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UK PM Boris Johnson condoles over the loss of lives in Ghotki

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Briefs

Public will not be fooled

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday said that Imran Khan's wanting another term to solve problems is joke with the country and now masses will not be fooled by false claims of economic progress. Chairman PPP, in his statement, criticized economic policies of the government and said that Imran Khan came into power with a promise to provide 10 million jobs but in reality his government snatched employment opportunities from the common man.

Ashrafi urges public to get vaccinated

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi said Monday ignorant people are stopping others from getting vaccinated against coronavirus. Ashrafi, speaking to the media, said the coronavirus vaccine "does not contain contents that violate Islamic principles," as he appealed to the masses to get themselves inoculated. "The ulama have issued fatwas regarding the vaccine and are repeatedly urging people to get themselves inoculated," he said, adding prominent clerics have also received the vaccine.

Maryam slams govt over train tragedy

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz Sharif has condemned the present regime which has failed to accept its responsibility while witnessing eight major train accidents in its past three years in power. While tweeting on the fatal train tragedy in Dherki on Monday, Maryam said how cruel and tyrant people are ruling over Pakistan. Despite the fact that eight major train accidents occurred during its three years in power.

Ghotki: over 50 killed as trains collide

Rescue operation under way; Minister Azam Swati orders immediate probe

NAZIR SIYAL

GHOTKI: Two express trains collided on Monday in Sindh's Ghotki and killed over 40 passengers, while more than 100 others have been injured, said police and rescue officials. Federal Minister for Railways Azam Swati who reached the spot soon after the incident, has ordered immediate inquiry, upon the directions of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. The Millat Express derailed and the Sir Syed Express train hit it soon afterwards, railways officials confirmed, saying that the collision took place between the Raiti and Obaro railway stations. A rescue operation is under way at the site of the crash and the injured are being shifted to hospitals. Ghotki SSP Umar Tufail confirmed the death toll and told Geo News that the deceased have been transported to surrounding hospitals. He said he expected the toll to shoot up as there were still mangled train compartments that rescuers had not been able to access despite the passage of hours since the accident in Ghotki.

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President, PM express shock

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday expressed deep shock over the train accident near Daharki in Ghotki district that killed at least 30 people. In their separate messages, both extended sympathies with the victims of the train crash. President Alvi expressed sorrow over the loss of lives and prayed for the departed souls to rest in peace. The Prime Minister in a tweet on Monday said he was "shocked by the horrific train accident at Ghotki early this morning leaving 30 passengers dead". He asked the Railway Minister to reach the site and ensure medical assistance to injured and also support for families of the dead. He also ordered a comprehensive investigation into the railway safety faultlines.



RAWALPINDI: Ambassador of Romania Nicolae Goia in a meeting with Federal Minister for Defence Production Zobaida Jalal, on Monday. - DNA

Next elections under new system: Fawad

The minister said the govt had proposed forty-nine amendments in the Electoral Reforms Bill

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry has said that the next general election will take place in Pakistan in 2023 under a new mechanism to ensure transparency in elections. He was talking to the media along with Minister for

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'Saad Rafique destroyed Railways'

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry said Monday Federal Minister for Railways should not be punished for former railways minister Saad Rafique's mistakes after the two express trains collided in Sindh's Ghotki - leaving at least 41 passengers dead and over 100 injured. "I cannot immediately comment on the cause of the crash... rescue operations are underway at the site and a preliminary investigation has been launched," Fawad said while speaking during a television program.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan administering Polio Vaccine to a child to inaugurate National Polio Vaccination Campaign. - DNA

Japan envoy grieved over loss of lives

ASNAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: MATSUDA KUNINORI, the Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan on Monday expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in a tragic train accident in the district of Ghotki, Sindh, leaving scores of people dead and injured. In his condolence message, the Ambassador conveyed his heartfelt grief and sympathies to the bereaved families and wished for a speedy recovery of the injured. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the government, the people of Pakistan, and the families of those who have lost their dear ones in the tragic train accident. Please accept our deepest condolences, and we wish for a quick recovery of the injured," said the Ambassador. The Ambassador prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and wished for the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude and equanimity.

China, Turkey extend condolences

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China and Turkey extended condolences to Pakistan over the loss of lives in the train collision on Monday. Chinese envoy to Pakistan Nong Rong said in a tweet, "we were deeply saddened to learn of the accident in Ghotki. I want to extend my sincere condolences to the families of the victims and my good wishes for a full and speedy recovery to the wounded".

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Imran, Boris discuss Afghanistan, FATF

NEHAL MIRAZ

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan held a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom, on Monday. The two leaders exchanged views on the current trajectory of bilateral relations, the Afghan peace process, the Covid-19 pandemic and climate change. The Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Boris Johnson for his thoughtful video message for the World Environment Day event held in Islamabad on 5 June 2021. Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed the hope that Pakistan and the UK would



be able to forge an even stronger partnership going forward, particularly in the domains of trade and investments. The two leaders agreed on the importance of high level exchanges between the two countries. The Prime Minister lauded

efforts of Prime Minister Boris Johnson in effectively combating Covid-19 pandemic in the UK. He also briefed his British counterpart on measures taken by Pakistan to tackle

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'No harm to those who worked for the West'

Taliban says all such elements have to show remorse

AGENCIES

KABUL: The Taliban said Monday that Afghans who worked with foreign forces in the past have nothing to fear once international troops leave, as long as they "show remorse". Thousands of Afghans have received visas to live abroad after serving alongside US and NATO troops - particularly as interpreters - but hundreds more are scrambling to leave before US President Joe Biden's September 11 withdrawal deadline. In recent weeks, many interpreters have demonstrated in Kabul, demanding foreign forces and embassies that they worked with help them relocate. "They shall not be in any danger on our part," the Taliban said in a statement. "The Islamic Emirate would like to inform all the above people that they should show remorse for their past actions and must not engage in such activities in the future that amount to treason against Islam and the country." While Afghans were viewed as foes when they worked with foreign forces, they will not face any issues "when they abandon enemy ranks", they added. "Hence they should not remain fearful." Over the past two decades, dozens of Afghan translators have been killed and tortured in targeted assaults by the Taliban.

China lauds PM Imran's remarks



NEWS DESK

BEIJING: China on Monday welcomed positive comments of Prime Minister Imran Khan on President Xi Jinping's congratulatory message on World Environment Day and reaffirmed its resolve to work together to build a clean and beautiful world. "We take note of Prime Minister Khan's positive response to President Xi's words. China and Pakistan are all-weather strategic cooperative partners. We are ready to work with Pakistani side to forge close cooperation and enhance global environment governance to build a clean and beautiful world," Chinese Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Wang Wenbin said during his regular message. In a tweet, Prime Minister Imran thanked the Chinese president for his "strong message" on World Environment Day hosted by Pakistan on June 5. "I thank President Xi's strong message on World Environment Day 2021 hosted by Pakistan reflecting our commitment to counter environment degradation. We laud President Xi's leadership in combating climate change and biodiversity loss and his offer to step up cooperation on ecosystem restoration," the premier said. Wang Wenbin in press briefing said President Xi appreciated that PM Imran was giving priority to environment governance and stressed that China was ready to work with Pakistan and the wider international community within the framework of UN.

