



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Bilawal must return looted public money

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Briefs

Billion Trees drive being lauded

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Friday has said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) billion trees project is being appreciated across the world. In a statement, the minister said that ecosystem is being affected due to lack of sufficient trees and forests. The world has praised Pakistan over its strategy for improved environmental conditions, he said.

Uranium sale matter of concern

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday expressed deep concern over the illegal sales of Uranium in India, and demanded a thorough investigation of such incidents. Responding to media queries about reports of attempted illicit Uranium sales in India, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said that we have seen the reports about yet another incident of attempted illegal sale of six kilograms of Uranium in India.

Pakistan not to accept any blame

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Security Adviser (NSA) Dr Moeed Yusuf has said the United States has assured Pakistan that the country will not be made a scapegoat as Washington ends its two-decade long presence in Afghanistan. The national security adviser further said that any attempt to shift the blame on Pakistan for 'face-saving' by Washington would be unacceptable. "The United States has assured us that Pakistan will not be made a scapegoat amidst the withdrawal from Afghanistan."

Holiday Notice

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

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Bad days over; now time for growth: PM

- Says self-proclaimed democrats (Opposition parties) are calling on the military to overthrow the govt; declares that covid witnessing downward trend

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday said the country's economic turnaround had brought down the curtains on bad days and heralded the time for economic growth, wealth creation and jobs for youth. "I believe, we have gone through the worst time. Insha Allah (God willing), in the coming days, Pakistan's growth will not be turbulent with up and down cycles. Pakistan will start its journey from when it was fourth largest economy in Asia in 1968 after Japan, China and India," he said addressing the groundbreaking ceremony of Lodhran-Multan road. The 62-kilometer North-Bound section of N-5 will connect three district of Multan, Lodhran and Bahawalpur. The project will complete in two years costing around Rs 6.8 billion. Referring to the Opposition, PM Khan said that these self-proclaimed democrats are calling on the military to overthrow the government. From day one, the PTI govt faced criticism from the Opposition, which was poised to topple the government unless their leaders were given an NRO, says Prime Minister Imran Khan. "My own people had to face a tough time. The media also gave an impression that Naya Pakistan can emerge by switching a button on," he said.

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Federal budget to be unveiled on June 11

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will present budget 2021-22 on June 11 with an outlay size of around Rs8,000 billion. As the total size of the economy now stands at Rs52,057 billion, the federal government is to set the economic growth target of 4.8 percent for FY22. In FY22, the government would pay around Rs3,060 billion as debt and interest payments. The fiscal deficit will be around Rs2,915 billion in FY22 which would be around 5.6 percent of the GDP. The government is to set public spending target of Rs900 billion. The provincial spending target for provinces will be around Rs1,000 billion. The volume of subsidies will be set at Rs530 billion for FY22. The defence spending target will be set at Rs1,400 billion for FY22. The revenue collection target for FY22 will be set at Rs5,820 and the non-tax collection target will be set at Rs1,420 billion.

Bilawal lashes out at PTI, PML-N

"If Opp. leader is from Lahore, he is awarded bail, and if he hails from Sukkur, he is denied the right"

'Bilawal must return looted public money'

ZUBAIR AHMED



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has demanded Prime Minister (PM) Imran Khan to give account of the funds given by international organizations for the prevention of coronavirus pandemic. In a statement on Friday, Bilawal Bhutto said that

Continued on Page 06

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Friday asked Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto to help the government clear foreign debts by bringing back the looted public money stashed by his father Asif Ali Zardari abroad. "If you (Bilawal) are really concerned about the foreign loans then bring back the money dumped by your father in Swiss banks, halt the process of money laundering through (characters like) Ayan Ali, and return money hoarded through 'Omni groups' in fake bank accounts," he said while criticizing the PPP leader over his misleading presser on the government's economic achievements. The minister told a press conference that the opposition parties were perturbed over the historic triumphs of present government on the economic front, and were trying to mislead the public through incorrect data. He reminded Bilawal about the PPP-led government's deal with the IMF in 2008 and the unprecedented surge of 32% in the foreign loans to \$61 billion from \$46b in 2013.

Deposits in Roshan Digital accounts soar to \$ 1.25 billion

Raza Bashir Tarar urged the overseas Pakistanis to take full advantage of the incentives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Roshan Digital Accounts (RDAs) have emerged as a dependable, secure and profitable banking solution and mode of investment for the overseas Pakistanis as over 160,000 Pakistanis from 170 countries have invested US\$ 1.25 billion so far in the RDAs launched by the State Bank of Pakistan last year for the 9 million Pakistanis living abroad.

This was stated during a webinar arranged by the Habib Bank Ltd in collaboration with the State Bank of Pakistan and Pakistan High Commission Canada. Pakistan High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar, President HBL Muhammad Aurangzeb, Managing Director DPC, SBP Syed Irfan Ali, Pakistan Stock Exchange CEO Farrukh Khan, Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed, Consul General of Pakistan Vancouver Janbaz Khan, Consul General of Pakistan Montreal Ishtiaq Ahmad Aqil also attended.



Addressing the webinar, Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Raza Bashir Tarar urged the overseas Pakistanis to take full advantage of the incentives offered under the Roshan Digital Accounts. He noted that an investment of up to US \$ 1.25 billion in RDAs and repatriation of US \$ 24.2 billion home remittances in 10 months by overseas Pakistanis were a clear marker of the level of trust overseas Pakistanis had in the economic policies and different initiatives taken for strengthening the financial sector by the government. He said the launch of Roshan Digital Accounts was in line with Prime Min-

ister Imran Khan's vision to reach out to the overseas Pakistanis and his recent interactions with the Pakistan Missions abroad and subsequent stress laid by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in his routine communication with the heads of Missions were aimed at giving the overseas Pakistanis confidence that the government deeply cared for and valued their contribution to the national development. He said Pakistan High Commission Canada and all its Consulates were ready to serve the Pakistani community and provide them with hassle-free consular services. During the webinar, it was noted that out of US \$ 1.25 billion deposited by overseas Pakistanis in Roshan Digital Accounts, a handsome amount of US \$ 800 million had been invested in Naya Pakistan Certificates due to best market rates available under the scheme. It was assured that the RDAs were a secure and protected mode of investment and only the best Pakistanis banks having robust financial health and strong IT solutions had been roped in the scheme to make it a success.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, Prof. Sahiba Gafarova, presenting a souvenir to President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Pakistan keen to diversify ties with Azerbaijan: Alvi

Prof. Sahiba Gafarova emphasized the need for increasing interactions between the two countries at all levels

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan wants to further strengthen bilateral ties with Azerbaijan, particularly in the fields of trade, energy, defence, culture and tourism. He said that Pakistan attached utmost significance to its ties with Azerbaijan as both countries had shared religion, values, culture, as well as commonalities of views on

regional and international issues. He made these remarks while talking to the visiting Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan, Prof. Sahiba Gafarova, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The President underscored the need for exchanging political, cultural, and economic delegations at high levels to further solidify bilateral cooperation. He congratulated the government and people of Azerbaijan on liberation of their territories from occupation of Armenia

and signing of landmark peace agreement. The President appreciated the steadfast support extended by Azerbaijan to the legitimate cause of Kashmiri people. He expressed the hope that her visit would further deepen bilateral relations. He asked the Speaker to communicate his good wishes to the people and government of Azerbaijan. Prof. Sahiba Gafarova emphasized the need for increasing interactions between the two countries

at economic, political, cultural and strategic levels. She also underlined the need for promoting cultural ties to build bridges between the people of the two brotherly countries. She conveyed that the people and political leaderships of Azerbaijan were highly grateful to Pakistan for supporting her country's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh. She added that her country would continue to support Pakistan's stance on Kashmir at all fora.

Lowest positivity rate in three months

ISLAMABAD: Another 83 people died from coronavirus in Pakistan in the last 24 hours, but the positivity rate of cases has been declining and the lowest level in three months was recorded on Friday. A daily report by the National Command and Operation Centre said that 52,859 coronavirus tests were conducted across the country in the last 24 hours. Of these, 1,893 came back positive. At the same time, however, Pakistan reported its lowest coronavirus positivity rate in three months at 3.58% on Friday. The last lowest COVID-19 positivity rate reported by the country was on February 28 at 3.02%. According to the official portal, the rate of positive cases of COVID-19 in the country during the last 24 hours was 3.58%. The country has reported a total of 21,105 deaths from COVID-19 so far, while the total number of cases stands at 928,588. According to NCCOC's data, 856,005 people have recovered from the virus so far. COVID-19 cases are continuously declining in Pakistan, but Sindh is still reporting a spike in cases. Despite the efforts of the government, people are still hesitant to get themselves vaccinated, Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Pechuho had said a day earlier. - DNA

Terrorism rising in Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid on Friday said terror incidents are on the rise in the Federal Capital, promising that the government will take

Continued on Page 06

MONAL

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Briefs

Child protection
govt's
top priority:
Minister

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government is fully committed to ensure protection of the children from all types of violence and exploitation and reviewing laws to protect child rights. Minister for Social Welfare, Dr. Hashim Inamullah on the occasion of International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression, said that the top priority of PTI government was to ensure protection of children. The purpose of the day was to acknowledge the pain suffered by children throughout the world who were victims of physical, mental and emotional abuse. The day affirms the UN's commitment to protect the rights of children. The minister said that Child Protection Courts, Children Protection Units established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Act have been set up across the province.

He said that the establishment of the Child Protection Units are vital for the protection of vulnerable children against violence and exploitation. The minister said that PTI government has set up Zmangkor to protect and rehabilitate children at risk and street children. Dr. Hashim Inamullah Khan said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government was working to legislate Child Protection and Welfare (Amendment) Act 2020 to remove loopholes in the existing laws. - APP

KP Govt
releases funds
under TDC

PESHAWAR: The provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Friday approved allocation and release of funds under Tobacco Development Cess of the year 2018-19. The meeting of the committee for the utilization of Tobacco Development Cess (TDC) was held here with Chief Minister Mahmood Khan in the chair. Beside, Provincial Ministers Shahram Khan Tarakai, Mohibullah, Advisor to Chief Minister Qalandar Khan Lodhi, concerned members of provincial assembly, concerned administrative secretaries and others attended the meeting. The meeting was told that Rs.433.679 million were received for the year 2018-19 adding that proposed shares of each tobacco growing districts had been worked out as per laid formula. The committee while agreeing to the proposed shares of districts accorded the approval of releasing funds to concerned constituencies. On the occasion, the meeting also discussed the matters related to utilization of cess funds in different sectors. The chief minister said that TDC funds be utilized for necessary development activities as per the given rules. However, the chief minister stressed upon the need of making Tobacco Development Cess rules 2007 more effective and directed the authorities concerned for revising relevant rules and proposals from committee members be incorporated in revised rules. - APP

Parking
system to be
made online

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Parking Company has decided to make parking system online for elimination of corruption and embezzlement in parking revenue. A spokesman of Faisalabad parking company said on Friday that the company had established parking stands in various parts of the city to facilitate the people but a number of complaints were received that the contractors was committing embezzlement in parking fee by issuing bogus fee receipts. The management of Faisalabad parking company had decided to make the parking system online after which the people would be issued digital cards. The citizens can park their vehicles in the parking stands by getting their cards scanned and this step will also help in eradicating the vehicle theft incidents. He said that Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) General Khurram Parvaiz was heading the Faisalabad parking company and he after taking interest had also prepared a special mobile application while efforts were accelerated to develop software to make parking system online, he concluded. - APP

'Female entrepreneurs
must be incentivized'

Highlighting the Federal Budget Proposals for the year 2021-22, Mrs. Tehmina Pasha, President FWCCI said that women have a majority share in population but they have been crippled due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD. Female entrepreneurs must be incentivized for the immediate revival of their business operations as their businesses have been badly affected due to covid-19 and nearly 90% of production and income loss has been incurred. Highlighting the Federal Budget Proposals for the year 2021-22, Mrs. Tehmina Pasha, President Faisalabad Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FWCCI) said that women have a majority share in population but they have been crippled due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions. She said that despite the best efforts, women are reluctant to restart their own businesses while only a few sectors succeeded to

attract women by extending necessary protections. She said that women are generally harassed and discouraged to play their productive role due to our social traditions and taboos. She said that as an immediate step, the Government must incentivize women led businesses to operate. "However, at a later stage, they could be gradually convinced to contribute their role in revenue generation", she added. Giving details of the Budget Proposals forwarded to the Government, she said that a financial bailout package to women lead businesses may be announced in the upcoming Budget. She said that we have proposed interest free loans with nominal interest rates. She said that women lack necessary skills for taxation related

matters, therefore, a simplified Tax system may be devised for them which could facilitate and encourage them instead of the current complex documentation and procedures. She said that a large number of young girls are studying at university level. "These girls at school level must be equipped with vocational training to become a productive part of the national economy", she said and added that at the later stage, girls must be given business related projects with full support from the related authorities. "The girls should be encouraged to start these projects after completion of their education", she said and added that in this connection, the banks should play a proactive role and provide financial support in addition to arranging technical help from

SMEDA and other related departments till these projects are successfully launched. Regarding other proposals, she said that we have proposed special incentives for those women entrepreneurs engaged in hard core sectors as construction. She also proposed launching of large scale employment/infrastructure projects, promoting digital transformation/digital economy/E-commerce etc. She further said that women should be used for image building of Pakistan and in this connection their trade delegations should be encouraged with necessary financial support to visit developed western countries so that they could project the image of Pakistan. She disclosed that first-ever Women Incubation Centre would

be launched and efforts should be expedited to make it functional in the next three to four months at the current FWCCI premises with multi-pronged objectives. "It will facilitate young female graduates, start-ups and women entrepreneurs who want to move from home based to a commercial venture. About female workers, she said that they are the main players of the garment sector and hence 'Day Care Centres' should be established around knitting clusters. She said that residential colonies should also be established so that they could get rid of extensive travelling. She suggested that Honorary Commercial Counsellors may also be appointed from amongst the women entrepreneurs in the countries where they have well established business contacts.

