firms to persuade them to vaccinate their employees so that more people can be vaccinated more quickly, and the herd immunity we so badly require created within our borders.

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Bilateral cooperations

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

ALL countries within a region should create avenues for bilateral cooperation. Be it trade, industry, education, or any other domain, such links strengthen ties with other countries in the region and add positive value to the regional geopolitics. Pakistan is situated in a strategic location in South Asia. With the Arabian Sea and the port adding value to its trade activities, it has road links with neighboring countries. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will also benefit Pakistan's trade in the region. Pakistan has bilateral and multi-lateral trade agreements with many nations and international organizations. It is a member of the World Trade Organization, part of the South Asian Free Trade Area agreement, and the China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement. Recently, Pakistan and Iraq expressed their intentions to augment bilateral ties. This understanding was reached during a meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Iraqi counterpart Dr. Fuad Hussein in Baghdad. With the era of globalization at its peak, the period of localization is also moving ahead. Where Pakistan and South Asian nations have positive terms with the US and Europe, Islamabad needs to maintain and flourish its ties with the countries located near South Asia. Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Central Asian States, Russia, Sri Lanka, among others must foster smooth terms with Pakistan. This will increase their bilateral ties, create an era of peace and development, and unite the regional countries. Moreover, such regional connections help countries counter any geopolitical threat that may come their way - through a verbal assault, an economic threat, or other. Streamlining such bilateral trades, talks, and agreements is the priority of the foreign minister who must stay over and above the status quo and the competition. He must also carve out a viable strategy to achieve the desired objectives.

Elephant in the room

Fahd Husain



The PTI fears the PML-N resolving its elephantine issues. Of course, the PTI will repeat till it turns blue in the face that it won't be fair and square in the 2018 elections. The fact, however, is that at the very minimum, the elephant facilitated the PTI's ascent to power

THERE'S a strange satisfaction that comes with seeing everyone chastised. Something similar is unfolding across the political landscape as parties shuffle their feet, and their approach, in order to position themselves for the next general elections. These elections are still more than two years away but to most politicians they have started to glimmer across the horizon. There's another thing glimmering along with them: the elephant in the room. This elephant has in fact always been in the room. Perhaps he constructed the room in the first place. Once made, he let others in and let them find the little space left unoccupied. When the space got a bit too cramped, some people tried to push the elephant out of the room. That's when trouble started in that room. Many years and mishaps later, has the situation with the elephant and the room altered in any sense? That's the question which is defining the politics of PTI, PML-N, PPP and others as they wrangle for power in what is clearly a zero-sum game. The establishment as the proverbial elephant was supposed to have been subjected to decreased relevance if the flow of democratic evolution had gone in the desired direction. One can debate how and why this flow changed course - or was made to - and traversed back to the old beaten path, but at this point what is of far more importance is that the next general elections appear to be shaping up in the traditional mould. Yes, that means that the establishment will play a key role. This elephant has in fact always been in the room. Perhaps he constructed the room in the first place. But what kind of role? Well, depends who you ask. The PTI would want the establishment to be as supportive of it as it was in 2018; the PML-N would want the establishment to play a neutral role and provide a level playing field to the party; and the PPP would

want the establishment to play any role in which the party can somehow find itself a key player in a hung parliament. But all three major political parties, and their leaders, have internalised the reality that - like it or hate it - the elephant will be in the room in 2023 and will determine through its acts and approach what happens in these elections. This is far different from the ideal situation that all three parties parrot in their official statements. No, the establishment should have no role whatsoever in politics, they say; and yes, the establishment should stay confined to its constitutional role, they proclaim. That is the correct position to take on the record, but the fact is that each one of these three parties is now - two years prior to the scheduled elections - strategising how the establishment can play the role in 2023 that they want it to play. If there is one challenge facing these parties, it is this. So how do they plan to overcome this challenge? The complexity of the task at hand is evidenced in the confusion and internal strife plaguing the PML-N nowadays. This fault line within the party - the so-called Nawaz and Shehbaz narrative - is nothing more than their differing approaches towards the elephant in the room. That's it. Nawaz and Maryam believe they can push the elephant out of the room and pressure him to stay neutral in the 2023 elections, while Shehbaz says the elephant must be reasoned with so that he has reason enough to provide a level playing field and not block the PML-N's return to power in the next term. Like it or not, the elephant is also inside the PML-N room. The PTI fears the PML-N resolving its elephantine issues. Of course, the PTI will repeat till it turns blue in the face that it won't be fair and square in the 2018 elections. The fact, however, is that at the very minimum, the elephant facilitated the PTI's ascent to power. That was when the PTI had everything going for it in terms of hopes, expectations, prom-

ises and the idealism that the party was 'different' from the rest. Not so this time. Stripped of these advantages, and weighed down by severe governance ailments, the PTI will be vulnerable. Which is why it would look for support for itself. It would also want to ensure that the PML-N stays on the wrong side of the elephant. Like it or not, the elephant is also inside the PTI room. The PPP has already factored in the establishment as a key determinant of its electoral success in 2023. It knows it doesn't have enough muscle to strike gold at the centre and reach for the ultimate prize. This it can only achieve under very specific conditions where it can win some crucial seats from south Punjab - as it used to do once upon a time - and bring its total tally in the National Assembly to a number which makes it ideal to lead a coalition. These are very well-defined objectives and they will require some facilitation from the elephant in the room. Like it or not, the elephant is therefore also in the PPP room. What options does this leave for those people on the chessboard who want the establishment to have a lesser footprint in the next elections - less enough so that it cannot play a decisive role like it did in the 2018 elections? Those who have discussed these options over and over again believe that this can only be achieved by creating so much heat and noise inside the room that the elephant has no choice but to step outside and let the others slug it out on their own. It is a bold option, but a very risky one. Which is why those people who want to win at all cost in 2023 - especially in the PML-N - believe that it is a risk not worth taking. And so the tale of the elephant pivots back to where it started. All parties are gradually accepting that they have to deal with the elephant. Question is: how does the elephant want to deal with them? -*Courtesy DAWN*

Understanding the Cryptocurrency

Sher Zada



Since 20th century to 21st things get changing with higher acceleration due the revolution brought by internet and virtual ways of communication. The year 2008 considered the birth of digital or crypto currency

trade and boasting businesses. That modified and molded ways of transactions from barter system (exchange of items both food and non food items, including services) to the transactions based on cash money system (coins and paper notes). However, since 20th century to 21st things get changing with higher acceleration due the revolution brought by internet and virtual ways of communication. The year 2008 considered the birth of digital or crypto currency. However, the idea of digital or crypto currency is knotted with David Chaum an American computer scientist and cryptographer who pitched the idea in 1983, that was an electronically run currency called e-cash. Chaum waited for nearly thirteen years and finally launched his project of cryptocurrency in 1995 with the name of Digi-cash. With passage of time another cryptographer Wei Dai a Chinese computer engineer modified the system by developing cryptographic library. Further going in the complex technical details of cryptocurrency would be boring here and will distract from the core importance of this peer to peer digitally dependent form of transaction for the non technical costumers like me. Nevertheless what matters more is the revolution expected ahead with crypto currency, why the digitally addicted customers and investors are jumping in this profit oriented transaction system? Why governments and states so worried about the proliferation of business market with cryptocurrencies? How could it affect the traditional economic system so far? These are the whisper and cup of tea of everyone everywhere nowadays. From the consumer point of view, First the medium of digitally but physically invisible money is easy and not involved hectic legal procedures as physically visiting a bank and depositing amount in one's own account or transferring in account of whom to be the transaction is made. Second, it's more secured and there is no interference from anybody else such as traditionally banking systems and states that always have a watch dog eyes on the transactions of money. Third, it provides a space of time and jigsaw cutting spare time, even for both the ends i.e. the depositor and the receiver. Fourth, the mining option gives another edge to the consumers to increase their profits due to cryptographically boasting extension of cryptocurrency. According Luke W. Conway associate editor of