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New envoys present credentials to the President

President Alvi calls for increasing cooperation with all friendly countries in the areas of trade, economy, culture and defence; welcomes new ambassadors to Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has called for increasing cooperation with all friendly countries in the areas of trade, economy, culture and defence. He emphasized the need for enhanced engagements with the friendly countries at political, economic and cultural levels to further expand cooperation with them for the mutual benefits. The President made these remarks while talking to the Residents Ambassadors-designates of Republic of Uzbekistan, Republic of Cuba, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Republic of Bulgaria and Argentina, who made separate calls on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Earlier, the Ambassador-designate of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Oybek Uzmanov, Ambassador-designate



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Uzbekistan, Cuba, Vietnam, Bulgaria and Argentina presenting credentials to the President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi. - DNA

of Cuba to Pakistan Javier Caro González, Ambassador-designate of Vietnam to Pakistan Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador-designate of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Genadieva Gancheva, and Ambassador-designate of Argentina to Pakistan Leopoldo Francisco Sahores presented their credentials to President Dr Arif Alvi at a ceremony.

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Briefs

SBP extends relaxation of biometric verification

KARACHI: Considering the intensity and ongoing impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the State Bank of Pakistan has further extended the relaxations regarding bio-metric verification and activation of dormant accounts to December 31, 2021.

The decision has been taken to ease the challenges faced by banks, Development Financial Institutions and Micro Finance Banks, and their account holders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, said a circular letter issued by the central bank's Banking Policy and Regulations Department on Monday.

Under the anti-money laundering and counter terrorism financing measures physical presence and bio-metric verification of persons intending to open an account or start a business with the financial entity was made mandatory but perceiving the risk of spread of COVID-19 from physical contact banks were allowed to utilize NADRA Verisys in place of Bio metric Verification (BMV) for verification purposes.

It has been decided to extend the validity of measures stipulated in relevant Circular Letter from June 30, 2021 to December 31, 2021. The central bank has updated the requirement stipulated in BPRD Circular Letter No. 09 of 2020 and ACMFD Circular Letter No. 03 of 2020. The revised Para A(i) now reads, "— for acknowledgment of physical presence of the customer for opening accounts without bio-metric verification may be relaxed by banks, in case of bank accounts of legal persons/ arrangements where the signatories (persons authorized to open or operate the accounts) are unable to travel to Pakistan amid COVID-19 restrictions.

KP to operate 10 more hospitals on PPP mode

PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Health, Taimur Saleem Khan Jhagra Monday said that 10 more hospitals in the province would be operated under public-private partnership (PPP) to provide basic medical facilities to the people. In a message on twitter, he said that the step will help in medical facilities of far-flung areas and inaccessible areas at par with urban centres.

He said that District Orakzai is a far-flung area of the province wherein the sending of senior doctors is not less than a challenge, but now District Headquarters (DHQ) Orakzai has not only health staff from KP rather from other provinces of the country also and providing best medical facilities to the people. The hospital, he said is being operated under PPP mode. Similarly, he said that seven other hospitals are also being operated under PPP mode. Keeping in view the success of the model, he said the government has decided the operation of 10 more hospitals under PPP mode. He said that most of hospitals included in the list are situated in far-flung areas, wherein the people will get best medical facilities and they will not be required to travel to far-away cities for treatment purposes. — APP

15 arrested for flying kite

FAISALABAD: Police arrested 15 people from different parts of the district on charge of flying and selling kites during past 24 hours. The accused are: Faheem and Bilal from Fared-Chowk, KhawarMehmood from Noor Pur, AsadYounus from Chak No.117-JB, Tanveer Ahmad from Siddhupura, Aslam from Subhan Allah Chowk, Imran from Qadir Abad Chowk, NaveedQamar from DeraSain graveyard, Zubair Hussain from Dogar-Chowk, Nadir from Muraad Abad, Shehbaz from Chak No.99-RB, Basharat Ali from GandaKhoh, Farhan from BukhariChowk, Akram from TotianwalaKhoh and Umar Hayat from Risala Road.

Girl's body found in canal
The body of a young woman was found in Jhang Bazaar Canal in the area of Nishatabad police station. A police spokesman said on Monday that some passersby spotted the body of a 25-year-old woman floating on surface of canal water near Chak No 26-JB and informed the area police. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairs the meeting of National Economic Council. — DNA

US fully acknowledges Pak role in Afghan peace process

Sarwar said he vociferously took up the Palestine and Kashmir issues with the US leadership and asked that the international community must stop turning a blind eye to Israel's war crimes and immediately act to halt the genocide of innocent Palestinians

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said that the United States (US) government fully acknowledges Pakistan's role in Afghan peace process and viable regional peace and stability today.

In a meeting with journalists after his US visit at the Governor's House here on Monday, he said he met more than 100 politicians including senators, congressmen, state governors, mayors, community leaders besides Pakistani and Sikh businessmen during US visit, adding that he apprised the US political elite of the services rendered in the war against terror, ini-

tiatives put forth to combat climate change, strategy adopted to contain novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and keep the economy stable despite challenges.

Sarwar said he vociferously took up the Palestine and Kashmir issues with the United States leadership and asked that the international community must stop turning a blind eye to Israel's war crimes and immediately act to halt the genocide of innocent Palestinians after recent escalation of tensions between Israel and Palestine.

The Governor Punjab said he made the US politicians realize that the inhumane and illegal 672 day-long curfew in Kashmir is a gross violation of international law so the United States, as well as

the peaceful nations, must play a role in resolving Kashmir conflict in the light of the UN resolutions. About another achievement of his US visit, he said the California Assembly tabled a bill to declare Punjab and California as sister states in his presence besides a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was also signed between University of Agriculture Faisalabad and the University of California. He said, under the MoU, both universities will collaborate in agricultural research to enhance productivity while the sister states status to Punjab will unleash new era of development in the province.

The Governor Punjab further said he had a successful meeting with

US Senator Chris Van Hallen who has tabled the economic package bill for Pakistan, expressing the hope that the bill will be passed by the US Senate. He said the economic package is an acknowledgment of the fact that the Prime Minister Imran Khan and his team have saved Pakistan from economic bankruptcy.

He said it is through successful diplomacy that Pakistan has managed to browbeat India in its negative propaganda, adding that the world is lauding Pakistan's role in durable regional peace today.

"One of my foremost goals to the US visit was to inspire US-based Pakistani community to take part in the US politics, and after I became the first Muslim Member of

Parliament in the UK, the number was now in the dozens", he added. Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said Pakistani and Indian Sikh communities in the United States are on the same page and the Sikh community always stands by Pakistan's stance on issues like Kashmir. He said the US Sikh community is grateful to Prime Minister Imran Khan for opening the Kartarpur corridor and provision of facilities to Sikh pilgrims in Pakistan.

To a question on Jahangir Khan Tareen, Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar said Jahangir Khan Tareen and all PTI MPAs and MNAs will support the government in every matter including provincial and federal budgets.



PESHAWAR: Vice Chancellor Shaheed Benazir Bhutto University Prof. Dr. Razia Sultana presenting souvenir to Forest Minister Syed Muhammad Ishtiaq. — DNA

KP Government proposes package for oil, gas' exploration

PESHAWAR: KhyberPakhtunkhwa Government has proposed Rs40 billion development package for exploration of oil and gas activities in merged areas (erstwhile Fata) blessed with abundance of oil and gas reservoirs.

"Today, KP is producing 52 percent of crude oil, 11 percent of gas and 40 percent of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) of the country from just two-exploration blocks.

The development package has been exclusively prepared to increase its production through exploring of new oil and gas reservoirs in seven tribal districts," he said.