APNS
expresses
solidarity
with Waqas
Tariq

DNA

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society strongly condemns the incidence of dacoity and manhandling of family at the residence of Mr. Waqas Tariq Farooq, Chief Editor, Daily JehanNuma, Lahore. The APNS expresses its solidarity with Mr. Waqas Tariq Farooq and noted with concern that in a posh residential area, the unidentified dacoits escaped despite the presence of law and order forces. The APNS has requested the Chief Minister, Home Minister of Punjab Government and the IG Police to take strong notice of the incidence and apprehend the culprits and bring them to book at the earliest.

Sindh cabinet
approves
pension
reforms

KARACHI: The provincial cabinet of Sindh considering the significance and future financial implications of the pension payments has approved a Pension Reforms Scheme under which around Rs 894.4 billion would be saved, otherwise the pension bill of the government would surpass the salary bill within next 10 years. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah at CM House on Friday. The provincial ministers, advisors, Chief Secretary Mumtaz Shah and other concerned officers attended the meeting. The chief minister being in-charge minister of the finance department told the cabinet that in 2012 the number of government employees were 477,570 and their monthly salary and pension bill was Rs11.78 billion and Rs 6.523 billion respectively. He added that in 2020 the number of employees increased to 493,182 and the monthly salary bill increased to Rs 23.97 billion while the pension bill rose to Rs13.329 billion. "If the same post-retirement liabilities, including pension, commuted value of pension, gratuity, family pension and others are continued unabated the pension bill will exceed the salary bill within next 10 years," he said and added therefore a study has been conducted so that necessary reforms could be introduced to control the ballooning pension bill. Syed Murad Ali Shah said that a restriction on early retirement (minimum 25 years of service and 55 years of age) with reduced pension, according to the number of years in service, was being proposed. The financial impact is determined based on the assumption that the early retirement reduction factor would be 2.5 percent for each year remaining to reach 60 years of age, he said and added that the accrued pension liability would be declared by Rs 433.326 billion. - APP

Pakistan
eco-friendly
policies lauded

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Housing Dr Amjad Ali Friday said that the government's eco-friendly initiatives are acclaimed internationally and many countries are following Pakistan's successful policies and tree plantation drive to cope with environmental issues. In a statement, he said KP government has strictly adhered to its principle of not utilizing agricultural lands in development projects and housing schemes to fulfill its responsibilities in promoting the natural beauty and healthy environment. On the occasion of 'World Environment Day' he said that the purpose of observing this day is to highlight and identify environmental issues at local and international level. He said it is our individual and collective responsibility to mitigate these challenges to give healthy environment to the future generations. The provincial minister also urged the people to protect natural forests, plant more trees, especially fruit trees and orchards and avoid wastage of water. - APP



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali chairs a meeting of District Emergency Response Committee for anti dengue. - DNA

DC directs to gear up
surveillance against dengue

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The meeting of District Emergency Response Committee for Anti Dengue was held at DC office which was presided by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali. CEO DHA Dr. Mushtaq Sipra, District Health Officer Dr. Bilal Ahmad, District Coordinator Epidemics Control Dr. Zulqarnain and other officers from different departments attended the meeting.

Deputy Commissioner directed the departments to more gear up the surveillance against dengue and collective efforts were required to stop the breeding of larvae in this regard. He asked the ACs for holding Tehsil Emergency Response Committee meeting on regular basis and reviewed the performance of departments in connection with anti dengue. He said that the officers of concerned departments should be active in field to

achieve the desire results of the anti dengue campaign because the moonsoon season is coming and eyes should be opened during the surveillance. He asked for submitting departmental performance reports regarding surveillance and prevention activities daily. He cleared that the carelessness from duties should not be tolerated and stern action would be taken against the officials showing poor performance in this regard.

Deputy Commissioner said that the strict monitoring of the anti dengue measures is being carried out by the District Administration to make the preventive and precautionary measures a success on durable basis. During the meeting District Coordinator for Epidemics control gave detailed briefing on indoor and out door surveillance and informed that action was also taken against shopkeepers for not maintaining cleanliness.

Statistics by rejected
economists also fake

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Political Communication Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Friday criticizing opposition said that the statistics of rejected and fake economists on national economy were also fake. Reacting to the statement of spokesperson Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) Maryam Aurangzeb, he said those who caused a deficit of \$20 billion were not experienced economists rather "experienced thugs," said a statement issued here. He said those who left behind a trade deficit of \$32 billion created a drama yesterday. He said those who have imposed a national debt of Rs. 30 trillion on the nation are becoming champions of the economy. Dr. Shahbaz Gill said circular debt of Rs.1,200 billion with monthly increase of Rs. 38 billion was the misdeed of incompetent N-league. He said that with a deficit of Rs 480 billion, national institutions were brought to the brink of ruin. He said that billions of tax refund of national institutions had been left, adding that the incompetent N League has to be held accountable who had ruined the economy.

Crackdown
against
illegal petrol
agencies

FAISALABAD: The district administration has launched a crackdown against illegal petrol agencies and in this regard, Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari and Civil Defense Officer Rana Muhammad Abbas seized 12 mini petrol pumps in different areas and registered FIR against violators. They checked the petrol agencies at Gulshah Muhammadabad, Madina Town, Chak 8 Canal Road and took action against illegal agencies. The 15 agencies were checked during operation. Assistant Commissioner City said that citizens had complaints about illegal petrol agencies in the residential areas are not only the cause of fire accidents but also complaints of low petrol supply to the consumers. - DNA

Construction of new PA
building completed

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Construction of the new building of the Punjab Assembly has finally been completed after 15 years. The new Assembly Hall is now the largest in Asia with a seating capacity of 422 members while the guest gallery has a seating capacity of 800. It has been decided that the budget for the next financial year will be presented in the new House. On Friday, Speaker Punjab Assembly Pervaiz Elahi visited the new building along with Secretary Punjab Assembly, Provincial Law Minister Raja Basharat and Minister for Communications.

The Speaker was told in a briefing that the foundation stone for the new building was laid on June 27, 2006 when he himself was the Chief Minister of Punjab. The project was supposed to be completed in two years, but was constantly postponed due to unavailability of funds during PML-N's government.

It was told in the briefing that the construction of the building was originally set to cost Rs 2.37 billion but due to continuous delays, the project was completed at a cost of Rs 5.39 billion. Pervaiz Elahi was informed that the offices of the Speaker, Chief Minister, Deputy Speaker and Leader of the

Opposition have been set up inside the new Assembly building. In addition, 38 offices have been set up in the building for provincial ministers, including three committee rooms and an office of the Assembly Secretary. A press conference hall, dispensary, library and a large cafeteria have also been built. A security monitoring room, an IT data center and parking for more than 400 vehicles have also been set up in the new building. Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi was informed that the painting and calligraphy work of the building was completed under the supervision of National College of Arts (NCA).

Covid-19 spread depicts results of ecosystem loss: CNS

Admiral Niazi said Ecosystem restoration means bringing back plants and animals from the brink of extinction, from the peaks of the mountains to the depths of seas

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi has said the emergence of COVID-19 has shown how disastrous consequences of ecosystem loss could be as by shrinking natural habitat for animals, we may have created ideal conditions for pathogens including 'Corona Virus' to spread. The Naval Chief made these remarks in his message on World Environment Day which is celebrated on 5th of June every year under the ambit of United Nations to raise awareness about significance of healthy and green environment, said a Pakistan Navy

news release here received. It aims to promote environmental measures for improving the quality of life, especially for our future generations, under the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This year's theme adopted for the World Environment Day is 'Ecosystem Restoration'; a major concern for the mankind. Admiral Niazi said Ecosystem restoration means bringing back plants and animals from the brink of extinction, from the peaks of the mountains to the depths of seas. Setting the right priorities, Pakistan has been proactively focusing on measures to protect the environment so as to reduce destruction caused by a myriad of anthropogenic activities, he added.

In the same context, this year, Pakistan is hosting World Environment Day for the first time and numbers of activities are scheduled by various ministries and other public and private entities to generate awareness among masses about the importance of restoration and conservation of the environment. "There is no denying the fact that 'Ecosystem Restoration' is a global undertaking requiring response at a massive scale," the Naval Chief underscored. Ecosystem, he said is interaction between living organisms i.e. plants, animals, people with their surroundings (nature, cities, farms etc). The restoration includes recovery of degraded or destroyed as well as conservation of

ecosystems still intact, he added. Pakistan Navy, he said also celebrates World Environment Day to highlight the significance of environment and undertakes numerous protection measures; focusing particularly on the marine environment. "PN has launched various initiatives, such as Trees and Mangroves plantation campaigns, banned use of polythene bags in naval premises, collection of solid waste in harbours and installation of Reed Bed Reverse Osmosis Plants for Sewerage Water Treatment in residential areas," he mentioned. The Naval Chief said, "While 'Ecosystem Restoration' is a global challenge affecting everyone, a number of activities have been planned by Pakistan Navy's Field Commands

to inculcate a sense of responsibility among all personnel to preserve our precious environment." "I expect all Units under Command to put up dedicated efforts to make these events a success. Small actions taken by individuals, with unanimity of purpose, can cumulatively create enormous effects," the Naval Chief said. Admiral Niazi in his message concluded, "On this day, let us reaffirm our commitment and resolve to ensure a cleaner and safer environment which directly affects our quality of life. I would also urge the industrial community to come together and embrace best practices and principles for the protection and preservation of our shared asset; The Environment."

Briefs

Bodla becomes Elite ISSA trainer

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani martial artist and holder of multiple Guinness World Records Ahmad Amin Bodla has become an Elite Trainer of the International Sports Sciences Association (ISSA) USA. Bodla has completed certifications including Certified Personal Trainer, Specialist in Strength and Conditioning, Youth Fitness Trainer and Weight Management Specialist.

"I had enrolled ISSA courses in August 2019 with the aim to learn scientific training and coaching methods. Now I am among the top Strength and Conditioning coaches in Pakistan. The credit goes to my parents for their unconditional support," he told APP.

Bodla was the founder of Mashfitt Martial Arts School at Lahore which has produced many international medalists and record holders for Pakistan since 2017. Bodla said that all these modern training methods have been deployed in Mashfitt to prepare our young athletes for International Competitions. — APP

One killed, several injured through open fire

FAISAL MUNIR

ISLAMABAD: At least one person was killed and several women were injured after unidentified men opened fire at a factory bus near Hassan Abdal in Attock on Friday. According to details, rescue sources said that a driver was killed on the spot while other twenty-eight women were critically wounded and moved to a nearby hospital.

The passengers, who work at a biscuit factory, were travelling from Hassan Abdal to Haripur when the firing incident was happened, a police official said, private channels reported.

Police officials reached the scene and have started investigation of the incident.

IRSA releases 233,300 cusecs water

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 233,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 270,000 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1412.24 feet, which was 28.24 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 118,600 and 95,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1111.25 feet, which was 71.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 58,100 and 45,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 125,100, 88,400 and 24,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 56,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 12,800 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

Foreign reserves rise to \$ 272m

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill on Friday said that foreign exchange reserves have increased to \$ 272 million. In a tweet, he said that readymade garments exports were increased by 296 percent which was reached \$ 243 million on April 21. He said that the corrupt opposition alliance will continue to spread negative propaganda and attacks on the economy, but the country will continue to move forward on the path of progress and prosperity. He expressed the hope that more good news will continue to come for Pakistanis. — DNA

MCI asked to address sewerage issues in markets

President ICCI said that Chairman CDA in collaboration with ICCI has started development works in markets and industrial areas including carpeting of roads and restoration of streetlights and stressed that MCI should also work with ICCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the business community was facing problems due to old and dilapidated sewerage and water lines in markets and industrial areas and emphasized that MCI should address these issues on priority to facilitate the growth of trade and industrial activities. He said this while exchanging views with Ghulam Sarwar Sandhu, Director General Civic Services, MCI during his visit to ICCI. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry, Saeed Khan, Omair Khattak, Aslam Khokhar, Naveed Malik and others were present in the meeting. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that



Chairman CDA Amir Ali Ahmed in collaboration with ICCI has started development works in markets and industrial areas including carpeting of roads and restoration of streetlights and stressed that MCI should also work with ICCI to find out the key issues of business

community and take measures to address them that would help in promoting business activities smoothly.

Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Ejaz Abbasi former President ICCI and others

the key initiatives being taken by the MCI to improve the civic services in the city.

He said that MCI was working to improve the sanitation system and replace old sewerage pipelines with new ones. He said that the contract sanitation system was being abolished in G-Sectors while renovation of Nullahs for smooth water drainage was in progress. He said that new dustbins would be placed in the city and new garbage collection vehicles were being purchased to improve sanitation services.

He assured that he would start visiting markets to resolve the key issues of traders. It was agreed in the meeting that the President ICCI and MCI team would conduct joint visits of markets to know about the issues of the business community and take remedial measures to resolve them.

Speaking at the occasion, Ghulam Sarwar Sandhu, Director General Civic Services MCI highlighted

Police to be provided resources for security

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Friday said that the government will take elaborate steps to improve security in the federal capital and more resources to be provided to Islamabad police for this purpose.

In a video message, the minister pledged to make Islamabad city safer in the days to come. In wake of some incidents in the federal capital, he said that elaborate measure would be ensured for the safety of the citizens. Over firing incident in Islamabad last night resulting martyrdom of two policemen including Head Constables Syed Bashir Shah and Muhammad Ishtiaq, the Interior Minister said the number of police martyrs in Capital has reached nine during tenure of PTI government.

The minister paid tributes to those who sacrificed their lives for the country and for restoration of peace. Rashid said one hundred and fifty mobile eagle squads would be attached with safe city project to make Islamabad a safe zone. These squads will keep a check on the city with the help of the Safe City and a wireless system, he added.

Sharing more details about the steps taken to improve the law and order situation in the city, he said currently, eagle squads have only four mobile vans while 16 more would be added soon in this budget. The Federal Capital is connected with Punjab and KP and the government would make it a safe zone while important steps would be ensured during this week, he maintained. — APP

PNCA, GB culture to organize musical event

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) in collaboration with Gilgit Baltistan Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Culture would organize a mega musical event at Deosai plains in August. Director General PNCA Dr. Fouzia Saeed said that it was decided during her meeting with the Minister Tourism, Sports, Culture & Archeology, Youth Affairs GB Nasir Ali Khan and the local administration, said a press release.

She was on an extensive visit to Skardu. This was hosted by the Minister Tourism, Sports, Culture & Archeology, Youth Affairs. She also met prominent cultural personalities, performing and visual artists and district management during her trip. She discussed many crucial issues and also areas in which PNCA could facilitate.

She added that "GB's Government is very proactive in promoting tourism and cultural activities in the Baltistan region. DG PNCA said she requested the district Government and the GB government to provide the space for performing artist as there is none currently.

A hall that was built earlier for that purpose is being used for other activities. Dr. Fouzia also emphasized that the current art councils should collaborate and come under one umbrella. Issues related to training of the artists in Baltistan and their participation in Islamabad specifically at PNCA was also discussed.

ICTSG to organize sports gala

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Council for Traditional Sports Games (ICTSG) would organize a day-long traditional sports gala here at Shah Allah Ditta on Sunday. The main purpose of organizing the event was to promote traditional sports of the country, particularly in federal capital. President ICTSG Syed Zeeshan Naqvi told APP that the traditional sports activities included horse dance, traditional shooting Walli Ball, Kushti Dangle, Single tire race, Bante, Tap Dana and Kabadi. He said Sports Gala would be started from 4 pm at Serenity Resort, Shah Allah Ditta. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, Minister of State for Climate Change, Zartaj Gul and Minister of State for Information & Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib viewing photos after ceremony of photographic exhibition on World Environment Day organized by Electronic Media & Publications at Pak China Friendship Centre. — APP

Experts highlight impacts of climate change on impoverished segments

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: On this World Environment Day, experts at the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) emphasize the need to highlight the inextricable connection between climate change and poverty.

"Climate change disproportionately impacts the poor and vulnerable segments of the society," Ms. Adnana Rao, Manager, Environment and Social Management at PPAF said. "Climate change not only jeopardizes the lives of the poverty-stricken segments in remote and underprivileged areas but also threatens their meager sources of sustenance. In addition, the poor are hardest hit by the long-term consequences like weather anomalies, food insecurity and water shortages."

Pakistan is placed on the 8th spot of the Global Climate Risk Index 2021, released by global think-tank German watch. The report indicates that Pakistan is one of the three countries perpetually ranked amongst the coun-

tries most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. "Climate change is a major challenge to sustainable development globally," Ms. Adnana Rao says. "Although Pakistan makes minimal contribution to the global climate change, yet ranks amongst the top eight most vulnerable countries. The changing weather patterns, variability of monsoons, rising temperatures and receding glaciers constantly threaten livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of poor households across the country besides incurring substantial economic losses to the country."

The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), in support with Government of Pakistan works to remove socio-economic inequalities across marginalized regions. The organization seeks to help out socio-economically disenfranchised communities without harming the local environment and water sources. In order to achieve the balance, it has set a higher benchmark in environmental safeguards in infrastructure development and operations across its program areas.

AIOU uploads semester terminal examination papers for BA programs

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is uploading semester terminal examination questions papers for autumn 2020 semester for BA (Associate Degree) programs today (June 5) on its website (www.aiou.edu.pk). The students are instructed to download their respective courses' question papers from the link given for 'Roll Number Slips' on the university website. The students are required to dispatch solved papers through registered postal services to their concerned tutors before June 20, 2021 and keep their receipts in safe custody. Moreover, semester terminal examinations for BS, B Ed, ADE, ADC will be conducted online from June 6-13, 2021. Similarly, semester terminal examinations for PGD, MA/MSc, M Ed, MBA and M Com will be conducted online from July 4-11. Questions papers for these programs will be uploaded on the students' existing LMS accounts at 8:30 am and will be available till 8:30 pm. The students will be allowed twelve hours to solve their papers and upload on the LMS portal. They will not be allowed to upload their solved papers after 8:30 pm. All regional offices will remain operational during these timings to facilitate the students in online examinations. — DNA

Speakers urge availability of Talking Software for blinds

Special emphasis was on two basic issues one of these is "Talking Software" and other is related to affordability of mobile devices

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The participants at a conference have expressed their concerns over non-availability of useful "Talking software" that is hindering blind persons from being benefited in higher education and research.

Participants of the conference also emphasized the government to make mobile devices duty-free or make these available at subsidized rates for the disabled peoples which has become an international norm.

'Global efforts needed to eliminate corruption'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Chairman Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal on Friday has said that there is a need for international cooperation to eliminate the corruption. Virtually addressing the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) session, the NAB chief said that corruption is inflicting loss of 1260 billion dollar annually to the developing countries as it breeds injustice and poverty. "NAB being the focal agency of Pakistan under the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) is determined to weed out this scourge of corruption and to make Pakistan corruption-free by adopting accountability for all policy," he said. Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal urged the international community to take stern steps to halt money transfers from the poor country.

They were addressing the one day conference organized by Pakistan Disabled Foundation (PDF) is a nationwide organization struggling for betterment of disabled population of the country, held in the auditorium of National Skills University.

Issues related to information and communication technologies for PWDs especially for blind persons were also discussed to emphasize that, despite government funding, these are still awaited. It was told that PDF has been struggling since last 6 years to make

affordably usable for PWDs. Special emphasis was on two basic issues one of these is "Talking Software" and other is related to affordability of mobile devices. For this purpose FBR and ministries of IT and Finance are formally contacted to make provisions in the forthcoming federal government budget for the year 2021-22.

Besides these, blind experts and professionals from different fields, and various intellectuals and socially prominent personalities also attended this conference.

Opposition's conspiracies for only point scoring

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar's aide Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan on Friday said that the conspiracy to derail the democratic system would fail miserably as economic team would prepare a 'pro-poor and relief-oriented' budget for the next fiscal year. Current government would present an excellent, balanced and people-friendly budget but opposition's conspiracies before budget is only aim to get political point scoring, she said while speaking to a Private news channel. She said the anarchistic political designs of PDM alliance have come its logical end, adding, deceiving public is the old habit of the opposition but it could not fool the masses anymore.



ISLAMABAD: A foreigner takes part in a cycling event along with her children. — DNA

Briefs

PMAS-AAUR signed MoU with 2 private companies

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University (PMAS - AAUR) on Friday signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with two private companies namely the Harmony Group of Companies and Unique Value Pvt. Ltd. Through these MoUs organizations will cooperate for professional education, skills enhancement, product development, entrepreneurship, research, innovation and commercialization including but limited to Information Technology, Food and Nutritional Sciences, Biochemistry and Biotechnology, Livestock, Poultry and Veterinary and Agriculture & Agricultural Engineering. Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR, Dr. Tayyab Hussain Malik, Co-Founder & Chairman Harmony Group of Companies and Mr. Allah Ditta, Chief Executive Unique Value Pvt. Ltd signed MoU on behalf of their respective organizations. Under the MoU, organizations not only agreed to provide support in industrial linkages, internships & job placements but will also arrange public and private funding for R & D and Commercialization.

Scholars urged to combat propaganda

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi Friday urged the prayer leaders to convince the people to get vaccinated against the COVID-19 pandemic. Highlighting the significance of a mosque as a platform, he requested the religious scholars to combat the disinformation and propaganda against the COVID vaccination especially during the sermon of Friday prayer. Talking to a private news channel, he said the role of Ulema in creating awareness about the vaccination was of paramount importance and would even be more critical in years to come. He said a 'Fatwa' (religious decree) by Darul Ifta Pakistan had already been declared the vaccination legal and permissible in accordance with the Shariah. He asked the people not to pay heed to the conspiracy theories against the coronavirus vaccine as it was safe for human consumption and meant to protect their lives. Replying to a query about Hajj, he said the vaccination for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims would be ensured as per Saudi government's instructions. Pakistan was ready to make all necessary arrangements as long as the Saudi government announces its guidelines for Hajj pilgrims this year, he added. - APP

Science ministry for resolving water issue

DNA

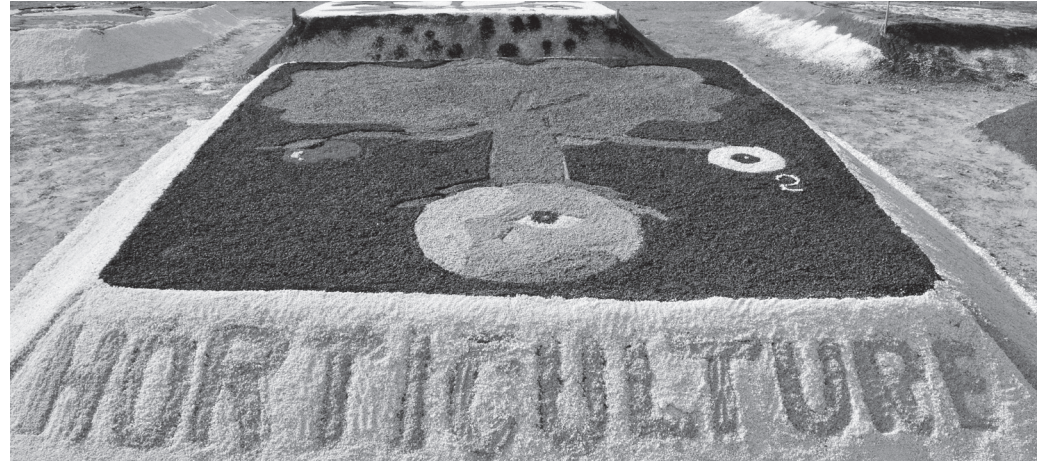
ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Science and Technology and Capital Development Authority (CDA) Friday agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the resolution of water issue of the capital city. This was agreed during a meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz. CDA Chairman Amer Ali Ahmad, Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR) Chairman Dr Muhammad Ashraf and Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Member Asjad Imtiaz Ali were present during the meeting. The PCRWR chairman gave a detailed presentation regarding water issue of the capital and intervention which could be used for the better management of both ground water and surface water. During the meeting, the federal minister said awareness regarding water conservation was key to resolve all water related issues. He said the Ministry of Science and Technology would provide all research and technical support to the CDA for effectively tackling this challenge.

PM's focus on global warming is reflection of true leader

"We will leave no stone unturned to make the PM's 10 billion tree tsunami campaign a success, which is the ever biggest practical effort in the world to this direction", VC PHA

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: Vice-Chairman, Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi, Malik Abid Hussain Friday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's full focus on global warming and environmental pollution was a reflection of the thinking of a true world leader. He made these remarks while talking to the public and staff members of the parks during his visit to Allama Iqbal Park, Murree Road and Rawal Park, Rawal Road. "We will leave no stone unturned to make the PM's 10 billion tree tsunami campaign a success, which is the ever biggest practical effort in the world to this direction", he added. On the occasion of World Environment Day to be observed on June 5, Saturday, "We will renew our commitment to plant maximum



saplings and make all the citizens fully aware of the need and importance of trees," he said. Malik Abid Hussain said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's thinking and vision on a serious and global issue like environmental pollution and global warming

was a characteristic of a true and Islamic world leader. He said, the hectic efforts being made by the government as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to prevent and gradually overcome this serious problem were the most unique and largest

in the world. He said, hosting "World Environment Day" in Pakistan would bring positive projections for the country providing an opportunity to highlight its commitment and achievement on a global scale to showcase its climate change and environ-

mental protection activities. He said that PHA Rawalpindi was working very hard, day and night to make these efforts 100% successful in its jurisdiction. "In this regard, we are also working on raising public awareness, the scope of which should be extended to the entire country," he mentioned saying that to this end, every institution and the people need to transcend political affiliations and work in the spirit of pure goodness and welfare of the society. Imran Khan was actively playing his role in ridding the international community of pollution and warming, he said and urged the world leaders and international community to come forward and play a role to support oppressed Kashmiri and Palestinian people. "In this way, we can live a more beautiful life under peaceful coexistence by getting rid of environmental pollution and oppressive human attitudes," he concluded.