Investopedia (a firm that has close eyes on crypto business and trending), there are more than 4000 cryptocurrencies existing in the crypto market till January 2021 and still boasting day by day, however only 11 cryptocurrencies including Bitcoin have stable position in the crypto block chain business and investment markets. However today's trending currency Bitcoin has been dramatically getting an increase price values since 2017, on December 17, 2017 the worth of one Bitcoin was \$19,783.06 which fell down to below \$11,000 on 22 December 2017 with a 45% decline from its peak price pool. The reasons could be quoted competitions by other crypto currencies, governments' reservations against the terms and procedures of digital transactions operationalized through bitcoin block chain system. Similarly bitcoin was jolted once again in January 2018 when news circulated that South Korea that was a key market for crypto investors were going to ban transaction in bitcoins that caused 65% decline in Bitcoins worth in \$ that squeezed crypto business down to \$100 b record low level, the misery for bitcoin did not end there, in June 2019 once again a hope of resurgence was built when the price of one bitcoin surpassed by \$10,000, but unexpectedly the price of this digital currency further smashed down to \$7,112.73 by December 2019. Nevertheless, 2020 that started with global pandemic corona virus, that not only paralyzed health sector across the world and caused death to 3.52M people but also jammed the economic wheels everywhere, businesses were shut down, travel was restricted, offices and schools were left to ghosts. After a pause of months educational institutions were swapped to online teaching and learning systems, moreover, offices were virtualized and the officials were bounded to work from home. As the year 2020 turned off on human and economic mobility on one side, while proven a token of luck and progressive growth in the worth of bitcoin, that's the increase in price of a bitcoin reached to \$18,353 on November 23, 2020 a jump up of \$11,240.27 from last year (\$7,112.73). Current year 2021 is considered a luckiest year for cryptocurrency where one bitcoin values \$36,850.00) since its emergence in 2008 after the world economic collapse. The rise and fall in the price of cryptocurrencies are strangled with a number of factors. Governments' and sates'

reservations come prior to all other factors. Because cryptocurrencies bypass traditional banking systems, state's monitoring and observations etc., that not only causes no profit to banks nor allows state entities to peak-in what was sold out and who sold it, what was bought and who bought it. The other speculation is that criminals, smugglers and persons seeking profits through sharing state's secrets and intelligences via crypto-transactions, that's why the third world's states like Pakistan, Iran and North Korea and many others advanced countries i.e. Russia, China are reluctant and not fully ready to accept and legalize cryptocurrencies. Yes or No! It is matter of confidentiality that no one talks about these aspects openly. On the other side, Generally investors and traditional businessmen in the third world seek digital currencies platform as volatile as stock exchange, they believe that these platform have been introduced by masterminds sitting in the first world, who control the gold markets, oil markets etc. Whereby, these sharp heads try to divert people's mind from everlasting precious element i.e. gold to the unreliable cryptocurrency transaction system, which clouds plump in profits every time. Whatever, assumptions and speculations are roaming here and there, living in this globally connected no one can escape from the trending protocols starting from one corner of the world to the other, going with the flow people living in poor world have to accept decisions and actions made by the super elites living in the power crowning states. World's leading Microsoft, BMW, Square, PayPal, Coca-Cola and Pizza Hut like giant companies have shifted their system of transactions from traditional banking systems to cryptocurrencies. A Pakistani private airlines company Sky Wings stationed in Karachi has stepped forward to be a pioneer in the crypto-business; it's another subject whether the state of Pakistan will allow other sectors and corporations to switch their transaction system over to cryptocurrencies. However the fear of loss due to reservations and restrictions by the states and banks and fast gear to earn uncontrolled profits would remain core questions with cryptocurrency mechanism. -*The writer is an Islamabad based Journalist and Social Analyst. He can be reached at sher.khanbntimes@gmail.com*

HASTE and race for earning more and more is ascribed characteristic of human species; however the main qualities that are the tricks of speedy earning and smart hunting vary from person to person and society to society. From hunting and gathering society to today's digitally dependent society the race for collecting valuables had has been prevailed everywhere with a slight difference that in previous times the race was for survival by collecting food items, hunting pastures, water reservoirs etc., while from the era of industrial revolution till now is for powers controls through massive productions, extending and excessing

Briefs

25 dead in India after drinking toxic liquor

WEB DESK

LUCKNOW: At least 25 people have died after drinking toxic alcohol in northern India, police said Sunday. Police have arrested 10 men for selling the liquor in sprawling Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state. "So far 25 persons have died and a few others are admitted in the hospital and are undergoing treatment. Ten persons have been arrested," Ajab Singh, a police spokesperson, told AFP.

Local media reported that the liquor was purchased on Thursday from a shop run by two brothers. Liquor stores in the state had been shuttered under a coronavirus lockdown imposed to combat a devastating wave. About 160,000 people have died countrywide since April 1.

But as case numbers started to slow, Uttar Pradesh allowed liquor sales to resume in some districts on May 11 with restricted hours. While it is unclear how the liquor in the Uttar Pradesh case was produced, hundreds of people die every year in India from cheap alcohol made in backstreet distilleries, affordable for even the poorest.

Of the estimated five billion litres of alcohol drunk every year in the country, around 40 per cent is illegally produced, according to the International Spirits and Wine Association of India. The liquor is often spiked with methanol - a highly toxic form of alcohol sometimes used as an anti-freeze - to increase its potency.

If ingested, methanol can cause blindness, liver damage and death. Last year, 98 people died in the northern state of Punjab after drinking bootleg booze. And in 2019, some 150 people died in northeastern Assam state, most of them tea plantation workers.

PM rules out trade with India

From Page 01

Answering a question, Imran Khan said, "List of legal housing societies will be on the website so that people may not be confused. And, the Justice Azmat committee is working on categorizing the housing schemes so that this issue may not surface in the future."

Imran Khan said that Pakistan will continue to achieve economic growth in the days to come as he termed the process gradual and one that would take time.

"The Almighty has passed us successfully from a difficult phase and now the country will continue to progress in the same way," he said.

"No one thought that we would achieve the growth rate of nearly 4 per cent. In fact, according to several independent experts, we may even surpass this growth rate or even beyond," he maintained.