Funds would be allocated from Accelerated Implementation Programme (AIP) and royalty for investment in various exploration and production blocks of the merged areas through joint venture partnerships

with KPOGCL, resulting in considerable direct revenue generation of around Rs13 billion per year by 2025.

The massive package would help accelerate pace of economic and industrial activities and create employment opportunities for thousands of skilled and non-skilled workforce in South Waziristan, Kurram, North Waziristan, Orakzai, Khyber, Bajaur and Mohmand tribal districts. — DNA

34000 police personnel deployed for polio teams'

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Monday reviewed security measures adopted for polio campaign beginning from Monday in the province. In this connection the Inspector General of Police (IGP), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Fr. SanaullahAbbasi, presided over a Video Link Conference held at Capital City Police Office (CCPO) Peshawar. CCPO Peshawar and all Regional Police Officers (RPOs) attended the meeting.

During the conference, CCPO Peshawar and RPOs gave detailed briefings to the IGP about the stringent security steps taken for ensuring safe polio campaign in their respective regions. During the briefing the IGP was told that a total of 34000 police personnel had been deployed for the security of polio teams in the whole province. Similarly, the IGP was informed that security measures had been finalized in due consultation with Health department officials and other security forces officials.

Addressing on the occasion, the IGP pointed out that eradication of polio was an important national obligation and we all have to put collective efforts for performing this duty in the

larger interest of the country.

The IGP also issued necessary instructions for providing fool proof security to the polio teams and making the campaign a great success.

The IGP further directed to extend full pledged corporation to the health department and keep close coordination with security forces. The IGP maintained that KP police was fully committed to make the province polio free and hoped that very soon Pakistan would be included in the polio free list of the world.

Meanwhile, the IGP KP Dr. SanaullahAbbasi early morning today visited Maulvi Amir Shah Alias Maulvije hospital Peshawar where he administered polio drops to the children less than 5 years age. During the visit the IGP also presided over a meeting in which he was given a comprehensive briefing about the security measures placed for the polio campaign.

The IGP was informed that a total of 4500 police officials had been deputed for security of polio teams in Peshawar added that with the help of health department and security forces the 5-day campaign is going ahead with success. CCPO Peshawar, SSP Operations Peshawar and other officials attended the meeting.

Teenage boy shot dead

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: A teenage boy was killed during a brawl over the construction of a mosque in a nearby village on Monday. According to police, two groups were indulged in altercation over construction of a mosque in Chak No.258, in the jurisdiction of Dijkot police station when the mosque management committee stopped the construction work. Over the issue, Khaleel, his son and others opened fire at Imam Masjid QariAkram but he miraculously remained safe and the bullets hit his son Ubaid (15) who died on the spot.

Following the incident, the people of the area gathered at the site of incident and staged a protest demonstration. A contingent of police reached the spot and pacified the demonstrators. The police took the body into custody and started investigation.

Ghani assures to hold meeting with WAPDA

DNA

PESHAWAR: Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Mushtaq Ahmad Ghani informed the House on Monday that a meeting would be arranged with WAPDA officials to resolve the loadshedding and tripping issue being faced by consumers in the province.

Responding to a point of order of Fazle Elahi of PTI, the speaker said that there was 70 percent shortage of WAPDA employees in province. He said that the lines were also outdated that was causing loadshedding and tripping. Leader of opposition Akram Khan Durrani said that loadshedding was a big issue in the province and it should be resolved on priority basis. He said that the vacant posts should be fulfilled as soon as possible. Earlier, FazleElahi said that there was hundred percent recovery in his constituency but the WAPDA disconnected electricity and people had been forced to stage protest against WAPDA.

He said that he personally helped in disconnection of illegal and direct hooks in his constituency but still the WAPDA disconnected electricity in his constituency. He appealed the chair to give ruling to WAPDA not to disconnect electricity in the area. The Speaker MushtaqGhani in his ruling asked PESCO Chief to submit report on the issue till tomorrow (Tuesday) and prorogued the session.

KP govt decides against hiring lower cadre staff

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government on Monday decided against hiring lower cadre staff in government departments on a permanent basis.

According to a private television hannel, the vacancies for lower cadres would be abolished after the retirement of government employees currently posted on the positions.

"Currently 7,500 government employees are serving at these lower category posts," the document revealed as it noted that those currently serving will continue as permanent employees until their retirement. The finance ministry has summoned details on recruitment and retirement of government employees of lower cadres as 46 cadres have been abolished in separate government departments. In March this year, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has reversed its decision of increasing the retirement age by three years in view of increasing pension liabilities. The decision was taken during a meeting of the provincial cabinet in Peshawar with Chief Minister KP Mahmood Khan in the chair. Later, briefing media men about cabinet decisions, Special Assistant to Chief Minister on Information Kamran Khan Bangash said in the future, all recruitments will be made through provincial testing agency ETEA. He said the cabinet directed Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Service Commission to establish new zones within one month.

Collateral free loans to businesses soon: SBP

DNA

LAHORE: Governor State Bank of Pakistan Dr. Reza Baqir has said that the SBP is going to initiate a scheme for Financing to Cottage Industry up to Rs 10 million without the collateral. He said that the government will give guarantee to the banks against losses and will invite Expression of Interest from banks for inclusion in this scheme. The Governor SBP said that the end user rate for the small businesses and cottage industry in this scheme would be 9 percent which otherwise get loans at 24 percent.



PESHAWAR: Karman Bangash, SACM KPK on Information along with MPs addressing a press conference. — DNA

Briefs

Farrukh grieved over loss of lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Monday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in the train accident in Sindh's Ghotki that killed around 30 people. In a tweet, he said the injured were being shifted to nearby hospitals by the rescue teams. "Apart from Ghotki Hospital, the injured have been shifted to nearby Sadiqabad's hospital and Rahim Yar Khan's Sheikh Zayed Hospital for medical treatment," he added.

MPC

disposes of 5,722 cases by May end

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Missing Persons Commission has disposed of some 5,722 cases by May end from out of a total of 8,018 cases registered during the aforementioned period, says monthly progress report issued by Secretary Commission of Inquiry on Enforced Disappearances (ColoED) on Monday. According to the report, a total number of 7,873 cases were received by the Commission up to April 2021.

During May 2021, 145 more cases were received by the Commission swelling the number of cases to 8,018. The Commission disposed of some 186 cases in May 2021 and thus total disposal of Missing Persons up to May 31, 2021 is 5,722 and balance as on May 31, 2021 is 2,296. The Commission has conducted as many as 401 hearings during the month of May 2021; of which 208 hearings were conducted in Islamabad and 193 in Quetta. The relatives of the missing persons have lauded the efforts of its Chairman Justice (Retd) Javed Iqbal and other members for taking keen interest in locating their near and dear ones and ensuring the recovery of the missing persons.