ISLAMABAD: In presence of Secretary Health, Mr. Ashraf Khawaja, WHO Representative, Dr Palitha Mahipala handed over equipment to DRAP & reiterated WHO's commitment as a trusted partner in DRAP strategic road map for expanding access to effective treatments. - DNA

Shibli hopes to get fiscal budget passed with majority

Govt had focused on ensuring rule of law and strengthening economy

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz Friday said the government would get the upcoming fiscal budget 2021-22 passed with thumping majority by providing relief to the common man in all sectors. The country was achieving goal of economic stability through prudent policies adopted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, he said talking to a private news channel. The minister said the economic indicators were heading into right directions. Prime Minister Imran Khan was working day and night for the welfare and uplift of the country and masses, he said and added the government had put the country on path of development and progress. He said the government had focused from day one on delivery, ensuring rule of law, good governance and strengthening economy to directly facilitate the people to bring change in their lifestyle. Despite COVID-19 chal-



lenges, he said a strategy was devised to bring economic stability in the country and a record improvement was witnessed in different sectors including agriculture, construction, cement and others. Shibli Faraz said the PTI government would not run the country's economy by following certain pattern and procedures of the previous regimes. He disclosed that opposition parties were incompetence and facing corruption charges. Replying to a question, he said Pakistan had worked hard to establish permanent peace in Afghanistan which was imperative for the peace in whole region.

Case registered against gun attack on Islamabad policemen

The attack took place near the Construction Technology and Training Institute (CTTI)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police have registered an FIR against the murder of two policemen in the capital Thursday night. The complaint comprises sections of terrorism. According to it, four men on a motorcycle

opened fire on the officers. An exchange of fire was reported between the groups. The suspects were, however, managed to escape, the SHO of Shams Colony said. The deceased policemen were members of the Eagle Force, SSP Fida Satti told. The attack took place near the Construction Technol-

ogy and Training Institute (CTTI), he added. Earlier in the day, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed took notice of the attack and summoned a report from the inspector-general of Islamabad. He expressed condolences with the families of the martyred policemen as well. Islamabad

Operations DIG said that all evidence from the crime site has been collected. "The culprits will soon be arrested," he assured. This is the third attack on the police in Islamabad and Rawalpindi this year. In March, two policemen were killed in two separate attacks in the twin cities.

MET office predicts hot weather in most parts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Friday predicted hot and dry weather likely to prevail in most parts of the country during next 24 hours. According to Meteorological office Islamabad, rain wind-thunderstorm is expected in South Punjab, Upper Sindh and north-east Balochistan, Kashmir and its adjoining hilly areas. A westerly wave is affecting upper and central parts of the country and likely to persist till Saturday (today). Maximum temperature was recorded in Nokkundi 47 & Dalbandin 46.



ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, the UAE Ambassador in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, meets H.E Nassar Al-Mutairi, the Ambassador of Kuwait in Islamabad, and discusses bilateral work and cooperation and joint initiatives and plans between the Embassies of the two brotherly countries. - DNA

FBR for awareness for tax culture in institutions

Federal Board of Revenue will educate and train students and teachers through taxation syllabus, training sessions and seminars

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) inked between Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and provincial Higher Education Department of Government of Punjab to create awareness for tax culture in educational institutions. The MoU is aimed to promote tax culture and tax awareness in all educational institutions under

Higher Education Department, Government of Punjab, said a press release issued by FBR here. In line with the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan for promoting Taxation culture in the country, a special signing ceremony of MoU between Higher Education Department, Government of Punjab and Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) was held at Higher Education Department, Civil Secretariat, and Lahore. The Ceremony was observed by

Punjab Provincial Minister Higher Education, Raja Yasir Hamayun Sarfraz and Member FATE and Spokesperson FBR Syed Nadeem Hussain Rizvi. The MoU was signed by Provincial Secretary, Higher Education Department, Government of Punjab Nadeem Mahbub and Chief FATE, FBR Tehmina Aamer. According to release, it shall serve to foster positive taxation culture and awareness among students and teachers through different

sets of activities, skills and experiential learning for making them responsible citizens. The training sessions will inculcate among students the significance of paying taxes and how to act the role of identifying tax evasion and reporting to the concerned tax authorities. Federal Board of Revenue will educate and train students and teachers through taxation syllabus, training sessions and seminars. According to signed MoU, Higher

Education Department, Government of Punjab will provide access to FBR for conduct of training and awareness activities in maximum provincial government educational institutions. This MoU will be applicable for three years. FBR has decided to launch countrywide awareness sessions through seminars and training sessions to promote tax culture which will help to increase the number of taxpayers and revenue for the country.

PMDU to train Punjab Police officials

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to effectively address grievances of public, the Prime Minister Delivery Unit (PMDU) will hold a workshop for the senior officials of Punjab Police. The decision has been taken to give the officials a briefing via video-link about working at Pakistan Citizen Portal and on resolving the grievances of general public. The workshop will also include a briefing on policy-making for effective redressal of public grievances. Inspector General (IG) Punjab has ordered Additional IGs, DIGs and DPOs to personally participate in the training. The briefing will be given by the officials of the PMDU at the Prime Minister's Office this week. After Punjab Police, the police officers of other provinces will also be given training. It is pertinent to mention that after a detailed audit from the IG Punjab Office, it was decided to hold a workshop for the relevant officers.

Commission Rawalpindi inspect uplift projects

RAWALPINDI: Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Gulzar Hussain Shah on Friday visited Jhelum district and inspected pace of ongoing development projects. He also directed the authorities concerned to complete the project in tehsil complex Dina within shortest possible time frame. He chaired a meeting in Deputy Commissioner Jhelum office to discuss different development projects of the district. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Omar Iftikhar Shirazi, Assistant Commissioners of Tehsils, CEO Health Dr. Wasim Iqbal, CEO Education Chaudhry Maroof, Divisional Forest Officer, Sudhvir Mughal and heads of relevant departments. Gulzar Hussain Shah was given a detailed briefing on development projects. He instructed the officers to ensure timely completion of the projects besides monitoring the quality of work. A thorough inspection of the quality of development projects should also be carried out. Dina-Mangla Road should be completed on priority basis, he added. He said that development projects should be completed as soon as possible so that better facilities could be provided to the citizens. He said that the government was committed to promote tourist places in Jhelum district as such places have great importance for development of any area and help improve economic growth. - APP

ED notifies transfer of high ranking officers

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division on Friday issued the notification directing transfers and postings of various high ranking officers. According to a notification, Aitzaz-ud-Din, a BS-19 officer of the Secretariat Group, presently awaiting posting, Establishment Division is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary, Commerce Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. Similarly, Khurram Ghaznavi, a BS-19 officer of the Postal Group, presently posted as Deputy Postmaster General (Operations Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Circle, Peshawar is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary, Cabinet Division with immediate effect and until further orders. While, Muhammad Asghar Gondal, a BS-19 officer of the Secretariat Group, presently at the disposal of National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC), on deputation basis, is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary, Maritime Affairs Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. - APP

25 new infections reported

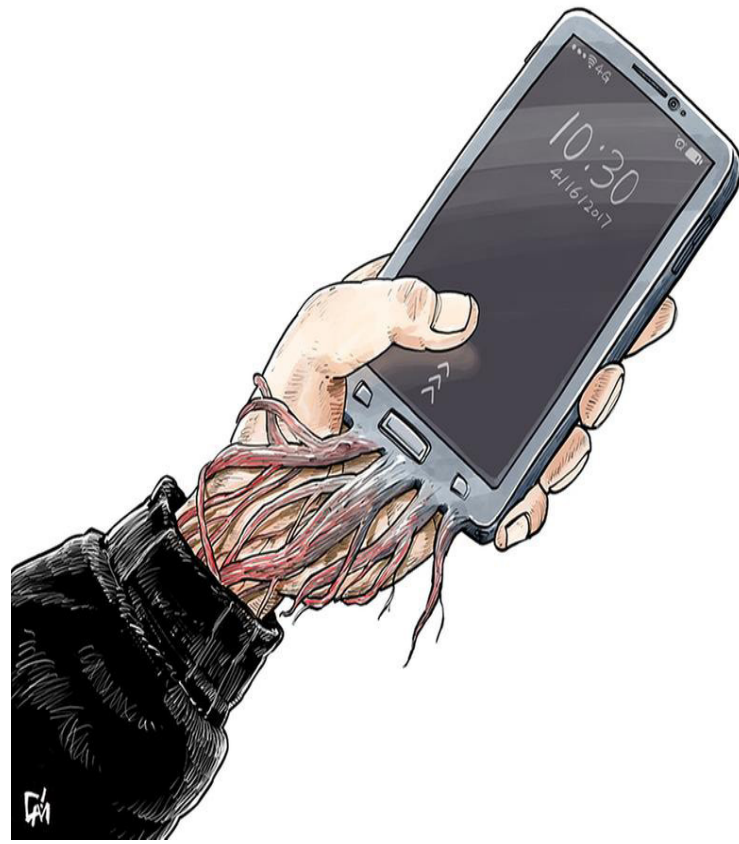
STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: As many as 407,694 people including 26,573 health workers and 381,121 senior citizens have jabbed themselves so far against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) from 23 centres operating across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10. According to data shared by the district administration here on Friday, 25 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 26,390 in the district while three lost their battle of life against the deadly virus. As per the latest data, 4 cases were reported from Rawal Town, 4 from Potohar town, 10 from Rawalpindi Cantt, 3 AJK, 2 Kotli Sattian and one each from Gujjar Khan and Murree.

US troops' exit from Afghanistan

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE US forces and UN troops will leave Afghanistan in 2021. The withdrawal process will continue until September. US President Joe Biden and his administration are looking forward to the US troops' return from Afghanistan. It has been one of the most talked-about military engagements by the US in recent years. Moreover, some opine that this was an "Unwinnable War" for the US. The mission in Afghanistan by the US troops and allies has been in process for two decades. However, recently Pakistan's National Security Adviser Dr. Moeed Yusuf said that the sudden withdrawal of the United States from Afghanistan was not ideal, adding that any shifting of blame on Pakistan for "facesaving" would be unacceptable. While speaking on a Pakistani TV show, Dr. Yusuf said, "[The] United States has assured us that Pakistan will not be made a scapegoat amidst the withdrawal [of US troops] from Afghanistan, but only time will tell whether [they stay true to their word] as history suggests otherwise." He reiterated that although peace in Afghanistan must manifest, however, the rapid withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan will not bode well for Pakistan. While talking about geopolitics and regional affairs, Dr. Yusuf said, "The approach is still regional. [Though], they [the US] have shifted focus from Af-Pak and are now obsessed with China, seeing India [as a country] that has a role to play [in this equation]." Indeed, Afghanistan holds an important position when it comes to peace and stability in the South Asian region. The term, AfPak was coined by the US to show the significance Afghanistan and Pakistan hold in the region. Despite many efforts in the past, the US left a residual force in Afghanistan after each withdrawal. Now that the entire military is leaving Afghanistan, analysts fear that Afghanistan's extremist elements may surface again to scuffle with the country's security apparatus.



Tackling dengue

THE scourge of dengue has made a return once again, raising questions regarding the efficacy of our strategy to combat it. Over the past week, Punjab has witnessed a high incidence of cases, with 44 of them being reported on Wednesday by the Punjab Health Department. These numbers are concerning, because by this time last year only nine cases had been reported across the province. The persistence of dengue year after year illustrates that we are yet to get a grasp on this health issue. While there is the argument that concerned health departments have been striving to curb the spread of Covid since last March, the preventative strategy and information campaigns over the last several years have lacked the sense of urgency this issue deserves. Back when dengue first became a menace in Punjab, the response by the government was exemplary and reassuring. It is now time that we once again initiate mass fumigation campaigns in hotspots across the province. Before the monsoon rains arrive, it is essential that a vigorous public awareness campaign is carried out to ensure effective community participation. Recalling the strategies of the past, authorities should ensure that information regarding dengue and its prevention should be broadcasted across traditional and new media platforms. Authorities in Punjab have announced that they will now be taking emergency measures and hiring health workers on a contractual basis, along with cancelling the Sunday holiday of workers who are part of the anti-dengue campaign. This response is characteristic of our reactive approach to dealing with dengue. Considering how this is a yearly occurrence, the need for such measures should not arise in the first place. It is high time that we change our strategy to a more proactive one and devise a coordinated plan to put an end to this ground-hog-day scenario.