PM Imran further stated that the issues that the incumbent government faced were unprecedented.

World leaders call for action at Seoul climate summit

The WB estimates that between 32 million and 132 million additional people could fall into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the effects of climate change

SEOUL: World leaders on Sunday called for more action and inclusion of all countries in the global drive towards a cleaner and greener planet at a climate summit hosted virtually by South Korea. Climate change is a major threat to global growth, with perils ranging from declines in crop yields, extreme weather that devastates tourist economies, disease outbreaks and other catastrophes that would sap productivity.

South Korea - which recently announced plans to cut finance for international coal projects - is seeking a

bigger role in the global initiative to go green. "South Korea will play a responsible role as a bridging nation between developing and advanced nations," said President Moon Jae-in as he opened the 2021 Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030, or P4G, summit. The two-day summit is the second of its kind following the inaugural meeting held in Copenhagen in 2018, and is focused on public-private partnerships, especially in developing countries.

Advanced nations have laid out ambitious emissions-cutting goals in recent months, as well as plans to ultimately

go carbon neutral by 2050. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called on the countries to phase out their dependence on fossil fuels, warning climate change is threatening people's lives and the economy as much as the Covid-19 pandemic. Earlier this month Germany tightened its targets to reduce CO2 emissions - including a 65 per cent cut in emissions by 2030 - after a landmark ruling by the country's top court declared a flagship climate protection law "insufficient".

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said countries must now deliver on their green pledges. "It's a great start, but let's not pat ourselves on the back just yet because our planet and our people need more," he said. "We need governments that will not just make promises on climate and nature but match those words with deeds." World leaders committed under the 2015 Paris accord to keeping the global temperature increase to under two degrees Celsius - and ideally closer to 1.5C - by 2050.

Yet many of the largest emitters have so far failed to keep up their commitments and countries have not even agreed on a unified rulebook governing how the Paris agreement works in practice. The UN says that emissions must fall nearly eight per cent annually to keep 1.5C in play - equivalent to the emissions saved during the pandemic every single year through 2030.

World leaders also stressed the importance of making sure that poorer countries are not left out in the global initiative to go green. African countries should not be "locked up" in fossil fuels and be able to advance with the rest of the world, said French President Emmanuel Macron, calling for ways to draw large-scale investments in renewable energy. "It is not a global partnership if some are left struggling to survive," added UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres. "Tackling climate change head-on will help protect the most vulnerable people from the next crisis while sustaining a job-rich recovery from the pandemic," he said. The World Bank estimates that between 32 million and 132 million additional people could fall into extreme poverty by 2030 due to the effects of climate change. - APP

China hammer Guam in qualifier

SHANGHAI: Wu Lei and Brazilian-born Alan Carvalho both scored twice as China demolished Guam 7-0 in a World Cup qualifier in front of a sell-out home crowd of 30,000 on Sunday. The handsome victory over the US island territory saw China close the gap on group leaders Syria to five points with three games left, but only the top team is guaranteed to reach the next stage of qualifying for Qatar 2022. In Li Tie's first match since being permanently named China coach in January last year, Espanyol's Wu opened the scoring with a 20th-minute penalty in Suzhou after being chopped down in the box. Jin Jingdao scored the second six minutes before half-time, then 29-year-old Wu crashed in the best goal of the night on 55 minutes. - APP



PORTO: Chelsea FC players celebrate after winning the UEFA Champions League. Chelsea beat Manchester City 1-0 in final. - DNA

Cyprus votes for new parliament

NICOSIA: Cyprus voters went to the polls Sunday for parliamentary elections amid simmering public anger over the "golden passports" corruption scandal on the Mediterranean island. Ultra-nationalists looking to exploit the anti-establishment mood have also played on concerns over migration, another hot-button issue for the European Union's most easterly member state. As usual, the election will be limited to government-held areas, excluding the northern third of the island where a breakaway Turkish Cypriot state holds sway. "There is a very unhappy electorate fed up

with the political elite and parliament," said Hubert Faustmann, professor of history and political science at the University of Nicosia. "People are fed up with corruption in public life." Last November, Cyprus dropped its controversial passport-for-investment scheme after Al Jazeera aired a documentary showing reporters posing as fixers for a Chinese businessman seeking a Cyprus passport despite having a criminal record. Parliament was at the centre of the furore after speaker Demetris Syllouris and an opposition MP were secretly filmed allegedly try-

ing to facilitate the passport for the fugitive investor. They later resigned, although both insisted they were innocent of any wrongdoing. The other issue is migration as Cyprus has the highest per capita number of first-time asylum seekers in the 27-member bloc, according to the Eurostat statistics agency. The government has said Cyprus is in a "state of emergency" due to migrant streams from war-torn Syria and elsewhere. Unusually for Cyprus, the decades-old division between the island's Greek and Turkish communities has played little part in this

year's election campaign. The last round of UN-backed reunification talks collapsed in acrimony in 2017 and a UN summit in Geneva last month failed to reach an agreement on resuming talks. The conservative DISY party is expected to remain the largest in parliament but again without a majority, forcing President Nicos Anastasiades to continue to rule through a minority government. Cyprus has an executive system of government with the president elected separately, but the vote will gauge the popularity of Anastasiades, whose term expires in 2023. - APP

Saudi Air defenses intercept Houthi explosive drone

DNA

RIYADH: Coalition air defenses intercepted an explosive-laden drone launched by Yemen's Houthi militia toward Saudi Arabia late on Saturday, the alliance command center said early Sunday. In a statement carried by state TV Al-Ekhabariya, the coalition said the weaponized UAV was aimed at the southern Saudi city of Khamis Mushait along the border with Yemen.

It was the latest in a series of missile and drone attacks by the Iran-backed militia against Saudi Arabia since the Kingdom spearheaded a coalition to restore the UN-recognized government in 2015. Ignoring calls to support the peace negotiations being brokered by the UN, the militia has also refused to end its offensive in the city of Marib. Brig. Gen. Turki Al-Maliki on Saturday dismissed as "fabricated" video footage released by the Houthi movement claiming an incursion by its fighters into a Saudi Arabian border area on the frontlines. The Arab Parliament condemned the attacks in a statement on Saturday, adding that the repeated hostilities not only threatened the Kingdom, but also posed a danger to regional security and stability. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) strongly condemned the Houthi militia's continued launching of drones to target populated areas in the Kingdom. Secretary-General Dr. Yousef Al-Othaimen said the OIC supports all measures taken by the coalition forces to protect civilians and civilian objects.

Kuwait opens visas...

From Page 01 issue technical visas for Pakistani workers in medical and oil field. Pakistani citizens living in Gulf countries can also get online Kuwaiti visa. Thanking the Kuwaiti Prime Minister on restoration of Visa for Pakistani citizens, the Interior Minister said that after this decision, huge job opportunities will be available for Pakistanis in Kuwait. He said by lifting ban on business visa, the trade will also increase between the two countries.