Two wanted members of snatchers gang held

ISLAMABAD: Crime Investigation Agency (CIA) of Islamabad Police have claimed to arrest two members of a snatchers gang and recovered mobile phones, motorbike and weapons. According to Police spokesperson, DIG (Operations) Islamabad police, Afzal Ahmad Kausar had categorically directed all police officers to accelerate their efforts to curb crime and secure the city. Following these directions, SSP (Investigation) Atta ur-Rehman constituted a special police team under the supervision of DSP CIA including ASI Muhammad Ishaq and others nabbed two member of a criminal gang, identified as Sami-Ullah and Riasat Ali resident of Bajaur Agency KPK. - APP

2 died in separate incidents

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Two persons on Monday lost their lives in separate incidents in different areas of Attock during last 24 hours. In first incident, a laborer was beaten to death by a fellow labourer over a petty issue in village Burj in the limits of Fateh Jang Police station. Police informed that a 19 years old labourer Ahsan Ali exchanged hot words with a fellow worker Kamran Yaqub who attacked Ahsan Ali with an iron rod and killed him on the spot. In another incident, a young man Mohammad Ibrar - a native of Shahdher drowned in Ghazi-Brotha water channel near Hazro. Police and rescue officials searched his body and handed it over to his family. Respective police stations have registered cases and started investigation.

President for enhancing co-op with friendly countries

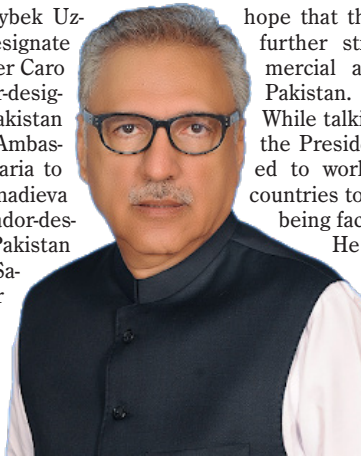
The President apprised the envoys that Pakistan offered investment opportunities and the world should take benefit of business-friendly environment by investing in different sectors of economy

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Monday called for increasing cooperation with all friendly countries in the areas of trade, economy, culture and defence. He emphasized the need for enhanced engagements with the friendly countries at political, economic and cultural levels to further expand cooperation with them for mutual benefit.

The President made these remarks while talking to resident Ambassadors-designate of Uzbekistan, Cuba, Vietnam, Bulgaria and Argentina, who separately called on him here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Earlier, the Ambassador-designate of Uz-

bekistan to Pakistan Oybek Zuzmanov, Ambassador-designate of Cuba to Pakistan Javier Caro Gonzalez, Ambassador-designate of Vietnam to Pakistan Nguyen Tien Phong, Ambassador-designate of Bulgaria to Pakistan Ms. Irena Genadiyeva Gancheva, and Ambassador-designate of Argentina to Pakistan Leopoldo Francisco Sadores, presented their credentials to the President at a ceremony. Congratulating the newly-appointed Ambassadors, the President expressed the



hope that they would play their role in further strengthening political, commercial and cultural relations with Pakistan.

While talking to the envoys separately, the President said that Pakistan wanted to work closely with the friendly countries to address various challenges, being faced by the world.

He briefed the envoys about the successful economic policies of the government, saying that Pakistan's economy was performing well despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

The President apprised the envoys that Paki-

stan offered investment opportunities and the world should take benefit of business-friendly environment by investing in different sectors of economy.

He underscored that since Pakistan's main emphasis had shifted from geo-political to geo-economics, it was focusing on improving regional connectivity and economic integration. The President also highlighted the brutalities committed by Indian security forces against innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He urged the international community to play active role to stop India from committing human rights violations and grant the right of self-determination to the people of IIOJK in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Indonesia Adam Tugio in a meeting with "Dr. Noor-ul-Haq Qadri Federal Minister for Religious Affairs. The ambassador got first-hand information his forward looking vision in improving educational system of madrasah here and exploring collaboration to promote global interfaith harmony". - DNA

Ahsan Bakhtawari for raising brain tumour awareness

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President, D-Watson Islamabad Line Club, has said that the purpose of celebrating World Brain Tumor Day on June 8 is to create awareness among the people about the disease. And you have to be protected from radiation, you have to protect yourself from chemicals, even having a family history of cancer can lead to this disease, live your life simply, use natural foods, protect yourself from all kinds of drugs. Successful treatment of brain tumors is possible through timely and accurate diagnosis. Pharmaceutical companies should abolish the patent right of pharmaceutical treatment drugs to provide cheap cancer drugs to cancer patient. They become expensive medicines, savings, pharmaceutical companies consider this and the patent rights of a medicine which lasts for 10 years, because of the patent rights this medicine is very expensive which belongs to the poor. Out of reach, he said, constant headaches, vomiting, seizures such as epilepsy or permanent part of a specific part of the body. In case of hearing or hearing impairment, CT scan or MRI scan should be done as per the doctor's advice, as these symptoms may be of brain tumor, there is no specific cause of brain tumor. However, there are some causes that can lead to brain tumors, such as people who live or work in a radiation area or environment may be at risk for the disease. In addition to headaches, seizures, difficulty speaking, memory loss, and poor eyesight can also be symptoms of a brain tumor, and a CT scan or MRI scan of the brain is used to diagnose it. The treatment is surgery, in addition to the nature of the cancer is treated with radiation and chemotherapy. He gave his message to the public that permanent headaches, difficulty speaking, crooked eyes or any problem in brain function. If this is the case, consult a qualified doctor and do not be afraid to seek treatment, remember that delays can be dangerous. - DNA



Over 4,00,000 vaccinated in Rawalpindi

DNA

RAWALPINDI: District Health Officer (DHO) Rawalpindi Dr Ihsan Ghani said that 30,000 people are being vaccinated everyday to contain corona virus. He expressed these views while talking to delegation of All Pakistan Private Schools Management Association Rawalpindi. The District Health Officer (DHO) said that more than 400,000 people have been vaccinated. A target has been set to vaccinate all the citizens of Rawalpindi district by the end of this year, he added. He made it clear that, some people are spreading misleading propaganda about vaccines on social media and we should not pay attention to their negative comments. Teachers can play their positive role in this regard. He said the continuation of educational activities in educational institutions, it depends on curtailing the spread of Corona. Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) must be implemented to return to normal life, he asserted.

Earlier, inoculation against Covid-19 of people aged 30 years and above started from May 22 as the National Assembly was informed that local production of the anti-coronavirus vaccine has begun.

Govt to introduce Agri tech to improve farming

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Food Security Jamshed Iqbal Cheema Monday said that government was introducing new age technologies to improve farming quality and bringing the agriculture products at par with the international standard to increase the exports of the country. Pakistan's agriculture sector is expected to undergo a revival via present government's historic steps that would see an increased effort in modernization, the utilization of technology and smart farming that could

boost farmers' income, he said while speaking to a private news channel. "Current government under the leadership of PM only wants to modernize agriculture and get more technologies to encourage young people to participate in the sector", he mentioned. "We are educating farmers to use the modern technology which will save precious time and increase per-acre yield with low labour cost", he added. "The government's direction is right and intentions are good therefore we will achieve the set targets set in the next budget," he added. He also mentioned that the government is also

taking practical steps to increase cotton production in the country, adding, Pakistan's cotton production is far better than neighboring country of India.

"We are focusing on the use of certified seed for enhancing agriculture productivity due to better profitability and international recognition," he added. "With agriculture reforms, the country would create new agricultural jobs, increase agro-exports, improve farmers' incomes and enhance equity outcomes," he added. He said quality seeds and its awareness among farmers will also be provided for a better quality crop.