Azerbaijan–Pakistan: Opportunities for friends

Rusif Huseynov
DunyaSuleymanova

The post-war period did not shrink the political and military alliance; on the contrary, the sides are resolute to strengthen these relations. Several Pakistani officials visited Karabakh, where they would witness the scale of the Armenian-made destruction and call on the international community to help Azerbaijan rehabilitate the liberated areas

SINCE Azerbaijan became an independent state in 1991, it has had close relations with Pakistan. The latter was among the first three countries that immediately recognized Azerbaijan's independence from the former Soviet Union. Both Azerbaijan and Pakistan are Muslim-majority countries that have supported each other throughout the last three decades on important political issues such as Kashmir and Karabakh. For instance, in April 1993, when the Armenian forces illegally occupied Azerbaijani province of Kalbajar, Pakistan co-sponsored the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 822, which demanded the immediate cessation of the hostilities in Karabakh and the withdrawal of Armenian occupying forces from the afore-mentioned province. Furthermore, Pakistan remains the only country that avoids recognition of Armenia due to the latter's aggressive policy against Azerbaijan, and one of few countries to have officially recognized the scale of the

horrendous Khojaly massacre carried out by Armenian gangs against Azerbaijani civilians in February 1992. Such a fraternal and warm attitude by Pakistan has always sparked reciprocal rhetoric and action by Azerbaijan, which in turn has always supported Pakistan's stance on the Jammu and Kashmir issue. Azerbaijan is also a member of the Jammu and Kashmir Contact Group and backs Pakistan in resolving its border disputes with India.

Azerbaijan's capital in green

During the Second Karabakh war last autumn, Pakistan extended full and unconditional support, again, to Azerbaijan and welcomed the liberation of the territories formerly occupied by Armenia.

This attitude triggered an unprecedented Pakistanomania across Azerbaijan: throughout the 44-day war (27 September – 10 November), as well as in the immediate aftermath, Pakistani flags (along with Azerbaijani and Turkish flags) became something routine and usual for Azerbaijani towns, especially the capital city, Baku, where Parcham-e Sitarah o-Hilal was hung from balconies, and on façade of the buildings, painted on walls, and placed inside houses and offices. Numerous private vehicles were decorated with Pakistani national colors. One of the most creative displays of this obsession took place inside a supermarket, which hosted the Pakistani flag (again together with Azerbaijani and Turkish) made with fruits and vegetables. Both the Victory Day (10 November) and subsequent Victory Parade (10 December) had Pakistani flags as an integral element of celebrations.

Post-war relations

The post-war period did not shrink the political and military alliance; on the contrary, the sides are resolute to strengthen these relations. Several Pakistani officials visited Karabakh, where they would witness the scale of the Armenian-made destruction and call on the international community to help Azerbaijan rehabilitate the liberated areas.

Very recently, in early March 2021, Azerbaijan was attended by a high-level Pakistani delegation led by General Nadeem Raza, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee. In his meeting with Azerbaijani military officials, General Raza discussed the prospects for the development of cooperation between the two countries in the military, military-technical, military-educational, and other spheres, as well as joint military exercises. In late March 2021, Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Ceyhan Bayramov met with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi to discuss various opportunities for

cooperation. The Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations is also transforming into a more effective triangle with the involvement of Turkey: according to a tripartite declaration signed in January 2021, the three nations are to support each other in challenging issues, further develop the trilateral relations between these countries, since regional transportation and communication channels that provide more opportunities for cooperation have opened as a result of the liberation of Azerbaijani territories. Some experts even suggest this trio can partner in space-related activities.

Current economic relations

While Azerbaijan and Pakistan enjoy the highest level of political ties, the economic and trade relations leave much to be desired: in 2019, Pakistan's exports to Azerbaijan amounted to some \$25 million, while goods in the reverse direction slightly exceeded \$1 million. The trade turnover was even lowered to \$10 million in 2020, due to the pandemic.

Noticing the economic relations trail behind the political ties, the officials in both countries have been keen to improve this trend in the recent years. The 2015 business forum hosted in Baku was attended by presidents of both Azerbaijan and Pakistan, Ilham Aliyev and Mamnoon Hussain. Organized in 2019 by Azerbaijan's Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZPRO-MO) and Pakistan's Border Trade and Industry Chamber, a similar business forum attracted over 150 entrepreneurs operating in various sectors.

In 2017, Azerbaijan and Pakistan signed an agreement on cooperation in the energy sector, with two countries having set goals to build long-term energy ties. Azerbaijan's oil giant SOCAR has been offering the supply of gasoline and LNG cargo to Pakistan LNG Ltd as well as Pakistan State Oil. At the end of 2020, Socar announced that it would help Pakistan to overcome natural gas crisis that could have happened in January 2021. Consequently, it offered bids at the level of 20.4832% of Brent for the time interval from January 29 to February 1, 2021. According to information, SOCAR is soon going to operate fuel stations in Pakistan.

What can further be done?

The liberation of the occupied territories in Karabakh has not only changed the geopolitical picture in the Caucasus, but also is offering new economic opportunities and prospects. As the entire infrastructure of once prosperous cities and villages in Karabakh had been razed to the ground by the Armenian occupants in the past 25 years, the region's revival will require a lot of

resources and synergy in the forms multi-billion-dollar infrastructure projects. Since it would be too difficult for Azerbaijan to solely rebuild new settlements, Baku is considering proposals for outside investors as well. It should also be noted that the Azerbaijani side will offer preferential policies and concessions to those countries who had been supportive of Azerbaijan's military efforts of liberating the formerly occupied lands. Pakistan is among these few nations, whose companies can and must partake in the Karabakh infrastructure projects, by enjoying the said preferential attitude. This invite was voiced at the highest level: in the 14th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev once again thanked Pakistan for its active support throughout the conflict and invited the government of Pakistan, as well as private companies, businesses, investors to invest in the liberated territories of Azerbaijan.

According to the Azerbaijani government's plan, smart towns and smart villages will be built in the newly liberated areas. This is one of the sectors in which Pakistan can be involved and be effective: Pakistan's growing IT sector, which generates an annual revenue of between \$3 and \$4 billion, can put forth viable solutions to Azerbaijan's smart settlement concepts.

Pakistani agricultural and pharmaceutical firms can not only discover a new market in Azerbaijan, but also use Azerbaijan as a springboard (through joint ventures or re-export) to access to a huge post-Soviet market.

In the post-pandemic period, when traveling mode will return to normalcy, mutual tourism should be encouraged. According to reports, the sides plan to launch Baku-Islamabad direct flight, which can boost not only people-to-people contacts and tourism, but also economic relations. While Pakistan enjoys a highly positive image in Azerbaijan, this soft power should not be based solely on political and military relations. Pakistani industrial and agricultural companies, as well as cultural organizations should also assume more role within this framework. Why not introduce Hollywood products in Azerbaijan or organize fairs of Pakistan-made exotic fruits in Baku, for instance? In other words, both societies have an ocean of opportunities to boost economic and cultural ties, which await to be properly exploited.

—Rusif Huseynov is the Co-founder and Director of Topchubashov Center, a Baku-based think tank. Dunya Suleymanova is a research intern at Topchubashov Center

Islamophobia too readily overlooked in West

Chris Doyle



Prominent Tory Muslims like Baroness Warsi, the former party chairman, believe that a fully independent investigation is required – not one appointed by the party. This is what happened when the Labour Party stood accused of institutional anti-Semitism

AN inquiry into Islamophobia within the British Conservative Party returned its verdict last week. While it did not find the party guilty of institutional racism, it certainly highlighted distur-

ing trends. What it did not do, however, is end the debate – one that is ever more relevant, as anti-Muslim hatred remains so pervasive not just in the UK but in many non-Muslim-majority countries.

Without delving into every finding, what is clear is that Conservative Party members have, over recent years, uttered a large number of anti-Muslim comments. The party's leadership is at fault, not least Prime Minister Boris Johnson. Back in 2018, before he became PM, Johnson described, in a newspaper article, Muslim women who wear the burqa as looking like "letterboxes" and "bank robbers." He last week again refused to apologize, while admitting he "would not make such remarks now that he was prime minister." This is as close to confessing he was wrong as he will go. Remarkably, the panel determined that "in a democratic society, it should be careful not to be overzealous in its scrutiny or censure of language." Imagine if this had been stated about disparaging comments about black people or Jews. The outcry would be huge.

The double standard very much remains that Muslims, and indeed Arabs, are often fair game and those who indulge in Islamophobia are held to a different standard than those who utter anti-Semitic or racist comments.

Few commented that, at the same time the report was published, Johnson was preparing to welcome the anti-Muslim Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to Downing Street. Orban's record of anti-Semitic comments was also overlooked, even by many of those who had been so vocal on the issue in recent weeks. He is accepted by some because he is a paid-up member of the anti-Semites for Israel club and a warm friend of Benjamin Netanyahu.

Prominent Tory Muslims like Baroness Warsi, the former party chairman, believe that a fully independent investigation is required – not one appointed by the party. This is what happened when the Labour Party stood accused of institutional anti-Semitism. Islamophobia in the Conservative Party should be treated just as seriously. Once again, Islamophobia does not get the attention it

deserves or the acknowledgement of how widespread this issue has become. Similarly, anti-Arab racism rarely gets a mention in mainstream discourse, even though it too is frequent and vicious, if often subsumed in the Islamophobia debate. Imagine the outrage if one of the most revered synagogues in the world was invaded by the armed forces of a foreign state using stun grenades, tear gas and bullets, as happened at Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Conflict fuels hatred. The escalations in the Occupied Territories and Israel over the last two months have seen tensions triggered elsewhere. Once again, outbreaks of Islamophobia and anti-Semitism have soiled the streets of Europe, the US and elsewhere. The bigots feel entitled and empowered to release their pent-up fury on those who have nothing to do with events in the Middle East, as if somehow it is justified in their foul little universe. One incident in London, where six cars drove through a largely Jewish neighborhood with the odious passengers screaming unprintable obscenities against Jews, was one of the worst examples.

It seems these extremists feel empowered by conflicts to vent their hatred. Jewish communities in Europe are not responsible for Israeli crimes, just as Muslims worldwide are not responsible for the crimes of Al-Qaeda or Daesh.

Sadly, such hatred is not confined to the streets, but is also found in newspapers, the broadcast media and, perhaps most notably of all, online. Collective demonization is frequent. The presence of a few overtly anti-Semitic banners at a protest in London led some to demonize all 180,000 protesters as anti-Semitic and being in a pro-Hamas march, as opposed to one devoted to Palestinian rights. High-profile football stars like Paul Pogba and Mo Salah were slammed for showing solidarity with Palestinians, as if supporting Palestinian freedom and rights was a crime. The New York Times ran a front page filled with the images of the 67 Palestinian children recently killed in Gaza, but this was too great a humanization of Palestinians for some, who made a grand show of canceling their subscriptions.

For all the myriad examples of Islamophobia and anti-Ar-

ab attitudes one can pick out in the Western media and in political discourse, what really highlights the scale of the challenge are the policies of various Western governments toward the Arab and Islamic worlds and the overall reaction to events in the Middle East. If an Arab is executed on camera by Daesh, hardly anyone bats an eyelid, but if it is a Westerner then hold the front page. If Americans were being killed in their thousands, do you think US leaders would be seen to say, "We don't do body counts?" But when 2 million Palestinians in Gaza are stuck in an open-air prison under blockade for 14 years in subhuman conditions and the world does nothing, what message does that send about American and European attitudes toward Arabs and Muslims?

American and European racist attitudes are most clearly on show in terms of immigration. Rather than welcoming Syrian refugees fleeing an extraordinarily brutal regime and the uber-extremists of Daesh, many EU states put up barriers. Denmark is even trying to send Syrians back to their country, declaring it to be safe. Donald Trump in 2015 called for a "total and complete shutdown" of Muslims entering the US and he attempted to make this a reality when he became president. The Republican Party has yet to properly distance itself from this policy.

Such positions do not cost politicians their jobs. Muslims see that, on the contrary, more often than not, Muslim-bashing is extremely electorally profitable. This is particularly noticeable in France, where President Emmanuel Macron has upped his rhetoric, describing Islam as a faith "in crisis all over the world." His likely opponent in next year's presidential election, Marine Le Pen, was not to be outdone and recently proclaimed that France was at risk of "civil war."

Holding members of a single political party accountable for their racism is admirable. However, this is just a minor step when true and long-lasting change also has to be driven from the top. It requires leadership to challenge a host of inherited attitudes and prejudices against Muslims and Arabs, as well as others, that still inform policies. At present, it is hard to see where this leadership is coming from.

—Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Pakistani boxing coach pursues Kungfu dream

DNA

BEIJING: "While learning Chinese martial skills or arts one should cultivate fine qualities," noted Shah Syed Israr Ali, a Pakistani boxing coach based in Shenzhen, China, adding that he wished that his trainees would become capable children.

According to China Economic Net (CEN), Shah started practicing martial arts at the age of 4 and got a black belt in Karate at 11. He was fascinated by different martial arts.

To systematically master Chinese Kungfu, he traveled to China many years ago and started learning it from a martial artist in Shandong, China. "Kungfu mirrors morality," Shah mentioned.