UN chief for action to address pandemic, climate change

DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called on governments to embrace together the goals of phasing out coal, enhancing climate commitments, and investing in the international development goals so as to rise to the biggest challenge of our lives. The world needs a global partnership to beat COVID-19, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and address climate change, the UN chief said in a video message to a key international partnerships summit - the 2021 P4G - in Seoul, South Korea. The Partnering for

Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G) event aims to boost market-based partnerships and rally high-level political and private sector action. It brings together Heads of State, CEOs, and civil society leaders around a shared action agenda to mobilize investments for tangible impact. Guterres said that although there are commitments to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050, there is "still much to do" to close the emissions gap and achieve the SDGs. He reaffirmed his call to all main emitters to present new Nationally Determined Contributions, commit to net zero emissions by 2050, and, "most

importantly", put in place policies and programs towards achieving that goal. "Tackling climate change head-on will help protect the most vulnerable people from the next crisis while sustaining a job-rich recovery from the pandemic", he said, reminding that the first priority right now is stopping plans for new coal plants and phase-out of coal use by 2040. On that note, the Secretary General commended the South Korean government for announcing that it will stop all international coal finance and encouraged other government and private sector entities to do the same.

China increases loans to small firms

BEIJING: China's inclusive loans to micro and small enterprises rose by 32.5 per cent year on year at the end of April amid the country's targeted support for enterprises hard hit by COVID-19. Outstanding inclusive loans to micro and small businesses totaled 16.8 trillion yuan (about 2.63 trillion U.S. dollars) at the end of April, up by 32.5 per cent year on year. These loans supported 36.27 million firms, up by 28.9 per cent year on year, Zhu Zhaowen, an official with the People's Bank of China, told a press conference Friday. - APP

Ethiopia rallies against US

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia staged a massive rally on Sunday in Addis Ababa to rail against the United States imposing restrictions on economic and security assistance over the conflict in the Tigray region. Demonstrators packed a stadium in the capital for the pro-government rally, chanting against the US sanctions and waving posters accusing foreign powers of interfering in Ethiopia's sovereignty. "Ethiopia does not need (a) caretaker," declared one banner at Addis Ababa Stadium, while others denounced "western intervention". "We will not submit," Adanech Abiebe, the mayor of Addis Ababa, told the thousands in attendance, according to the state-owned Ethiopian Broadcasting Corporation. "The US and its allies have to stop and consider the wisdom, as well as correct the preconditions, they have imposed on our internal affairs." The rally, and smaller ones elsewhere in Ethiopia, was organised by the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth under the banner "Our voice for freedom and sovereignty". - Agencies

United Nations urges Yemen factions to 'make breakthrough'

DNA

AL-MUKALLA: Martin Griffiths, UN special envoy to Yemen, on Friday urged warring factions in Yemen to seize the available opportunities and make concessions to reach an agreement to end the war. Griffiths' appeal comes as his latest efforts to convince the Yemeni government and Iran-backed Houthis to accept his peace plan, known as the Joint Declaration, reached a deadlock. "My recent meetings, as well as the continued international and regional support, show that the parties could still seize this opportunity and make a breakthrough toward resolving

the conflict," Griffiths said in a statement. Houthi chief negotiator Mohammed Abdul Salam on Thursday met Griffiths after refusing to meet him during his previous visit to the Omani capital. The US envoy Tim Lenderking has previously criticized the Houthis for snubbing the UN Yemen envoy and refusing to comply with peace ideas and pressing ahead with their deadly offensive on Yemen's central city of Marib. In his statement, Griffiths said that he met the Houthi negotiator and senior Omani officials in Muscat where he discussed the UN proposal for opening Sanaa airport, lifting restrictions on Hodeidah port and put-

ting into place a nationwide cease-fire. The Houthi demand operating unlimited and unchecked flights from and into Sanaa airport to destinations including Iran, Syria and Lebanon, lifting restrictions on Hodeidah seaports and halting Arab coalition airstrikes before they put into place the truce and stop their offensive on Marib. In Riyadh, a senior Yemeni government official, who preferred anonymity, told Arab News that the government told Griffiths during his visit to Riyadh last week that the government insists on limited and checked flights from Sanaa airport and that airstrikes would stop after the Houthis first bring an end to their offen-

sive on Marib. On Wednesday, official news agency SABA reported that Yemen's Vice President Ali Mohsen Al-Ahmer and Prime Minister Maen Abdul Malik met Griffiths in Riyadh and discussed with him the impact of the Houthi offensive on Marib and their military operations on the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Griffiths "thanked" the Yemeni government for positively responding to peace ideas to end the war, SABA said. On the battlefield, fighting has largely subsided over the past 48 hours in the central province of Marib after the Houthis failed to advance on the ground amid strong resistance from army troops and allied tribesmen.

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Briefs

PM lauds
FBR over
'historic' tax
collection

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday commended efforts of the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) over crossing tax collection of Rs4,000 in a fiscal year for the first time ever in Pakistan's history. Taking to Twitter to laud the FBR, the prime minister apprised that the tax collections have reached Rs4143 billion during a period of 11 months. "During [July]-May our collections reached Rs.4143 (billion) & still counting - 18% higher than the same period last year," Imran Khan said in his message adding that it reflects broad-based economic revival spurred by government policies. The prime minister in another Tweet earlier said that Pakistan's gross domestic product (GDP) growth for this fiscal year was estimated at 3.94 per cent. Taking to social networking website, Twitter, PM Imran said, "National Accounts Committee has finalized GDP growth estimate and GDP growth is estimated at 3.94 per cent." He maintained that it reflects the success of his government's economic policies while managing COVID-19 pandemic. "Our V-shaped recovery is balanced between three major sectors - agriculture, industry and services, the prime minister said.

Boris weds
fiancee in
'secret'
ceremony

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his fiancee Carrie Symonds married over the weekend, his office confirmed Sunday, in what media reports have described as a "secret ceremony". He is only the second British prime minister to marry while in power, and the first in nearly two centuries. The last was Robert Jenkinson in 1822. "The Prime Minister and Ms Symonds were married yesterday afternoon in a small ceremony at Westminster Cathedral," a Downing Street spokesman said. "The couple will celebrate their wedding with family and friends next summer." Known for his colourful love life, 56-year-old Johnson wed Symonds, 33, in front of close friends and family, the Mail on Sunday and The Sun newspapers first reported. The weekend nuptials were a surprise development, after reports earlier this week said the couple had sent out "save the date" cards for a wedding on July 30 next year. The pair got engaged in December, 2019, and have a one-year-old baby son, Wilfred. Their original plans to marry last year were delayed by the pandemic. Political colleagues sent congratulations to the couple as the news became official Sunday. "I think it's a wonderful thing for both of them that they have made their marriage vows to one another," senior minister Nadhim Zahawi told Sky News. - APP

Israel FM in Egypt for
Gaza ceasefire talks

Israeli strikes on Gaza killed 254 Palestinians, including 66 children, health officials said

WEB DESK

CAIRO: Israeli and Egyptian officials held talks in both countries Sunday aimed at bolstering the Cairo-brokered ceasefire that ended the latest deadly flare-up of violence between the Jewish state and Gaza's Hamas rulers. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met Egyptian intelligence chief Abbas Kamel in Jerusalem to discuss "strengthening cooperation" between their countries, Netanyahu's office said. Egypt's President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi tasked Kamel and his delegation, who were also to visit the occupied Palestinian Territories, with hammering out a permanent ceasefire deal, senior Egyptian security officials told AFP. On the same day, Israel's Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi made the first official visit by an Israeli top diplomat to neighbouring Egypt in

13 years, for talks with his counterpart Sameh Shoukry. Ashkenazi tweeted on his arrival that they would "discuss establishing a permanent ceasefire with Hamas, a mechanism for providing humanitarian aid and the reconstruction of Gaza with a pivotal role played by the international community". The Egyptian foreign ministry tweeted that the ministers' talks were "part of Egypt's relentless and continued efforts to revive the peace track and to build on the ceasefire in the Gaza Strip". Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was also expected in Cairo for talks, senior Egyptian security officials said, without providing further details. Egypt played a pivotal role in negotiating the May 21 ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that brought an end to 11 days of deadly fighting. Israeli strikes on Gaza killed 254 Palestinians, including 66 children, health officials said.