AIU announces to grant disparity reduction allowance

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) Prof Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum has announced that twenty five percent disparity reduction allowance will be granted in the salary of employees for the month of June, 2021 with effect from March 1, this year. While addressing the oath taking ceremony of Employees Welfare Association (EWA), in the supreme interests of the institution and

welfare of its employees, all decisions are taken in accordance with the rules and regulations and on purely merit basis. He said that negotiation, dialogue and mutual cooperation is the key to bring further improvement in university's affairs and lend it more credibility as a prestigious national educational institution. "I am against of the notions of nepotism and discrimination and strongly believe in meeting rightful needs of the employees" he added. He, further said that selec-

tion boards and departmental promotion committees are being organized on the regular basis to promote eligible employees on purely merit basis. It is a record in the history of AIU to organize three departmental promotion committees in a year and credit goes to AIU management for achieving this end. Medical facilities for the employees are being enhanced. The project of constructing a community center in the residential colony of the university is under consideration.



ISLAMABAD: Chaudhary Fawad, Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting talking to media. - DNA

Beekeeping has great potential

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Monday underlined the need for strengthening and facilitating the beekeeping sector of the country as it has great potential to generate employment opportunities and earn foreign exchange. He urged the need for improving the environmental conditions for beekeeping to increase the honey yield. The President made these remarks while chairing a meeting on Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) here at Aiwan-e-Sadr. The meeting was attended by Special Assistant to PM (SAPM) on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam, Vice Chancellor of University of Arid Agriculture and senior officials of the Government of Pakistan.

Malik Amin Aslam briefed the meeting about the initiatives taken by his Ministry under TBTP and informed that TBTP would greatly contribute to increasing the production of honey as well as improving environmental conditions of the country. He highlighted the steps taken for improving the honey-bee sector, eco-system and creating skill development opportunities for youth to engage them in economic activity.

Appreciating the initiative taken by the Ministry of Climate Change, the President expressed the hope that plantation, under TBTP, would not only boost the beekeeping sector but would also help in producing high quality of honey. He emphasized the need to use modern beekeeping gears and training of beekeepers on modern lines to increase honey yield.

The President added that it was imperative to adopt best marketing strategy and certification of honey to enhance its export.

KJP helps physically impaired get job: Dar

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Youth Affairs Muhammad Usman Dar has shared the story of physically impaired Abdullah, who got a job in the international market after getting six months training in a high-tech trade under the Hunarmand Pakistan (Skills for All) programme. The SAPM, on his twitter handle, said, "Skills for All! A young man, who was unemployed and home-bound for several years due to his disability, has started earning thousands of dollars from international market. Under the Kamyab Jawan Programme (KJP), scholarships are being given to the youth for trainings in modern and high-tech trades along with traditional ones. Alhamdulillah! Today Abdullah is a successful young man."

Usman Dar also posted a two-minute film documentary of Abdullah describing his success through the KJP. The Hunarmand Pakistan was launched in the beginning of 2020 under the Kamyab Jawan Programme with Rs 10 billion seed money and set a target to train 50,000 each in high tech and traditional trades by end of the Fiscal Year 2020-21. According to Usman Dar, so far 170,000 young people have been given skill scholarships under the programme after release of massive funds in line with the instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He congratulated Abdullah on becoming a successful freelancer of the international market and said the young man had become an example for the youth. Usman Dar urged them to get rid of unemployment by getting trained in high trades under the programme. - APP

"BOOK LOST"

Book of Honda civic, Colour: White, Model: 2008, Car number: NE-027, Engine number: R18A1-3990562, Chassis number: NFBFD15748R110562, Contact number: 03125294832, House No 97, Street 06, Ghauri Town phase 3, Islamabad

Briefs

MOFEPT: No instructions to conduct exams from class 1-8

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on Monday said that it had not issued any instructions to conduct Class 1-8 exams. With reference to news item on TV channels and few Newspapers, the Ministry in a statement clarified that no instructions to conduct Class 1-8 exams or otherwise were issued by the Education Ministry. Final exams for Class 1-8th all around over the country are held internally and the decision to hold them or not rests with the provinces and individual schools. It is their domain to decide what is appropriate, it said. However, the Federal Directorate of Education, Islamabad, requested for permission for holding exams of grade 8 which was accorded, it added.

Court seeks comments on accused acquittal pleas

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Monday sought comments from National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on acquittal plea of co-accused in reference against former law secretary Arshad Farooq Faheem and others pertaining to out of way increase in medicine prices. AC-III Judge Syed Asghar Ali heard the case filed by NAB against Arshad Farooq, who had also been serving as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Drugs Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP).

The two co-accused including Ayaz Khan and Abdul Salam had filed acquittal pleas to the judge to this the court seeking comments from NAB and adjourned the case till June 19. The reference had alleged the accused to cause a loss worth Rs1683.69 million loss to national exchequer through out of way increasing prices of the medicine to benefit certain companies. Meanwhile, AC-II Judge Muhammad Azam Khan adjourned hearing till June 30, on reference pertaining to corruption in the funds of workers welfare board against former secretary Iftikhar Raheem.

IHC to view legal points in licenses case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday decided to view the legal points in a case seeking restoration of lawyers' licenses, which were suspended in misconduct matter pertaining to attack on IHC building.

A larger bench of IHC headed by Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case filed by lawyers regarding above matter. At the outset of hearing, petitioners' lawyer Shoaib Shahaen Advocate contended that the licenses could be suspended only for a period of 90 days, which had already been passed. Justice Minallah said the court would view the legal points raised by the lawyer.

The chief justice remarked that only the bar councils would point out that who was involved in misconduct during the incident. He asked the lawyer to submit their comments so that the reference could be sent to bar council.

The lawyer adopted the stance that the matter could not be sent to the bar council as the complainant in the case was someone else. The chief justice remarked that now complain would be sent from this court. Justice Farooq remarked that some lawyers had not submitted their comments, whether they did not want to pursue.

After this, the court adjourned hearing till next date.

ICCI opens vaccination centre for business community

President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the purpose of setting up vaccination centre is to support the mass vaccination drive of the government to make Pakistan a coronavirus free country

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) leading by example has opened a vaccination centre in its premises in collaboration with NCOC and Shifa International Hospital for the vaccination of the business community, their families and employees. ICCI is the first chamber of the country to set up a vaccination centre in its premises for its members to provide the first dose of vaccination to them on Monday and Tuesday from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. Hamza Shafiqat, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad inaugurated the vaccination centre during his visit to ICCI. Expressing his view after inauguration, Hamza Shafiqat, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad congratulated ICCI for opening a vaccination centre for its members and especially appreciated the proactive and dynamic approach of President ICCI. He said that Islamabad has set a target of vaccinating 20,000 to 25,000 people daily and hoped that ICCI vac-



ination centre would be helpful in achieving this target as it has the capacity to vaccinate a large number of people. He stressed that the business community of Islamabad, their family members and employees should take full benefit of this great facility at ICCI for their vaccination so that Covid-19 pandemic could be controlled and all business activities could be restored to their normal operation. He also

thanked the Shift International Hospital for collaborating with ICCI in setting up a vaccination centre that would play a positive role in controlling the spread of coronavirus in the federal capital. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the purpose of setting up vaccination centre is to support the mass vaccination drive of the government to

make Pakistan a coronavirus free country. He said that ICCI has been working actively with NCOC for controlling the spread of Covid-19 pandemic in order to lift all restrictions on businesses. He thanked NCOC and Shifa International Hospital Islamabad for collaborating with ICCI in setting up vaccination centre in its premises. He said that the only way for Pakistan to come out of the coronavirus and re-

store business activities to normal routine, was the vaccination of maximum people. He said that ICCI has already informed its members through emails and messages for the availability of a vaccination centre and hoped that maximum members of the business community, their families and employees would avail this facility for vaccination. He said that ICCI has already set up a vaccination centre at Centaurus Mall and more vaccination centres would be set up in major markets in coming days to promote the government's mass vaccination drive. He also appealed to all the citizens of Islamabad that if they wanted normalization of life and restoration of businesses, they should get themselves vaccinated on priority basis. ICCI Executive Members Javed Iqbal, Umar Hussain, Muhammad Shakir, Usman Khalid, Faad Waheed, Omais Khattak as well as Khalid Chaudhry former Senior Vice President ICCI, Raja Abdul Majeed, Tehmas Butt and others were also present at the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries & Production Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar hold meetings with SMEs development authority. – APP

24/7 vaccination starts at Allied Hospitals

RAWALPINDI: To bring a maximum number of people under COVID-19 vaccination coverage, round the clock 24/7 vaccination centres have been set up at Allied Hospitals of the city here Monday. Principal Allied Hospitals Professor Muhammad Umer told APP, that vaccination centres were established to stop overcrowding of centres and to ensure public safety at Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH), Holy Family Hospital (HFH) and District Headquarter Hospital (DHC).