Last month, Shah, who is also the General Manager of Shenzhen Ali Comprehensive Fighting Culture Communication Co., Ltd., reached a strategic cooperation with Shandong Chamber of Commerce of Guangdong Province, China, aiming at improving youngsters' moral education in martial arts and spreading Kungfu culture to the world.

"Kungfu and morality are handed down from one generation to another," Shah said. Besides, children are the seeds of the future. The education of children from 4 to 18 is very important. "It's our bounden duty to build a safe society," Shah explained. "Whoever kids come here, I treat them as my own children," Shah told China Economic Net, adding that Chinese kungfu is not only the means of self defense or mental training but also dealt with the system of morality and ethics.

Aisam's journey in French Open ends

WEB DESK

PARIS: Pakistan's Aisam-ul-Haq and his Austrian partner Oliver Marach eliminated from French Open after they lost their match in the second round of Men's double. The duo lost 7-5 and 6-1 against 7th seed Jamie Murray and Bruno Soares. Earlier, Aisam and his partner won their match in the first round against the duo of Santiago González and Marcelo Demoliner.

UN calls on Houthis to allow oil tanker probe

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The UN Security Council has called on Yemen's Houthi rebels to quickly allow UN experts to examine an oil tanker moored off the country's coast loaded with more than one million barrels of crude oil, warning there is a growing risk it could rupture or explode "causing an environmental, economic, maritime and humanitarian catastrophe for Yemen and the region".

The UN's most powerful body reiterated the Houthi rebels are responsible for delaying a technical assessment of the tanker, the FSO Safer, that the United Nations had hoped to deploy in March.

Terrorism rising in Islamabad

From Page 01

steps to ensure the city is safer in the days to come. In a video statement after two policemen were killed in a late-night targeted attack, the federal minister said during the PTI government, the number of police martyrs has reached nine. Rasheed said he is going to Waziristan to review fencing along the Afghan border, which would be completed in two months. "88% work is completed on Pak-Afghan border after which we will also complete fencing on the Iranian border, which is expected to be completed by the year-end," added the minister.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad industrial association led by its President Tariq Sadiq pictures with federal tax ombudsman Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera, secretary FTO secretariat Dr. Arslam Sobcutageen and adviser inland revenue Mehbooba Razaq also seen in the picture. – DNA

Automating tax system necessary for development

The delegation lauded the role of FTO in resolving tax-related complaints and hoped that the institution will go a long way in serving the business community

SHUJAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera on Friday said minimizing human involvement in the tax system through automation will reduce complaints by the taxpayers which is necessary for rapid economic development. Taxes play a key role in making growth sustainable and equitable, especially in the context of the pandemic as more resources are needed to provide relief to the masses, he said. FTO said that and efforts are

underway to resolve complaints, fight tax evasion, discourage under-invoicing as well as over-invoicing, deter misdeclaration and check misuse of various import and export schemes, he said. These are the issues being faced by the organized sector and are sensitive to the industrialization of the manufacturing sector of Pakistan.

Talking to a delegation of Islamabad Industrial Association (IIA) led by its President Tariq Sadiq, Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera said that many underdeveloped countries are still struggling to collect suf-

ficient revenues to finance their development as a minimum of 15 percent of GDP in taxes is a must to meet the basic needs of the citizens and businesses.

Four thousand cases were resolved in 2020 and the business community received refunds worth eight billion rupees with the help of FTO, he said, adding that we can take up suomoto cases, send policy recommendations to FBR, and try to tackle root causes of problems for the benefit of all stakeholders.

He said that eighty percent of cases are being resolved through mutual understanding while im-

plementation of FTO orders by concerned departments is 87 percent, Mr. Sukhera added.

Mr. Tariq Sadiq thanked FTO Mushtaq Ahmed Sukhera, Secretary FTO Secretariat Dr. Arslam Sobcutageen and Adviser Inland Revenue Ms. Mehbooba Razaq and apprised them of some issues confronting industrialists and gave some implementable suggestions to improve the overall investment situation.

SVP of IIA Omais Khattak, VP Shaikat Hayat, Shaikat Masood, Amir Waheed, Usman Khalid, Atifkram, Muhammad Ahmed and Chairman Coordination Malik So-

hail Hussain was also present at the occasion.

They said that sense of fairness is very important in creating a system businessmen are willing to work resulting in reduced tax disputes.

A fair, equitable, and transparent tax system is in everyone's best interest as it removes uncertainty and promotes trust between taxpayers and tax collectors, they added.

The delegation lauded the role of FTO in resolving tax-related complaints and hoped that the institution will go a long way in serving the business community.

Secy, Food Security meets Belarusian agri minister



DNA

BAKU: Mr. Ghufuran Memon, Secretary, National Food Security met with the Minister of Agriculture of Belarus. He was accompanied by Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan and members of the business delegation from Pakistan representing fruits/vegetables, fertil-

iser, dairy products and auto parts. While appreciating the warm hospitality of the Belarusian government, Mr Memon shared his first hand experiences of the exhibition, several meetings with relevant partners in Minsk and assured to work for solidifying bilateral cooperation especially in the Agricultural Sector.

The honourable Minister briefed the

delegation members on the overall economic portfolio of the country, priority sectors for cooperation and expressed readiness to follow up implementation on various agreements and MOUs already signed between the two countries. He showed willingness on the part of Belarusian side to host the next round of Joint Working Group session during July 2021.

Pakistan squad for West Indies tour announced

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan cricket selectors have recalled four experienced players and included uncapped Azam Khan in the squads for the tours of England and West Indies. The side will play three ODIs and as many T20Is in England from 8-20 July, before taking on world champions West Indies in five T20Is that will be followed by two Tests.

Middle-order batsman Haris Sohail has been named in the ODI side, while Imad Wasim has returned to the T20I side. Fast bowlers Mohammad Abbas and Naseem Shah have returned to the Test side. Pacer Tabish Khan, who made his Test debut in second Test against Zimbabwe, has been sidelined. Yasir Shah's inclusion is subject to fitness as the wrist spinner is yet to fully recover from the knee injury that sidelined him from the Zimbabwe Tests. The selectors have retained leg-spinner Zahid Mahmood along with left-arm spinner Nauman Ali and off-spinner Sajid Khan for the Jamaica Tests. Uncapped Saud Shakeel has also reclaimed his spot after missing South Africa ODIs due to an injury. Salman Ali Agha, who has lost his Test spot, has been called-up for ODIs. Fakhar Zaman has maintained his place in the original squad after being drafted as an additional player for Zimbabwe T20Is following a stellar performance in South Africa. Quetta Gladiators' Azam Khan, the 22-year-old hard-hitting batsman, is the new face in the T20I squad.

PCB collaborates with Facebook

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The PCB has collaborated with Facebook to bring the live-action of PSL season six for the global audience via the platform's Paid Online Events. PCB will monetize the matches through Facebook Paid Online Events where fans will have to pay a nominal one-time sign-up fee to access the live broadcast. The broadcast can then be watched anytime. "The online events will be acces-

sible globally except in the USA, Canada, Caribbean, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Sub Saharan Africa, the Middle East, Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, SL, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Maldives; where the PCB has existing rights agreements with international media partners," PCB said in a statement. PCB Head of Broadcast Rights and Business Development, Shoaib Naveed: "Providing fans ease of access and enhancing the viewership of Pakistan cricket globally.

Bad days over; now time for growth: PM

From Page 01

The prime minister, who earlier unveiled the plaque to launch work on two-lane road, said the incumbent government had constructed three times more road comparing the previous one which used to known only for constructing the roads. He said within days of assuming the government, the opposition and media started questioning the Naya Pakistan and also made notions about government's failure. He said the government also faced criticism from the opposition which were poised to topple the government unless their leaders were given NRO.

"My own people had to face tough time. The media also gave an impression as Naya Pakistan can emerge by switching a button," he said. The prime minister said it always took time to change the status quo as the mafias resisted any such movement to protect their interests.

Similarly, the opposition also yearned for the government's failure to protect their laundered money and properties abroad. He said rule of law was the only factor behind the nations' success as all the developed countries had no room for mafias and everyone was accountable before law.

He said Pakistan sailed through the COVID situation owing to the government's prudent policies contrary to India, despite the fact that both the countries had almost identical population density and weather conditions.

He said government took a year to stabilize the economy and in second year it was hit by pandemic but it managed well by maintaining a balance between the lives and livelihood. Now, the prime minister said as the economy had made a turnaround, the government was focusing the agriculture sector by ensuring timely and reasonable payments of crops to the farmers who also got bumper crop this year.

Bilawal lashes out at PTI, PML-N

From Page 01

Pakistan received \$1.25 billion from International Monetary Fund (IMF) while another \$1.5 billion were received from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to fight against coronavirus pandemic. Where were these funds used? Bilawal Bhatto further demanded PM Imran Khan to tell nation as to where did he spend \$200 million received from the World Bank as well as the billions of rupees deposited by Pakistanis in the Prime Minister's Corona Relief Fund.

Additionally, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari said "Raiwand's prime minister" Nawaz Sharif was sent abroad despite being convicted, as he lashed out at the ruling PTI and PML-N. "If the president (Asif Ali Zardari) is from Nawabshah, he remains on medical bed despite trumped-up charges," the PPP chairman said, during a press conference in Islamabad. Bilawal said Zardari remains in Pakistan – moving from one doctor to another – despite his children telling him to go abroad and seek treatment. "I want to ask the prime minister (Imran Khan) that what sort of accountability is being implemented in the country?" he asked, adding that if the premier's friends are being alleged of a crime, no action is taken against them.

He went on to say that despite accusations against the prime minister and his sister, no action is taken against them either.

However, if the sister of a former president from Nawabshah is blamed for something, "then she is dragged to jail from her hospital bed", he said, referring to PPP leader Faryal Talpur. The PPP chairman then continued to lash out at the PTI-led government over its standards of accountability. "This system is a mockery of the Constitution," he said. "If the Opposition leader is from Lahore (Shahbaz Sharif), he is awarded bail, and if the Opposition leader hails from Sukkur (Khurshid Shah), he is denied the right and treated like a ping-pong ball, sent back and forth from NAB courts to the Supreme Court," Bilawal said. The PPP chairman claimed the authorities were repeatedly blackmailing Shah's children and his wife.

'Uyghur Tribunal' hears testimony of alleged abuses

The tribunal is chaired by prominent human rights lawyer Geoffrey Nice, who led the prosecution of ex-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and has worked on several cases brought before the ICC

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: A London-based people's tribunal investigating whether China's treatment of its minority Uyghur population amounts to genocide is hearing testimony from witnesses. The "Uyghur Tribunal" has no state backing and any judgement would not be binding on any government, but it has drawn a furious response from Beijing, which branded the hearings a "machine producing lies". The first hearings take place over four days, from Friday to Monday, and are expected to draw dozens of witnesses. A second session is expected in September. The nine UK-based jurors of the tribunal, including lawyers and

human rights experts, intend to publish a report in December on whether China is guilty of genocide. Organisers hope the process of publicly laying out evidence of an alleged state-orchestrated campaign of repression against the Uyghurs, a largely Muslim ethnic group, in China's northwest Xinjiang province will compel international action against the country's authorities.

The tribunal is chaired by prominent human rights lawyer Geoffrey Nice, who led the prosecution of ex-Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and has worked on several cases brought before the International Criminal Court (ICC). It was set up at the request of the World Uyghur Congress, an international organisation of exiled

Uyghurs. The tribunal's organisers said Chinese authorities had ignored requests to participate in the hearings.

According to the United Nations, at least one million Uyghurs have been detained in internment camps in Xinjiang, which borders eight countries including Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

Critics of the camps, including the United Kingdom and the United States, say inmates at the network of facilities have been subjected to human rights violations including arbitrary detention, forced labour, torture, forced sterilisation and the separation of children from their jailed parents. Ahead of giving testimony to the tribunal via video link, three Uyghurs who fled from China to Turkey, described their

treatment by Chinese authorities. One of them, named Rozi, said she was forced into an abortion when six and a half months pregnant. Her youngest son has been detained since 2015, when he was just 13, and she hopes the tribunal's work will help lead to his freedom. "I want my son to be freed as soon as possible," she said. "I want to see him be set free." Another, a former doctor, spoke of draconian birth control policies.

And a third, a former detainee, alleged he was "tortured day and night" by Chinese soldiers while imprisoned in the remote border region. China denies the allegations of abuse at internment camps and claims the facilities are "re-education" centres. Officials insist that mass "educa-

tion and training" is necessary in Xinjiang in order to fight what they call the "three evil forces of extremism, separatism and terrorism", and boost economic development there.

In March, the tribunal was among four UK entities and nine individuals sanctioned by Beijing for raising concerns about the treatment of the Uyghurs. China has also publicly condemned the tribunal. "It is not even a real tribunal or special court, but only a special machine producing lies," foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said last week. "It was founded by people with ulterior motives and carries no weight or authority. It is just a clumsy public opinion show under the guise of law."

Briefs

France opens to EU travellers

PARIS: France said Friday it will fully open its borders to EU residents from June 9, but even vaccinated travellers from "orange" Britain and the United States still need a negative Covid test. Visitors from the EU will not have to provide a negative antigen or PCR test if they have had a full course of one of the four vaccines authorised by the bloc. The eased rules also apply to seven countries deemed "green" - Australia, South Korea, Israel, Japan, Lebanon, New Zealand and Singapore. The measures are part of plans to start easing border controls and help France's crucial tourism industry as the country emerges from its third coronavirus lockdown.