Rockets and other fire from Gaza claimed 12 lives in Israel, including one child and an Arab-Israeli teenager, medics said. Netanyahu reiterated Israel's demand "for the prompt return" of Israelis being held in the Gaza Strip, according to the statement. Ashkenazi also said Israel was "fully committed" to repatriating Israeli prisoners held by Hamas. Since Israel's 2014 invasion of the Gaza Strip, the Islamist group has held the bodies of Israeli soldiers Oron Shaul and Hadar Goldin, although Hamas has never confirmed their deaths. Hamas is also believed to be holding two Israeli citizens who entered Gaza alone and whose families say they have mental health issues. Israel is meanwhile holding more than 5,000 Palestinians in its jails. Sisi has pledged \$500 million to help reconstruction efforts in the densely populated Gaza enclave, which was pum-

elled by Israeli air strikes. Hamas has pledged not to touch "a single cent" of international aid to rebuild Gaza. Israel, which has enforced a land and maritime blockade on the enclave since 2007, accuses the group of diverting international aid to military ends. The statement from Netanyahu's office said he and Kamel also discussed "mechanisms and processes to prevent the strengthening of Hamas and its use of the resources that will be directed to the civilian population in the future". The latest violent flare-up was sparked by increased tensions in Jerusalem, including over Israeli security forces cracking down on Palestinians inside the Al-Aqsa mosque compound, Islam's third holiest site, which is also revered by Jews as the Temple Mount. A bitter divide between Hamas and Fatah has long plagued Palestinian politics, but analysts say

the latest escalation has served to unite the geographically fragmented Palestinian community in a way not seen in years. Sisi also tasked Kamel with working to help iron out political divisions between Hamas in Gaza and Fatah in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, the Egyptian officials said. The UN Human Rights Council decided Thursday to create an open-ended international investigation into violations surrounding the latest Gaza violence. It said it would also look at the "underlying root causes of recurrent tensions and instability, including systematic discrimination" in the occupied Palestinian Territories and inside Israel. UN rights chief Michelle Bachelet voiced particular concern about the "high level of civilian fatalities and injuries" from the bombing of Gaza and warned the Israeli strikes on the enclave "may constitute war crimes".

Pakistan
to receive
remittance
inflows
of \$29b

DNA

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar has expressed the hope that Pakistan would receive record remittance inflows of up to \$29 billion this year, as the government and central bank initiatives to facilitate overseas workers have started giving positive results amidst worldwide corona epidemic challenges. Mian Anjum Nisar said that foreign remittances flows are the only hope which can support the country's account balance amidst low volumes of foreign direct investment and slow growth of exports. He said that overseas Pakistanis living in Gulf and Saudi Arabia are likely to maintain an upward momentum in remittances, as they contributed more than 60 percent of the total inflows during the July-April 2021.

Pakistan
traders meet
LCCI team

DNA

LAHORE: Government should resolve the issues of traders at the earliest as they are doing business in challenging conditions. These views were expressed by President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry Mian Tariq Misbah and Senior Vice President Muhammad Nasir Hameed Khan while talking to the delegation of Pakistan Traders Association led by former LCCI Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa at the LCCI on Saturday. LCCI Executive Committee Members Fiaz Haider and Haji Muhammad Asif Sehar were also present on the occasion. LCCI President Mian Tariq Misbah said that the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry is playing the role of a bridge between the govt and private sector.



KARACHI: Ambassador of Denmark Lise Rosenholm in a meeting with Governor Sindh Imran Ismael during her recent visit to Karachi. - DNA

Chinese city's
efforts impressive

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese city Ningbo's efforts in rural revitalization is impressive one, said Mr. Nawab Ali Rahoojo, Deputy Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, according to Gwadar Pro. "I love it!" he said after seeing the neat and beautiful village of Chongshou in Ningbo, east China. During a two-day event "Ningbo in the Eyes of Asian Diplomats" from May 25-26, some 30 consular officials from 15 Asian countries including Pakistan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Mongolia, Cambodia and Turkey came to Ningbo to learn about the recent economic and social development of the city. They explored opportunities for economic said Mr. Nawab Ali Rahoojo, Deputy

Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan in Shanghai and trade exchanges between Ningbo and other Asian countries under the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. "The village is well organized, thanks to Chongshou town leadership for building a beautiful village and keeping it so prosperous. I think lots of visitors will come and appreciate beautiful views here," Ali said. He was amazed to learn that Chongshou Town exports nearly USD 5 million of various commodities and accessories to Asian countries every year. Among them, furniture and kitchenware are welcomed by customers from Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines and other countries. "Ningbo's efforts in rural revitalization are impressive. It is rich and livable with a harmonious neighborhood."

Businessmen
disappointed over
SBP's interest rate

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The business community in a meeting at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has expressed disappointment at maintaining the policy interest rate at 7 percent by the State Bank of Pakistan and demanded that it should have been brought down to at least 3 percent in order to stimulate the business and investment activities in the country. Chairing the meeting, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that to enable the businesses to combat the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the governments around the world made drastic cut in the policy interest and the business community in Pakistan had also been demanding of the government to make significant cut in interest rate to ease the problems of businesses, but it was unfortunate that the SBP has not given due consider-

ation to their demand and maintained it at 7 percent in its latest monetary policy review. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that the policy interest rate in Japan was 0.1%, Euro Area 0%, US & Canada 0.25%, UK & Australia 0.1%, Malaysia 1.75%, Philippines 2%, Indonesia 3.5%, China 3.85% and India 4%, but it was still 7% in Pakistan, which was very high compared to the regional and other countries. He further said that the average policy interest rate in Pakistan remained 11.08% from 1992 to 2021, which showed that Pakistan tended to keep borrowing cost for businesses and investors quite high, which is not a supportive approach for growth of the economy. ICCI President said that the high interest rate always tends to reduce the economic growth as it increases the borrowing cost for businesses, reduces the disposable income and limits the purchasing power of consumers, which ultimately leads to further contraction in the business activities.