He said that time limitation has been abolished to increase the jabs speed and res-

idents can now get vaccinated 24x7 at their convenience. Meanwhile, Medical Superintendent HFH Dr. Shazia Rashid informed that state of art vaccination centre has started working at the hospital while maximum awareness and guidance was being ensured to those visiting the centre. She said that three types of vaccine doses, including AstraZeneca, Sinopharm and Sinovac were administered to the people at the centre. Shazia said that a free cost facility was being provided to the people at allied hospitals of the city, adding a team of doctors including

para-medical staff has been deployed to vaccinate people around the clock. Meanwhile, according to the latest data shared by the District Health Authority, 441,266 people including 27,598 health workers and 413,668 senior citizens have jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10. The report said that 16 more COVID-19 cases were tested positive during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 26,480 in the district while 25,127 patients were

discharged after recovery. "Presently 58 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 20 in Holy Family Hospital, 8 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 14 in Institute of Urology, 15 in Fauji Foundation Hospital and one in Hearts International Hospital," the health authority report said. The report updated that 17 international passengers who had been tested positive for COVID-19, 13 were allowed to go to their homes as their reports were tested negative while four were quarantined at Women University Satellite town. – APP

CDA suspends officials over water wastage

ISLAMABAD: CDA management suspends officials involved in wastage of water. The Area supervisor and driver of a water tanker were suspended immediately and inquiry has been ordered by competent authority after a responsible citizen has shared with us this video regarding wastage of such a precious resource in the capital. CDA Management, while taking immediate notice & action, has initiated disciplinary proceedings and have placed the services of area Supervisor of city sewerage division Haji Rasan Khan and driver of the tanker irshad Mash under suspension with immediate effect. The CDA management urges our citizens to keep on pointing out whenever they notice any such violation. It's our collective responsibility to protect and manage our resources. – DNA



5-day anti-polio drive kicks off in Rawalpindi district

SHAHEEN HANIF

RAWALPINDI: The five-day anti-polio campaign kicked off in the entire district here on Monday to cover more than 718,000 children of below five years age.

Health Authority Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dr. Faiza Kanwal Sohail informed that around 2,864 polio teams, 663 area in charges, 240 medical officers, and allied hospitals, and tehsil headquarter hospitals were participating in the drive. The CEO said that SOPs regarding COVID-19 were being followed

to ensure the safety of polio teams during the drive. She said the polio drops were also being administered at 129 transit points and 307 fixed centres to ensure that all children be immunized below five years of age. Dr. Faiza informed that Deputy Commissioner Amir Aqil Khan himself administered the drops to children at Railway station and bus terminals today so that every child must be vaccinated coming from outside the city. She said that staff deployed for the campaign have been instructed that no negligence would be tolerated in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: To ensure that visitors are not disturbed, the Chairman CDA, Amir Ali Ahmed instructed the staff at the inauguration of the Vaccination Center at the Fire Brigade Headquarters. – DNA

Census 2017 not addressing Sindh's concerns: Sherry

"If the Federal Government or a Provincial Government is dissatisfied with a decision of the council, it may refer the matter to Majlis-e-Shoora in a joint sitting whose decision in this behalf shall be final"

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Rejecting the cabinet's decision to approve the 2017 census, PPP Parliamentary Leader in the Senate, Senator Sherry Rehman said, "According to a UNICEF survey, the average members of a household are at 7.2 for Sindh, whereas the census results put the number of the average household at 5.64. Similarly, Sindh's population should be over 61m, while the official result says the population is just under 48m people. Surely we have a problem here which needs to be re-

vised". "Despite Sindh's grievances over the 2017 census that its population was undercounted, the CCI approved it & the cabinet committee unilaterally finalized the report which was then approved by the Federal government. Sindh government was not even called for a consultation. How can such a major decision be taken without addressing Sindh's concerns?" she questioned. Rehman said, "CM Sindh has written to the PM, Senate Chairman & NA speaker calling for a joint session of parliament to discuss the issue. Why is it being delayed? Is it not a matter of national importance?"

Our Constitution guarantees us this right under Article 154 (7)."



"Article 154(7) states that "If the Federal Government or a Provincial Government is dissatisfied with a decision of the council, it may refer the matter to Majlis-e-Shoora (parliament) in a joint sitting whose decision in this behalf shall be final." We believe in the supremacy of the parliament and in this situation, it is only the parliament which can take the final decision" she added. Rehman said, "It is rather unfortunate that the PM endorsed the committee's decision instead of holding an inquiry into this matter. What's even more shocking is that during the voting PM chose not to take the

vote of the three federal ministers who were present at the meeting. What is the meaning of this? It's a shame that Sindh is being treated like this by the federal government". "How can a fraud like this be approved by the CCI? This discriminatory attitude towards Sindh is not hidden from anyone. Our numbers and representation matters. The government should ensure that Sindh's grievances are resolved and a joint session of the parliament is called on urgent basis as it is a very important issue which needs attention," concluded Vice President PPP Senator Sherry Rehman.

PARC, AEAR distribute rice transplanter

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To modernize agriculture and enhance the per acre yield of Rice crop in Pakistan, PARC is not only introducing the newly developed rice transplanter but also distributing and training the local farmers for mechanized rice farming. In this regard "Rice Transplanters distribution" ceremony under PSDP project "Productivity Enhancement of Rice" held in Gujranwala. Honorable Minister for Agriculture Punjab Jahania Gardezi; Secretary Agriculture Govt of Punjab, Dr. Asad Rehman Gilani; Chairman PARC Dr. Khan; Director General Agri. Ext. Punjab, Dr. Anjum Ali Buttar; CEO of Meskey & Fomettee Trading Corporation, Mr. Shahid Tawawala; MPs and MNAs, farmers and other officials attended the ceremony.

Meanwhile, Dr. Azeem Khan along with Dr. Anjum Ali Buttar also organized Farm level training of farmers for mechanized rice farming in KotNaina, Narawal. Chairman PARC says, "Although mechanical transplanter's initial cost is high but it requires less time and labour than manual transplanting, also ensures uniform spacing and timely planting.