People coming from green zones will also no longer have to give a compelling reason for entering France. "We have to reconcile freedom of mobility with the need for security," Tourism Minister Jean-Baptiste Lemoyne said on BFM television. - APP

HK police out in force

FOREIGN DESK

HONG KONG: Thousands of police were deployed in Hong Kong on Friday and the organiser of the territory's now-banned annual vigil of China's Tiananmen Square crackdown arrested, as the authorities tried to prevent people from gathering for any kind of remembrance of the events of 1989.

Hong Kong usually holds a mass vigil to remember those killed when soldiers stormed the square, which was packed with protesters calling for democracy, but police have banned the events for the past two years blaming the coronavirus pandemic. This year is the first to be held since China imposed national security legislation on Hong Kong that punishes anything Beijing deems subversion, secession, "terrorism" or collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison.

Police have not clarified whether commemorating the crackdown, which has been all but erased from history in the mainland, will breach the law, but in a statement late on Thursday said any gathering posed "considerable threats to the public health and lives" and warned that those taking part in "unauthorised assemblies" could face as many as five years in prison. "Police will deploy adequate manpower in relevant locations on the day and take resolute action to enforce the law, including making arrests," the police said.

UN urged for alternative funding for Hariri tribunal

WEB DESK

BEIRUT: Lebanon has asked the UN secretary-general in a letter to urgently explore ways of financing the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL), tasked with investigating the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, in light of funding difficulties. "The Government of Lebanon would be grateful to Your Excellency for urgently exploring different and alternative means of financing the Tribunal with the Security Council and Member States," Hassan Diab, the country's caretaker prime minister, said in the letter on Friday.

An exclusive report by Reuters news agency last week revealed that the UN tribunal, created by a 2007 UN Security Council resolution, had run out of funding amid Lebanon's economic and political crisis, threatening plans for future trials. The tribunal, which is 51 percent funded by voluntary contributions and 49 percent by the Lebanese government, could close after July if the funding shortage is not resolved. Last year the tribunal, based in the Hague, convicted Salim Jamil Ayyash, a former member of the Shia movement, Hezbollah, in absentia for the bombing that killed veteran Sunni Muslim politician Hariri and 21 others. That ruling is being appealed.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Naseebullah Bazai, presenting photo album to Sheikh Ali Abdullah Thani al Thani, member of the Qatar's Royal Family containing pictorial coverage of the Qatar parliamentary delegation visiting Pakistan at Islamabad International Airport. - DNA

Baku urges int'l steps against Armenia after mine blast

Thus, at about 11 o'clock on June 4, two media workers and one government official were killed and four people were hospitalized with various injuries

DNA

BAKU: Prosecutor-General Kamran Aliyev has urged influential international agencies to take measures against Armenia after a mine blast killed two journalists and one official in liberated Kalbajar region on June 4. Aliyev made the remarks in an official letter addressed to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch. He said that the Armenian armed forces continue to commit criminal acts against Azerbaijani citizens by mining Azerbaijani territories in gross violation of the basic norms and principles of international humanitarian law, including the

requirements of the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

"Thus, at about 11 o'clock on June 4, two media workers and one government official were killed and four people were hospitalized with various injuries when a bus carrying workers of TV channels and news agencies sent to Kalbajar region to perform their official duties was hit by an anti-tank mine on route to Susuzluq village," the letter said. Aliyev assessed Armenia's refusal to provide maps of mines, which Armenia has planted on Azerbaijan's liberated territories for many years, as a continuation of Armenia's provocations against the Azerbaijani people. He demanded that Armenia complies with its obligations under international law. "Azerbaijan's Military Prosecutor's Office has initiated le-

Azerbaijan calls on Armenia to hand over minefield maps

BAKU: Azerbaijani Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov called on Armenia to hand over minefield maps of the liberated territories, Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov tweeted. "Deeply saddened to learn that 3 Azerbaijani civilians, including 2 journalists have been killed in a landmine blast in Kalbajar district of Azerbaijan," Bayramov wrote. "We call on Armenia to hand over minefield maps. Every day they continue to refuse this request, more lives are endangered!" he added. Employees of Azerbaijan's AzTV channel and AZERTAC news agency were killed as a result of the mine explosion in Kalbajar district, a source in

gal proceedings into the case under the relevant Criminal Code articles and intensive operational and investigative measures are currently being taken," the letter said.

He noted that Armenia's refusal to provide maps and other necessary data that can save lives is a gross violation of the Azerbaijani population's rights fixed in Articles

2 and 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, Article 1 of Protocol No 1, Articles 2 (1) and 3 (2) of Protocol No 4.

Aliyev said that 18 Azerbaijani civilians were killed and 24 were wounded by mine explosions since the signing of the trilateral statement by Azerbaijan, Russia, and Armenia in November 2020.

In conclusion, the prosecutor-general called on reputable international organizations and the world community to take measures against the Armenian leadership within the limits of their powers in connection with the committed crimes. State-run Azertag's news agency's correspondent Maharram Ibrahimov and state TV channel AZTV's cameraman Siraj Abishov and Arif Aliyev, a deputy representa-

tive of the Kalbajar executive authorities in the administrative-territorial district of Susuzluq village, were killed as the crew vehicle exploded on an anti-tank mine explosion in Kalbajar's Susuzluq village on June 4. Four others have been hospitalized with various degrees of injuries.

Azerbaijan Media Development Agency has said that the two journalists who lost their lives, had been stationed in Kalbajar to cover Armenian-inflicted destruction in the liberated lands. Labor and Social Protection Ministry Spokesman Fazil Talibov said that the killed journalists will be presented martyr status. Armenia has refused to provide maps of hundreds of thousands of mines it planted on the Azerbaijani territories during three decades of occupation.

Vietnam approves Sinopharm vaccine

HANOI: Vietnam's Ministry of Health announced on Friday that it has approved China's Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine for emergency use. The approval was signed by Vietnam's deputy health minister Truong Quoc Cuong on Thursday, making the inactivated vaccine of Sinopharm the third COVID-19 vaccine approved by the country for emergency use, following the approvals of AstraZeneca and Sputnik V vaccines.

Vietnam's National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology will be responsible for cooperating with vaccine manufacturers to ensure the production of the vaccine and its safety and quality, according to local media VnExpress. The announcement came as the country is facing its worst wave of COVID-19 infections since late April. As of 6:00 a.m. local time Friday, Vietnam has reported 5,007 locally transmitted cases since April 27, taking the total number of local cases to 6,577, according to the Ministry of Health. The Sinopharm COVID-19 vaccine was validated by the World Health Organization in early May for emergency use. - APP

527 corona patients critical in Kazakhstan

DNA

NUR SULTAN: 24,797 (24,069 coronavirus positive and 728 coronavirus negative) people are being treated for COVID-19 in Kazakhstan as of today, the Telegram Channel of the Interdepartmental Commission for preventing COVID-19 spread reads. 9,208 patients are staying at hospitals, 572 of them are in critical condition, 124 in extremely critical condition, while 75 are on life support. 7 died from COVID-19-like pneumonia. As of June 2 Kazakhstan recorded 103 new COVID-19-like pneumonia cases, coronavirus2020.kz reads. Since August 1 Kazakhstan recorded 55,580 cases, 927 deaths and 51,469 recoveries from COVID-19-like pneumonia. Kazakhstan capital and Karaganda region still in COVID-19 'red zone' Kazakhstan capital and Karaganda region are still in the COVID-19 'red zone' as of today, June 4, the Telegram Channel of the Interdepartmental Commission for preventing COVID-19 spread reads. The city of Almaty, Atyrau, Akmol, West Kazakhstan, Kostanay and Pavlodar regions remain in the 'yellow zone', while Shymkent city, Almaty, Aktobe, East Kazakhstan, Zhambyl, Kyzylorda, Mangistau, Turkestan and North Kazakhstan region are in the 'green zone'. As earlier reported, over the last 24 hours Kazakhstan detected 1,319 new COVID-19 cases more.

EU ban on Belarus flights criticized

Paris: A leading airline association criticised Friday an EU ban on flying in Belarusian airspace as politicising air safety. EU states have been furious since Belarus last month forced a Ryanair flight crossing its airspace to land in Minsk on the pretext of a bomb threat in order to arrest an opposition activist. An initial warning to avoid Belarusian airspace by the EU's aviation safety body EASA was strengthened on Wednesday into a formal ban for EU airlines.

"Aviation safety must never be politicised," the head of the International Air Transport Association, Willie Walsh, said in a statement. "Banning European aircraft from using Belarusian airspace with a Safety Directive is also a politicisation of aviation safety" that Walsh called "a retrograde and disappointing development". IATA, which has condemned the forced landing of the Ryanair aircraft flying between two EU countries, called on EASA to rescind its order. "Two wrongs do not make a right. Politics should never interfere with the safe operation of aircraft and politicians should never use aviation safety as a cover to pursue political or diplomatic agendas," said Walsh. - APP

Emirates restarts flights to Phuket

DNA

KARACHI: Emirates has announced it will resume four weekly services to the resort island of Phuket from 2nd July 2021, with the re-opening of the popular destination to international tourists. Furthermore, those who are vaccinated against COVID-19 will enjoy hassle-free travel, with no quarantine on arrival. With measures in place to ensure a safe reboot of Phuket's tourism industry, customers travelling to the destination known for its sprawling beaches and white sands, will enjoy quarantine-free

travel to one of the world's most-loved holiday spots. The Dubai-Phuket route will be operated with a Boeing 777-300ER in a three-class configuration, offering premium services in First and Business Class as well as Economy Class. Emirates flight EK378 will depart Dubai on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at 03:00hrs, arriving at Phuket International Airport at 12:30hrs the same day. The return flight, EK379, will depart Phuket at 00:10 hrs, on Wednesdays, Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays, arriving in Dubai at 03:05hrs the same day (all times are local).



NABLUS: Several Palestinian protesters were injured in clashes with the Israeli occupation forces in the flashpoint Jabal Sabih mount in the occupied West Bank village of Beita. - DNA

Kazakhstan marked Day of National Symbols

DNA

NUR-SULTAN: Kazakhstan marks Day of National Symbols National symbols of the Republic of Kazakhstan are the distinctive signs of our state. These include the National Flag, the National Emblem and the National Anthem. On June 4, 1992, the first President Nursultan Nazarbayev signed the laws on the National symbols of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and on June 6, in Alma-Ata, a new flag and a coat of arms were raised over the residence of the President and the building of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kazakh-



stan. This important day for the country has been marked since adoption on June 4, 2007 of the Constitutional Law "On State Symbols of the Republic of Kazakhstan". On February 8, 2016, by the res-

olution of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the rules for celebrating the Day of State Symbols were approved. The National Flag of the Republic of Kazakhstan is a rectangular blue cloth with an image in the center of the sun with rays and a soaring eagle under them. There is a vertical stripe with a national ornament at the flagpole. The image of the sun, its rays, the eagle and the national ornament are the color of gold. The National Emblem of the Republic of Kazakhstan has the shape of a circle and is an image of a shanyrak on a blue background, from which rays diverge in all directions in the form of sun rays. To the right and left of the shanyrak there are images of mythical winged horses - tulpars. In the upper part there is a five-pointed star, and in the lower part - the inscription "Kazakhstan".

Uzbekistan to host a national Olympiad in financial literacy

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: A press briefing was held at the Banking and Finance Academy of the Republic of Uzbekistan (BFA) on the Republican Olympiad in financial literacy among students of secondary schools, lycueums, colleges and undergraduate students of higher educational institutions. The Olympiad is organized by the Banking and Finance Academy together with the Central Bank of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Special Education, the Ministry of Public Education, the Agency for Youth Affairs, the

Youth Union and the National Bank for Foreign Economic Activity. The main purpose of the Olympiad in accordance with Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan is to increase the level of financial literacy, namely, to popularize knowledge, stimulate educational and research activities in the field of finance among students; increasing the level of theoretical knowledge and the formation of practical skills in the use of methods of planning budgets and savings, control of their income and expenses; the formation of a financial culture and the development of skills in maintaining financial discipline.