UBG
greet FBR

DNA

LAHORE: The United Business Group (UBG) in the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sunday congratulated Federal Board of Revenue for collecting record Rs.4143 Billion revenue from July to May with an inspiring growth of 18% particularly showing an increase of 57% in the one month of April. UBG leadership Central Chairman Iftikhar Ali Malik, President Zafar Bakhtawari and Information Secretary Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig while congratulating Member In-Land Revenue Dr Ashfaq Ahmed lauded Chairman FBR Asim Ahmed and his team for the commendable efforts crossing over Rs.4,000 Billion tax collection in a fiscal year first time ever in Pakistan's history. UBG hoped that FBR will continue to facilitate the tax payers as this target had been possible mainly due to timely payment of taxes by the business community. They will extend full support to government in identifying the tax evaders across the country.

State Bank of Pakistan

Merit Scholarship Scheme (2020-21)

State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) offers financial assistance by way of Merit Scholarship to the talented and meritorious children of its serving/retired/deceased employees (up to OG-2 level) who are pursuing their studies at Intermediate, Graduation and Post-Graduation levels.

Applications for grant of scholarships under Merit Scholarship Scheme 2020-21 are invited from eligible candidates on the prescribed form.

Eligibility for SBP Merit Scholarship

1. Courses and Subjects:

All disciplines for Intermediate, Graduation, Post-Graduation and Diplomas (duration minimum six months).

2. Educational Institutions:

The award of scholarships for Intermediate, Graduation, Post-Graduation and Diploma courses will be considered for only those students who have taken admission in Colleges, Universities, Degree Awarding Institutions (DAIs)/Technical Training Institutes duly recognized by the relevant authority/body (HEC, BIEK, BISE, IBCC, NAVTTC, PEC, PMDC, TEVTA etc.).

3. Levels of Scholarship:

Enrolled in Program	Previous Qualification	Amount
Intermediate	Matric/O-levels	Rs. 6,160
Graduation	Intermediate/A-levels	Rs. 7,840
Post-Graduation	Graduate Degree	Rs. 11,200

4. Eligibility Criteria:

- Children of SBP employees (serving/retired/deceased) up to OG-2 level who have passed their last exams (Matriculation/O-levels/Intermediate/A-levels/Graduation/Diploma) in any year with minimum "B" grade or at least 60% marks.
- In case of grades mentioned in GPA/CGPA format, the candidate must provide certificate from the concerned institution stating the grading policy with GPA's corresponding percentages and minimum GPA requirements.
- The candidates must have secured admission in recognized educational institutions during the calendar year 2019 and afterwards.
- The students are not in receipt of scholarship from any other institution or the Government.
- Duration of the enrolled program must be mentioned clearly on the application form and supported with documentary evidence from educational institution.
- Minimum duration of diplomas should be 6 months

5. Admissibility/ Withdrawal:

- The scholarship will be granted in order of merit and in accordance with the prescribed quota for each course to those candidates who strictly meet all the eligibility conditions mentioned in this advertisement.
- Scholarships under this scheme cannot be claimed for same level of education twice.
- Disbursement of scholarship during each subsequent year/semester will be subject to submission of progress report of the last examination undertaken by the student.
- The scholarship will be withdrawn where children fail or do not appear in the examination.

Application Procedure:

Eligible candidates may submit their applications to Mr. Amjad Ali, Sr. Joint Director, Human Resources Department, State Bank of Pakistan, I. I. Chundrigar Road, Karachi-74000, latest by June 30, 2021. Application Form can be downloaded by accessing the link <https://www.sbp.org.pk/Scholarship/App-Forms-Merit-Scho.PDF>.

Dr. June, New Indonesian
Consul General arrived

KARACHI: The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia H. E. Retno Marsudi, has inaugurated Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat as the new Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia for Karachi on Tuesday, 4th May 2021 at the office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Jakarta. Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat arrived in Karachi on Monday, 24

May 2021, and has completed his quarantine upon arrival as mandated by the COVID-19 SOP in Pakistan. On Friday, 28 May 2021, the Indonesian Consulate carried out a handover ceremony to transfer the positions and responsibilities from the previous Acting Consul General, Mr. Herian Yuliansyah, to Mr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat as the current Consul General. The Consul General of the Republic

of Indonesia is highly hopeful for the newly appointed assignment in Karachi, and is looking forward to further strengthen the longstanding relations between Indonesia and Sindh Province, particularly in the field of trade, investment as well as people-to-people contact that shall benefit both countries. Furthermore, he also reaffirms one of the most important priority in Indonesian missions abroad, which is to provide exemplary citizen services to Indonesian nationals and diaspora in the Sindh Province. The Consul General is exceptionally grateful to be tasked with leading one of the most important Indonesian missions in the region, and is looking forward to working together with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, local government, business community, intellectuals, Indonesian diaspora, and Pakistan counterparts in order to achieve mutual goals. Prior to Karachi, Mr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat was assigned in the Indonesian Embassy in The Hague (the Netherlands), Rome (Italy), and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). - DNA

Briefs

NAB chairman pledges not sparing looters

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal has reiterated his firm commitment of not sparing the absconders after devouring billion of rupees of innocent Pakistanis. In a statement, he said the bureau will never spare those who fled abroad after looting billion of rupees from the poor. NAB will apprehend them from any corner of the world. He said NAB was determined to fulfill its national duties sans caring about any intimidation, browbeating or duress. He said business community was playing important role in country's economic progress. Since inception the bureau has recovered Rs 790 billion from corrupt elements and deposited in the national exchequer, which is a significant success. The suspects involved in money laundering of billion of rupees had nothing in 1980. And today they owned plazas at Dubai, from where they money poured in? Action is being taken against the owners of private housing societies on depriving the poor investors from their hard earned money. The poor investors were running from pillar to post to get their money back. NAB has returned billion of rupees to the poor people after recovering from fake housing societies working in Lahore, Multan, Quetta and other areas of the country. NAB officers were performing their duties with dedication. A special desk has been established to address the complaints of trader community. — APP

KP records 13 more Covid deaths

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department on Sunday reported 13 more deaths from Coronavirus and recovery of 336 patients during last 24 hours in the province. The total number of patients recovered so far from Coronavirus were 123131. According to reports, total 8116 tests were conducted in last 24 hours with detection of 379 new virus cases. The total tally of Covid-19 cases in the province has reached 132549. The Health Department said that total 3,970 death took place in the province so far. The number of active cases in the province are 5345 and total test conducted so far are 1799483. — DNA

Pakistani mangoes to enter Chinese market

BEIJING: Pakistani mangoes will hit markets in China from June 10, this year, when first consignment of King of fruits will be transported from Lahore to Kunming, capital city of South-Western Yunnan province. "We are picking Sindhri variety from the farms in Tando Allahyar, Sindh province and after processing and packaging in Lahore, we will airlift first consignment to Kunming on June 10, Adnan Hafeez, Director, Imperial Ventures (Pvt) Ltd told APP. He informed that most Chinese people favor mangoes imported from South Asian countries because of their plump and taste. "This year, we are offering the product to our clients directly under business to customer strategy and even if they want to buy one box, we will deliver to their homes," he added. He informed that his company will efficiently utilize the air cargo services and express delivery services to supply mangoes to the customers in a very smooth and timely manner. Adnan Hafeez said that this year, Pakistani mangoes will be available in 4.5 kg and 2.5 kg packings respectively and in the next phases we will also import Chaunsa from Pakistan. — APP