IESCO issues power suspension programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued a power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 09:00 AM to 01:00 PM Daultallah, Ahadi Feeders from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM Chakri, APP, SPD, Parial, Gagan, Chahan, Mahuta, Dharnal, Kot Shera, Kot Gulla, Sarcal, Khanabad, Munirabad, Lalazar, Purmiana, Industrial Estate, Garhi Afghana, AWC, Shahi-ya, Rashid Minhas, Burhan, Shafi Chauhan, Industrial, Sarai Kharboza, Pind Parian, ECHS (D-18), Sangiani, Paswal, Shah Allah Diitta, Bhelot, Taxila, Nawazish Shaheed, Salar Gah, Museum, Ghauri, Haro, Boi Ghar, Qutbal, Karima Feeders from 06:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Dhudial City, Express, Latifal Feeders from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Mandi Bhalwal, Dhoke Awan, New Rawat, Zaraj Feeders from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Iqbal Town, Club-1 Feeders and surrounding areas.

Arrest warrant for Farzana Raja issued

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Monday issued non-bailable arrest warrants against former chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Farzana Raja and directed to initiate a procedure to declare her as proclaimed offender on continuous disappearance.

The court also instructed the authority concerned to block the CNIC of accused Farzana Raja and place her name on exit control list (ECL). AC-III Judge Syed Asghar Ali heard the reference pertaining to corruption in funds of BISP filed by NAB.

At the outset of hearing, the counsels for the co-accused said that the bureau should inform the bench that whether it had filed final or interim reference. They said that charges couldn't be framed against the accused in an interim reference.

The court remarked that the investigation into the case couldn't be stopped at any stage in line of the directives of the top court. The court separated the case of Farzana Raja and fixed a new date for indictment of the co-accused. The judge instructed all the accused to ensure their attendances on next date of hearing. The NAB had filed reference against Farzana Raja and other accused in March last year.

Budget woes

THE PTI and the opposition, mainly the PML-N, have been engaged in a bitter war of words over the state of the country's finances, just a week ahead of the announcement of the budget for the year 2021-22. The PML-N has accused the PTI government of virtually destroying the country's economy, with former ministers pointing out that inflation in the prices of items of essential use in every household has grown by almost 96 percent since 2018.

We know that promises are easy to make. We also know that accusations are as easy to put forward, especially in a situation where economic struggles mark the plight of a country. But we should be asking why Pakistan's growth rate, put by the government at 4 percent, is lower than that of Bangladesh at 8 percent or of other countries in the region. India's negative 7 percent is also there but has a great deal to do with the Covid-19 crisis, which has torn the country apart. Pakistan technically should be doing far better, if it is to keep up with the world and to compete with its neighbours. While the PTI government appears to be holding true to its promise that utility bills will not go any higher and that tax collection will continue to grow, there are issues in other areas.

The first task of any government is to look after its own people. And the people of the country are today in a state of virtual desperation. Traders who say their businesses are floundering are demanding help of one kind or the other, with the Covid-19 pandemic adding to their woes. The challenge for the government now is to put forward a budget that is welcomed by the people and is also acceptable to at least most opposition parties, even in a situation when there is a fierce sense of acrimony and division between the political forces in the country.

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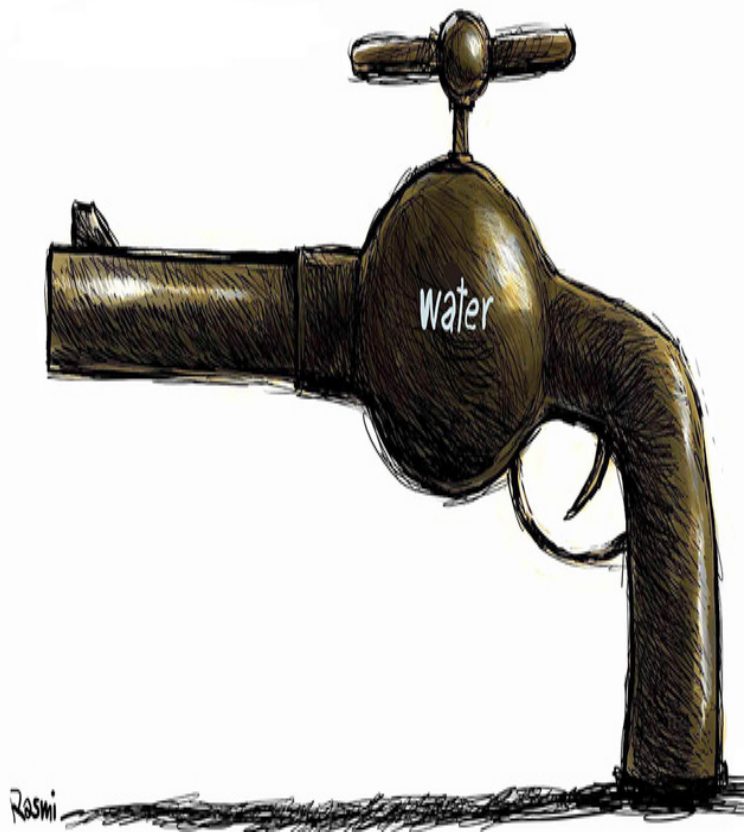
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India versus Twitter

CONCERNS over the curtailment of freedom of expression in India are rising, with the Indian government on a rampage to force social media companies to bend to its will. The trouble started in February when the Indian government introduced new guidelines to regulate digital content on social media and streaming platforms. Some of these new guidelines were draconian, meant to clamp down dissent with the right-wing BJP party in government.

For a while, Twitter, to a fault, complied with the Indian government's abusive policies, including removing tweets critical of the government's handling of the virus, and unblocking a number of accounts that had been spreading hate speech and inciting violence against minorities, following a request from authorities. Yet that still does not seem to placate the Indian government, which does not seem to be able to handle a word of criticism.

In an extremely concerning notice India has told Twitter Inc that it has one last chance to comply with new IT rules, or face "unintended consequences".

This should not be taken lightly. "Unintended consequences", the untold threat that the Indian government has left in his letter can mean a number of things, but knowing the Indian government's history, with its targeting of critics in the farmers' protest, and most starkly in Kashmir, the threat could mean arrests of Indian employees of Twitter, or worse. Countries should see this as a direct assault by one state on freedom of speech. International organisations and social media giants should not let this go—the consequences of allowing India to directly threaten can be catastrophic for those areas where the Indian government is already brutally arresting and torturing any dissent. IOK, where the Internet has been shut down since before the pandemic, stands to suffer the most from this.

Worse than Netanyahu? Meet Israel's new PM

Baria Alamuddin



Benjamin Netanyahu may have overseen a grotesquely ugly regime in its ceaseless efforts to murder a two-state solution, but the mutant coalition potentially replacing him is an altogether more bizarre prospect, comprising eight parties from across Israel's political spectrum. One of these factions is an Arab party, led by Mansour Abbas, who we can only hope will rapidly pull the plug if Bennett returns to his predilection for shooting Palestinian children

ASKED in 2018 if he would advocate a "shoot to kill" policy against children breaching the Gaza border, Naftali Bennett retorted: "They are not children — they are terrorists." During a Cabinet session, Bennett argued: "If you catch terrorists, you have to simply kill them." When a colleague pointed out that such an approach was illegal, Bennett referred to his own time in the IDF: "I've killed lots of Arabs in my life — and there's no problem with that!"

With Iran deploying its missiles and proxies throughout Syria, Lebanon and Iraq, and Israel launching airstrikes against Iranian targets, Bennett — who will become prime minister if Israel's new coalition survives an initial parliamentary confidence vote — may preside over a regional war in the near future, at which point his enthusiasm for killing Arabs and Muslims may acquire fateful significance.