Tokayev: Ecology directly affects growth of Kazakhstan

DNA

NUR SULTAN: Kassym-Jomart Tokayev sent a welcome message to the participants of the ECOJER International Congress "Shape a sustainable future", which is being held online. The address of the Head of State was read by the Special representative of the President for international cooperation Yerzhan Kazykhan, press secretary of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Berik Uali announced this on Facebook. Dear participants of the Congress, dear guests! Ladies and gentlemen! Please accept my sincere congratulations on the opening of

the First International Ecological Congress ECOJER! Improving the environment is a priority in the activities of our state. The government of Kazakhstan is carrying out consistent reforms aimed at harmonizing environmental legislation with the standards of the OECD countries and applying the world's best practices. The pandemic recalled the critical importance of the environment, which directly affects the rate of economic growth, social well-being and the quality of life of citizens. According to experts, poor air quality slows down economic growth and leads to losses of Kazakhstan's GDP at the level of 1.5-2% annually. The concept of sustainable development provides for

the harmonious interaction of the "ecology-economy-society" triad. We cannot postpone the solution of environmental problems. The



global energy transition, development of innovations, digitalization are changing the conjuncture of world markets and require new approaches to ensure sustainable economic growth. Kazakhstan has rich natural resources. This is our undoubted asset. At the same time, our country is faced with the task of not only extracting raw materials, but also developing their deep processing, taking into account the principles of a circular economy and introduction of the latest technologies. Kazakhstan actively supports mutually beneficial international cooperation in the field of climate change. Last December, at the Climate Ambition Summit, I announced Kazakhstan's commit-

ment to achieving carbon neutrality by 2060. The government has already begun to formulate a long-term development strategy aimed at achieving goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and decarbonize the economy. I welcome the creation of a new dialogue platform that brings together the efforts of the public, business and government to achieve sustainable development, solve environmental problems, and improve environmental culture. I hope that holding meetings of the Congress on the eve of World Environment Day will become a good tradition. I wish all the participants fruitful work and success in environmental protection! reads the welcome address.

Briefs

Indian, South African variants detected

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Indian and South African variants of the novel coronavirus have been detected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provincial health department confirmed Friday. According to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Secretary Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, the Indian variant of the coronavirus was confirmed in a patient. Meanwhile, two patients who tested positive for the virus were found to be infected with the South African variant. Shah said that all three patients had arrived in Pakistan from the United Arab Emirates a few days ago. "All three infected patients are residents of Peshawar," Shah said, adding that the samples of 12 more patients had been sent to Islamabad for testing. Providing further details about the infected patients, the provincial health secretary said that person who has been infected with the Indian variant of the coronavirus is 41 years of age, while the other two patients – who have been infected with the South African variant of the virus – are 38 and 18 years of age, respectively.

Pakistan wants peace, stability in region

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said Pakistan desires peace and stability in the region. In a statement on Friday, he said Pakistan has played positive and constructive role in the Afghan peace process but the irresponsible statements of Afghan security adviser are really regrettable which only serve the interests of spoilers. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said he has invited his Afghan counterpart to visit Pakistan in order to hold discussion on the Afghan peace process and the future strategy. The minister said Pakistan is focusing on economic diplomacy to address the challenges of poverty, inflation and unemployment. He said we need to focus on economic integration, investment, and trade and job creation. He said geo-economics is the foremost priority of our foreign policy as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Pak-Egypt exercise "Sky Guards-1" concludes

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The first ever Pakistan-Egypt two weeks long Joint Air Defence Exercise "Sky Guards-1" concluded at Cairo, Egypt. Commander Army Air Defence Command (AAD) Lieutenant General Hamood Uz Zaman Khan witnessed the final phase of live firing exercise and closing ceremony of the Pakistan-Egypt Joint Air Defence Exercise "Sky Guards-1", said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release here received. The troops of Pakistan Army Air Defence, Pakistan Air Force Air Defence and Egyptian Air Defence Forces participated in the first ever exercise of this kind. The two weeks long exercise was focused on the integration, synchronization, information gathering, interoperability and decision making of committing the Air Defence assets in a battle to offer an aggressive and prompt response to hostile air threat. The Chief Guest also witnessed live fire of different weapons including fire of Iglu missile by Pakistan Army Air Defence and Crotale missile by Pakistan Air Force Air Defence.

Sanjrani all praise for UK Pakistan Business Council



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani posing for a picture with members of the UK-Pakistan Business Council during awards ceremony held at Islamabad Serena Hotel. Also seen in the picture are Nasir Miraz, President RCCI, Zahid Latif Khan, Chairman REIT, and Khurshid Barlas the chief organizer of the event. (More coverage of the event in the Monday's daily Islamabad POST) – DNA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate congratulated the UK Pakistan Business Council for arranging the wonderful evening to celebrate the successes and achievements of talented individuals. Sanjrani remarked that there could have been no better way for the Business Council's

flagship launch in Pakistan. The Business Council operates as an effective means of communicating the latest on goings and insight into the trade and business activities between Pakistan and the UK. Such business intel helps the trade and business fraternity to identify common ground and to explore opportunities and the ways and means to

make effective and promising investments, and enhance business-to-business relations. Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani further said that Pakistan and the UK share a hefty trade volume at around £2.3 billion. However, it is important to understand that it is still far from the potential we can reach between both countries. The Business Council can play a vital role in achieving a significant increase in the trade volume.

Sanjrani informed the participants that "Due to friendly policies of the Government for overseas Pakistanis, investment in Pakistan is increasing by the day". Talking about CPEC Sanjrani called attention of the business communities around the

world of the immense investment potential of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. He further said that CPEC investment opportunities span across a multitude of industries, and all kinds of business opportunities are available under this multi-billion-dollar project. Sanjrani expressed his satisfaction that UK has remained a strong sup-

porter of Pakistan in securing GSP plus status from the EU. Its trade and commerce policies are friendly and in favour of Pakistan. These are all positive conditions for the entrepreneurs and business community from both sides to come forward and utilise the resourcefulness of the UK Pakistan Business Council to their advantage.

Govt makes payment to IPPS

Payment transaction of 40% to 20 IPPs amounting to Rs. 89.2 bn was equally divided in cash 5 years'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: In compliance with the directives of the Prime Minister and under guidance of the Finance Minister, the Government has completed the first payment transaction of 40% to 20 IPPs amounting to Rs. 89.2 billion equally divided in cash 5 years' Sukuk and 10 years' PIBs. Finance Division has completed this transaction in coordination with relevant organizations / departments including State Bank of Pakistan and Power Division.

48 Indian variant cases land in Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The alarm bells are ringing high in Karachi as a single flight from a gulf country has brought down 48 passengers who have tested positive for Covid-19 upon their arrival here. The health authorities fear they might carry the Indian variant. According to sources, 48 passengers who boarded a flight to Karachi from Oman were reported positive when their rapid corona tests were conducted at the airport. The health authorities suspect the positive passengers might be carrying the most dreaded Indian variant as they were coming from a Gulf country where a large number of the Indian diaspora is living. The health authorities have sent their samples of corona tests to the laboratory for examining the gene sequencing. However, most of the positive passengers hail from the south and east of Karachi. Some positive cases belong to Larkana and Hyderabad. While the rest hail from other parts of the country. Before this, the gene sequencing was done on the returnees of Iraq and Oman who were positive and it was found that they were carrying the Indian variant. The authorities stressed the need to keep a vigilant eye on people who are coming down here from abroad. The authorities have restricted these travelers at their homes so that they would not spread the virus in the community. Up until now, the India variant is regarded as the fastest spreading and most aggressive kind of coronavirus as its transmissibility rate is extremely high. The uptick in Indian variant cases is taking the provincial government off guard. The Ministry of National Health Services has asked the airlines to strictly implement SOPs for inbound travelers, including presenting a mandatory test report from an authentic lab in the country of origin.

Pakistan lauds US' provision of supplies

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office has appreciated the US government's provision of essential supplies including 685,000 KN-95 masks, fifty thousand protective goggles, two hundred and fifty thousand diagnostic Kits and one thousand Pulse Oximeters to Pakistan. In a statement, Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said earlier the US government had also provided 200 ventilators to Pakistan for Covid-19 patients. The spokesperson said this timely gesture is part of the continued assistance that the US has provided to Pakistan to support our Covid relief and prevention efforts.

Compliant rating in 31 FATF recommendations achieved

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Asia Pacific Group (APG) on Money Laundering has published results of Pakistan's second Mutual Evaluation follow-up Report on 2 June 2021. As per the report, Pakistan has achieved compliant/largely compliant rating in 31 out of 40 FATF Recommendations in Technical Compliance. These results prove the sincerity along with resolve of the Government in complying with FATF requirements. These results are also a manifestation of the irreversibility and sustainability of the complete process in bringing Pakistan at par with Global

AML/CFT standards. These results are manifestation of a whole of government approach adopted to achieve the same. An upgrade of 21 Recommendations within this short period of time remains unprecedented in FATF history. FATF's Mutual Evaluation Report (MER) of jurisdictions is assessed in two domains i.e., Technical Compliance/Legal Instruments (40 FATF Recommendations) and Demonstration of Effectiveness (11 Immediate Outcomes). Pakistan's MER was adopted in October 2019 in which Pakistan was rated compliant and largely compliant in 10 out of 40 FATF Recommendations for the Technical

Compliance. After adoption of MER, Pakistan was placed under Post Observation Period by FATF which expired in February 2021. During the said period, Pakistan carried out major legal reforms with the enactment of 14 Federal Laws & 3 Provincial Laws along with relevant rules and regulations. The laws not only strengthened the systems in Pakistan but also brought in the sustainability. Pakistan submitted its report to FATF on its Technical Compliance on 1st October 2020. APG has acknowledged that Pakistan has made notable progress in addressing the Technical Compliance deficiencies identified in its MER and has been re-rated compli-

ant/largely compliant in 31 out of 40 FATF Recommendations. Pakistan has also submitted re-rating requests to APG on four more recommendations in next follow-up report which are under review by APG. The technical upgrades achieved will help manifest achievement of effectiveness in 11 immediate outcomes of the APG MER process. As a result of this substantial progress, APG has decided to move Pakistan from enhanced follow-up; and Pakistan will continue to report back to the APG on progress to strengthen its implementation of AML/CFT measures.

ASEAN officials meet Myanmar junta leader

JAKARTA: Representatives of the Association of South-east Asian Nations met with Myanmar's junta leader on Friday, six weeks after an emergency regional summit on the country's crisis following a military coup drew promises of progress toward a solution but produced no tangible results. State broadcaster MRTV showed Senior General Min Aung Hlaing meeting with Brunei Second Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof and ASEAN Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi, but provided only a broad outline of their discussions. Earlier this week, an Indo-

nesian diplomat said the delegation's purpose was to seek Myanmar's approval of an ASEAN special envoy for the crisis, who is yet to be named. He said the choice of the envoy involved both sides, making progress slow. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media on the issue. Friday's meeting received a cool response from members of Myanmar's opposition shadow government. The National Unity Government said at a rare online news conference that ASEAN should meet with them as well, not just the military. – DNA

Saudi Arabia to approve Chinese vaccine: Envoy WHO has also approved China's Sinovac Covid vaccine

DNA

KARACHI: Saudi Arabia's Ambassador in Pakistan Nawaf Saeed Al-Malky called on Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah at the CM House on Friday. During the meeting, CM Murad said most of the citizens are being administered Chinese vaccine in Pakistan. Pakistanis are upset over non-inclusion of the Chinese vaccine in the Kingdom's list of approved vaccine for Hajj and Umrah pilgrims, he added. Saying that the World Health Organization (WHO) has also approved China's

Sinovac Covid vaccine, the chief minister asked the envoy to allow the Chinese vaccine to be administered to Hajj pilgrims. "We will get China's vaccine included in our list," the CM House as quoted the envoy as assuring the chief minister. Saudi Consul General in Karachi Bandar Al Dayal was also present in the meeting. A delegation of doctors of King Salman Medical Centre accompanied the Chinese vaccine in the Kingdom. The Saudi doctors will set up medical camps for poor patients' treatment in Karachi and Shikarpur and will also conduct open heart and eye surgeries.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain & Minister of State for Climate Change, Zartaj Gul cutting ribbon to inaugurate Photographic Exhibition organized by Directorate of Electronic Media & Publications in connection with World Environment Day at Pak-China Friendship Center. – APP

Chinese medical team in Pakistan for CPEC project

All of them are experienced in epidemic prevention and control, and patients' treatment as they have been the frontline workers during the fight against COVID-19

DNA

BEIJING: A Chinese medical team has been sent to Pakistan to serve the work staff and construction of Karot Hydropower Project, under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). According to Gwadar Pro, the team consists of one doctor-in-charge of the Critical Care Medicine and five nurses, which was

the third one sent by the First People's Hospital in Yichang, Hubei Province. All of them are experienced in epidemic prevention and control, and patients' treatment as they have been the frontline workers during the fight against COVID-19. They will rotate the teammates who were sent here early and improve the samples collecting and testing capacity for nucleic acid tests at the construction site. The nine-member team had to

conduct COVID-19 nucleic acid tests for about 4,000 workers every two weeks. "We once collected samples and gave nucleic acid tests up to over 900 cases at most one day in March 2021," said Yu Lianghuan, the nursing supervisor of the First People's Hospital in Yichang, who had served at the Karot's site for a year. The third team, along with the first two medical teams, was also invited by China Three Gorges

Corporation (CTG) to serve workers of Karot and its construction. These medical workers have played an important role in the fight against the novel coronavirus pandemic since May 2020, ensuring the smooth progress of Karot project. They have been praised by Pakistani ambassador to China Moin ul Haque, CTG, and China and Pakistan's departments in charge of construction. Karot hydropower project, in-

vested by CTG, is one of the priority projects of CPEC. With a total investment of 1.74 billion U.S. dollars, it will solve the power supply bottleneck in Pakistan and provide sustainable and stable energy support. China Three Gorges Corporation once donated two batches of supplies to Pakistan in order to help Pakistanis contain COVID-19 in 2020, which included 750,000 surgical masks, ventilators and protection gowns.