Gov't focusing on targeted sectors for sustainable growth

He said the measures already adopted by the government boosted revenues beyond Rs 4 trillion benchmark till now, which he termed historic hoping to raise it to around Rs5. 8 trillion during the next fiscal year

SAIFULLAH

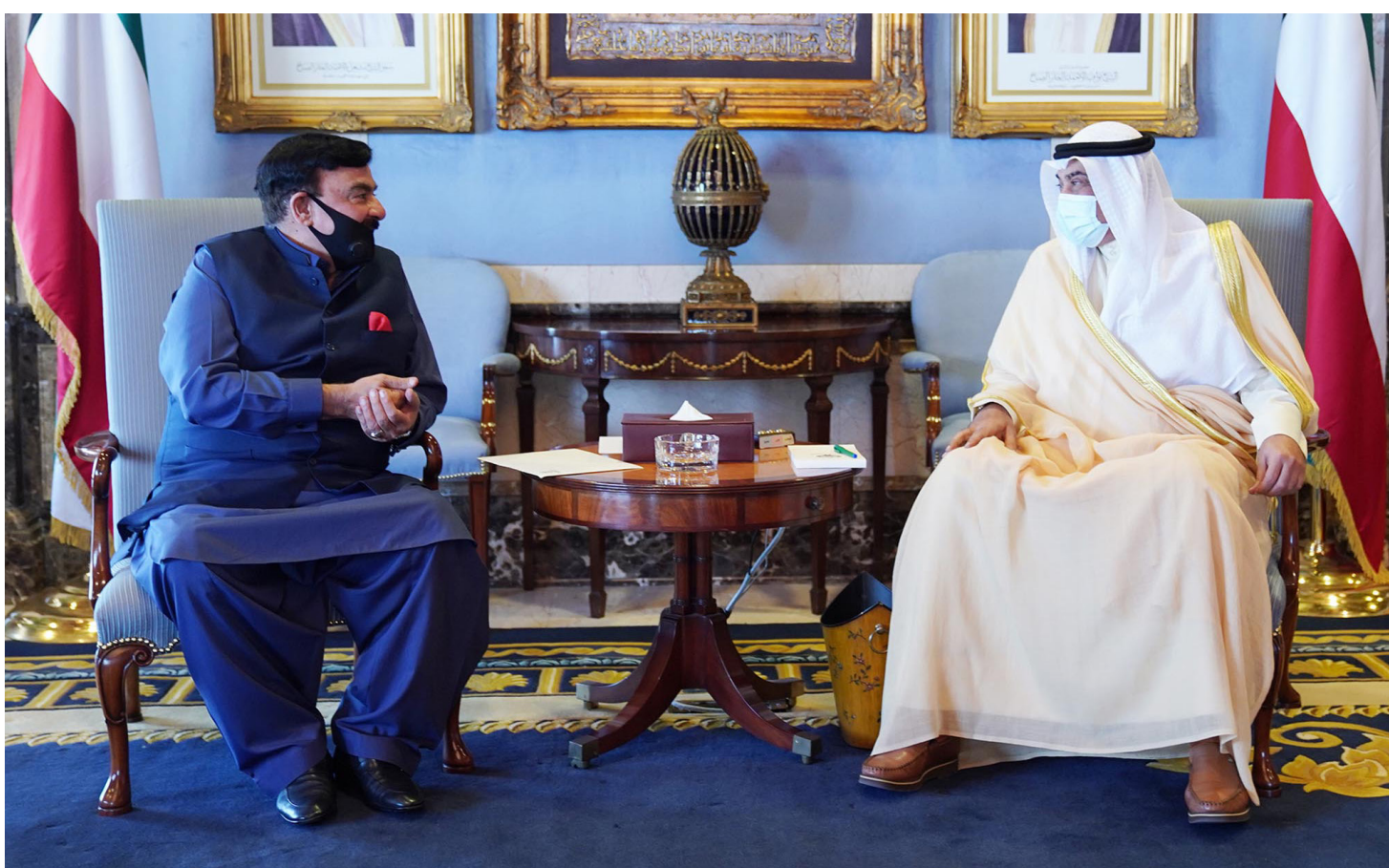
ISLAMABAD, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin on Sunday said government was determined to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth by focusing on development of few targeted sectors of economy including revenues, agriculture, industry and external trade. Addressing a webinar titled, "Budget 2020: Balancing Stability and Growth" organized by Institute of Policy Reforms, the minister said the government had already constituted Economic Advisory Council (EAC) to evolve development strategies with the help of experts to ensure sustain-

able growth of about 12 different sectors. The minister said Pakistan needed inclusive and sustainable growth as few regional countries were experiencing so, he added, a planned roadmap was being developed which the current and successive governments would follow to have consistency in the planning process. He said it was the first time that government was making such comprehensive roadmap for development of economy since sixties. The minister said enhancing revenue collection would be the top priority of the government, adding that currently the revenue collection was less than 10 percent of Gross Domestic Product. He said the measures already



adopted by the government boosted revenues beyond Rs 4 trillion benchmark till now, which he termed historic hoping to raise it to around Rs5. 8 trillion during the next fiscal year. Secondly, the government would enhance funding of Public Sector

Development Programme (PSDP) to Rs 900 billion and this time projects would be launched with Public Private Partnerships to promote growth. Likewise, he added, agriculture was another prime focus of the government. He lamented that Pakistan was converted from food-exporting to food-importing country, so the government's focus would be on reversing this trend. He said there was also need to focus on all agriculture chains, adding that a progressive plan was being put in place with a number of incentives for agriculture reforms. He said the government was also focusing on making industry more efficient to enhance exports manifold.

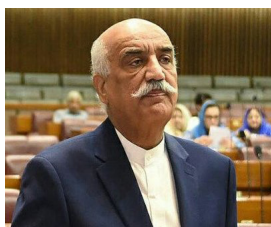


KUWAIT: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed calling on Prime Minister of Kuwait His Excellency Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamam Al-Sabah to discuss restoration of Kuwaiti visas for Pakistani citizens banned since 2011. — DNA

SC to hear Khurshid Shah's bail plea on Wednesday

The court, while fixing the plea for hearing, sent notice to prosecutor NAB

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan will hear bail plea of former opposition leader in National Assembly and senior leader of PPP Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah on Wednesday.

According to details, a three member bench presided by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Amin-Ud-Din Kahn would hear the bail pleas filed by Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah and his son Syed Farrukh Ahmed Shah. The court, while fixing the

plea for hearing, sent notice to prosecutor NAB. NAB had alleged that it conducted inquiry against Syed Khurshid Ahmed Shah, MNA on receipt of multiple complaints that he was richest man in the Sindh beyond his known sources of income and investigation whereby collected the evidence against him and filed a Reference in NAB Court Sukkur. He was nominated the accused No.1 in the Reference No.17/2019 along with seventeen others and the Petitioner/ accused in connivance with other co-accused persons accumulated assets beyond their known sources to the tune of Rs 1.229b which were disproportionate to their known sources of income, it added. NAB had also approached the Supreme Court against the decision to grant bail to Syed Khurshid Shah's son-in-law, wife and others.

Ceasefire along LoC led to peace: Indian Army Chief

Says this is first step to normalisation of ties between two countries; India hands over Pakistani's dead body to Rangers

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI, Indian Army Chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane has said the restoration of ceasefire in February between Indian and Pakistani militaries along the Line of Control (LoC) is holding and contributed to the overall sense of peace and well-being in border areas.

According to Hindustan Times on Sunday, Indian Army Chief Naravane said: "This is the first step on the long road to normalisation of ties between the two countries. We would like the ceasefire to continue. It has definitely led to an improvement in the security situation and benefited civilians living in the forward areas." In a surprise development, Indian and Pakistani militaries announced on February 25 that they had begun observing a ceasefire along the LoC from midnight of Feb-



ruary 24. India and Pakistan had agreed to a ceasefire on the LoC in November 2003, but it was frequently violated. However, the Indian army chief also vowed that "Counterterrorism operations will continue." Peace along the LoC is mutually beneficial, Naravane said. "The population living on either side suffers due to violence along the LoC. I am sure the Pakistan army

is also concerned about the population and hopefully the ceasefire will hold," the Indian army chief said. After February 24, there has been a solitary instance of cross-border firing along the LoC between the Indian Border Security Force and Pakistan Rangers. Meanwhile, the Indian forces have tortured to death a Pakistani youth who inadvertently crossed over Indian border, a private television channel reported on Sunday. Reportedly, a Pakistani youth, Asim Raza, resident of a village in Zafarwal, mistakenly crossed over Indian border on May 18. He was detained by the Indian border officials. On Saturday, the Indian border forces handed over his body to the Pakistani Rangers. The Indian media constantly tried to portray him as a terrorist. Asim's mother had lodged a report regarding her son's disappearance in Zafarwal police station. The family came to know about his whereabouts through Indian media. In his picture aired on Indian TVs, Asim looked severely wounded and tortured while being treated in an Indian hospital. It was obvious that he was severely beaten and tortured by the Indian forces. Asim succumbed to his injuries in Jammu Hospital on Saturday.

Farrukh compares PTI tax collection with PML-N

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: A day after the country's top tax machinery broke all the previous record of revenue generation, Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Sunday took to the twitter for drawing a comparison between the PTI government's current year tax collection and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) last year. In a series of tweet, he said the PML-N government, during its last year (2017-18), collected only Rs 3,840 billion tax, coupled with revenue on \$60 billion import, an amnesty scheme and withholding of refunds. While, the PTI government, in the 11 month of the current year, collected a 'record' tax of Rs 4,140 billion despite a reduction in 20 per cent of the imports. It also disbursed a 'record' refunds amounting to Rs 216 billion, he added. Farrukh said the reforms in the FBR, carried out on the special instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, had helped achieve 28 per cent increase in the collection of sales tax, 18 per cent surge in customs revenue through different measures including curbs on smuggling, 11.5 per cent increase in federal excise duty, and, above all, a surge of 54 per cent in the revenue which was ensured with addition of more people into the tax net.

Consumers likely to get 84 paisa relief for April

ISLAMABAD: The power consumers are likely to get relief of 84 paisa per unit for April on account of monthly fuel cost adjustments charges (FCA). In a petition submitted to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the Central Power Purchase Agency (CPPA-G) sought a decrease of 84 paisa per unit for April under FCA. The actual fuel charges remained Rs 5.7860 per unit against the reference fuel charges of Rs 6.6087 per unit during the said period. The regulator was informed that a total 10,193.56 GWh electricity, costing Rs 58.79 billion was generated during April. It was further said out of total generation, share of hydel was 24.55 per cent, coal 23.28 per cent, gas 12.19 per cent, RLNG 24.54 per cent, nuclear 10.18 per cent, furnace oil 1.41 per cent and wind 1.88 per cent. The regulator will hold public hearing on June 2. — APP

NCOC to establish vaccination centres for teachers

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operations Centre (NCOC) has decided to establish separate COVID vaccination centres for the teachers and educational staff. The decision has been made to expedite the vaccination process for the teachers and the non-teaching staff amid the third wave of the pandemic. New centres would be established countrywide at the tehsil level, while separate counters would be reserved for the teachers at the already functional vaccination centres countrywide, sources said. The NCOC observed that the pressure is mounting at the vaccination centres, after the opening of walk-in service for them and the separate centres to ensure rapidly vaccination of the teachers. The body has directed to complete vaccination of the teachers by June 5, said sources. It may be noted that the walk-in vaccination service was opened on May 29. On May 20, Federal Education Minister Shafiqat Mahmood had announced that teachers will be inoculated against COVID-19 on a priority basis. Taking to his official Twitter account, the federal education minister said that the government has decided to give priority to teachers in vaccination. — DNA

PIA transports 500,000 doses of Sinovac

STAFF REPORT

BEIJING: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA)'s special flight PK6852 on Sunday transported a batch of 500,000 doses of Sinovac vaccine from the Beijing Capital International Airport to Islamabad. Last Sunday, a special flight PK 6853 had also transported a consignment of two million doses of Sinovac vaccine procured from China to fight the ongoing wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in Pakistan, Qadir Bux Sangi, PIA Country Manager for China told APP. Pakistan has so far received over 13 million doses of Covid-19 vaccines comprising Sinopharm, Sinovac and CanSino procured from China including others through COVAX programme. A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson has stated in a statement that China has always

COVID-19 claims 56 more lives

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 58,878 with 2,697 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 2,620 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Fifty-six corona patients died during past 24 hours, 53 of whom were under treatment in hospital and three out of the hospital in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the past 24 hours, most of the deaths have occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of the total 56 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours 18 of them had died who were under treatment on ventilators. There were 4,017 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical care in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities in past 24 hours. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 4.81 percent. It may be mentioned here that

attached great importance to Pakistan's demand for vaccines to help fight Covid-19 pandemic and carried out close cooperation with

that country. "Chinese vaccines manufacturers have cooperated with Pakistan in the development and production

of vaccines from very beginning and will continue to export vaccines to Pakistan," he added. China and Pakistan are all weath-

er strategic cooperative partners, adding, Since the outbreak of Covid-19, China and Pakistan have worked together to help each other and achieve positive results. It may be mentioned that Pakistani health authorities had launched a nationwide vaccination drive with around a million doses of Sinopharm vaccine donated by China, starting with older people and frontline healthcare workers, in March. The drive began with a focus on the oldest people in the community, generally over the age of 80, and worked its way down. Initially, the government had to deal with vaccination hesitancy and a shortage of vaccine supplies and had limited shots for people aged 30 or over. Islamabad received the first COVID-19 vaccine consignment after a military aircraft transported it from Beijing on February 01, this year. — APP