Benjamin Netanyahu may have overseen a grotesquely ugly regime in its ceaseless efforts to murder a two-state solution, but the mutant coalition potentially replacing him is an altogether more bizarre prospect, comprising eight parties from across Israel's political spectrum. One of these factions is an Arab party, led by Mansour Abbas, who we can only hope will rapidly pull the plug if Bennett returns to his predilection for shooting Palestinian children. Bennett's extreme-right aspirations for annexing the West Bank often made Netanyahu look dovish. He celebrated Donald Trump's 2016 victory by gloatingly predicting: "The era of a Palestinian state is over!" Bennett's political bedfellow is Yair Lapid, a centrist who has taken care to cultivate himself as a "security hawk." A few brief months ago Bennett swore never to share power with Lapid and Abbas. Now, if all goes to plan, Lapid will succeed Bennett as prime minister after two years, which is why many grassroots supporters of these figures are now denouncing them all as traitors and opportunists for countenancing such an alliance.

After 15 years as prime minister, if Netanya-

hu genuinely has been defeated, this is the end of an era — and never has there been a more deserving candidate for imprisonment on corruption charges. That Netanyahu held his country hostage for two years, forced four senseless rounds of back-to-back elections, and killed off a whole succession of Cabinet-forming initiatives purely to evade jail adds an additional level of poetic justice to his belated downfall. The readiness of former allies such as Bennet, Avigdor Lieberman, Gideon Saar, and Ayelet Shaked to act together to dethrone him is testament to what a toxic figure Netanyahu became, even on the far right of the political spectrum.

Following the bloodshed of recent weeks, the terrible legacy of Netanyahu's years of self-serving misrule have become all too obvious. By killing off all avenues to a just peace, while seeking to slowly strangle the Palestinians out of existence, he has made such explosions of anger inevitable — not just inside the giant prisons of Gaza and the West Bank, but inside Israeli cities, where mobs of deranged settlers took to the streets with the intention of tearing Arab citizens to pieces.

The 20 percent of Israelis with Arab citizenship were once relatively reconciled to life within an Israeli state. This consensus has been fatally undermined by a succession of hard-right leaders who rendered non-Jews second-class citizens, along with racist attacks and media demonization. That an Arab party played a decisive role in ousting Netanyahu has opened eyes to their power when non-Jewish minorities act together. This mobilization of Arab activism is a sweetly ironic component of Netanyahu's legacy, particularly with demographics remorselessly trending in favor of Arabs and other minorities.

Israeli journalists predict that the ousting of Netanyahu's ultra-Orthodox stablemates will loosen these factions' pincer-like grip on the state, allowing for secular and progressive voices to argue that Israel has spent the past 20 years traveling in an erroneous, dangerous

direction toward pariah statehood. There has been a conspicuous exodus of wealthy figures from Israel, despairing at the ceaseless turmoil and fearing that their luxury Tel Aviv homes were sitting ducks for Hamas and Hezbollah missiles because of Netanyahu and Bennett's indefinite deferral of a peace solution.

It is glaringly obvious that there must be a credible path to peace, but never have we been more bereft of capable leaders. We have a Palestinian leadership that has eroded any semblance of democratic legitimacy, Western leaderships hoping to focus their attentions as far from the Middle East as possible, and an Israeli coalition likely to disintegrate at the first whiff of political crisis, under a prime minister who argues that "the era of negotiations is over." If we are to achieve Arafat's "peace of the brave," there must be intensified efforts to find courageous, far-sighted leaders ready to do everything it takes to bring lasting stability and justice to the region.

Israel is meanwhile losing the global battle for public opinion. Never before has there been greater readiness in the US and the West to voice criticism of Israel, with Democrats in the US Congress questioning whether it is tenable to continue bestowing billions of dollars upon a state engaged in illegal occupation, ethnic cleansing and apartheid. If Western publics continue to watch Israeli bombs murdering Palestinian children on the evening TV news, then it is merely a question of when the dam breaks and Israel finds itself alone on the world stage.

By selecting as prime minister an extreme-right politician who sees nothing wrong with the mass murder and expulsion of Arab citizens, Israel only brings the moment closer when it no longer has sympathetic allies to shield it at the Security Council and other international bodies. As moderate Israelis warn: Bennett's fanatical aspirations for an aggressively expansionist, monolithically Jewish state risk sowing the seeds of Israel's demise.

—Courtesy: Arab News

US should quickly recognize Rohingya genocide

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim



It is much more difficult to acknowledge crimes against humanity in our own times, such as, for example, the genocide against the Rohingya, which is currently being investigated by the International Court of Justice

AFTER the Trump presidency, the Biden administration has had to work overtime to reshape America's image in the world. To that end, the State Department under Secretary of State Antony Blinken has done some pretty remarkable things. Joe Biden was, for example, the first US President to recognize the Armenian genocide, despite staunch opposition from Turkey, an important US regional ally.

But recognizing historical crimes is relatively easy. National prides may be hurt and official protests lodged, but otherwise nothing needs to change. Turkey remains a member of NATO, just as begrudgingly as before.

It is much more difficult to acknowledge crimes against humanity in our own times, such as, for example, the genocide against the Rohingya, which is currently being investigated by the International Court of Justice. This is not least because recognition of ongoing human rights abuses demand — often explicitly under international law and even under domestic law — immediate action.

To recognize genocide obliges a country to do everything in its power to stop it, for example under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948.

The upside is that timely recognition of a contemporary genocide also enables a powerful

country like the US to take action to mitigate and reduce the outcomes of the genocide, and to frustrate the designs of the perpetrators. Timely recognition is not just about political messaging and posturing, it can actually serve the cause of human rights in real time by intervening to protect real human beings. Doing the difficult work to counteract genocide is also the only sure-fire way to gain the moral credibility that the Biden administration is pursuing on the international stage. What is more, the US does not have a recent history of intervention in this particular region, nor does it have any essential interests there.

In January, one of the last actions of the Trump administration's State Department under Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was to recognize the abuses against the Uighur Muslim minority of Xinjiang, China, as genocide. Such accusations had the merit of being fully justified, as a number of independent reports have since confirmed. Nevertheless, many were highly skeptical on the timing of the determination, believing it was motivated by Donald Trump's confrontational attitude toward China.

The determination, they argued, was an attempt by the outgoing administration to poison the well for the incoming one and preempt any possibility that Biden might reset Washington's relationship with Beijing. After

all, a popular campaign slogan that was used to relentlessly attack Biden's weakness on China was "Beijing Biden." Even though we can see with our own eyes what is happening in Xinjiang, Trump and Pompeo should get full credit for the recognition of that genocide, especially on the international stage.

In recognizing the actual genocide — a contemporary genocide no less — the Trump administration did more on this issue in practice than the Biden administration has managed so far. Despite ill-conceived attempts to tarnish that determination as being politically motivated, this does put pressure on Biden and Blinken. If Trump and Pompeo can identify genocide when they see it, Biden and Blinken must do at least as well.

The upside, however, is that, once this happens, we can also trust this administration to do something for the victims.

Doing so will be difficult and will require expending a substantial amount of political capital in order to both support the democratic opposition to the military coup in Myanmar, while also imposing on it the need to make full amends to the Rohingya once it is in a position to do so. Then, America will not only have talked the talk on human rights, it will have also walked the walk.

Then, and only then, can Biden claim that America really is "back".

—Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Robinson suspended from int'l cricket

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: England fast bowler Ollie Robinson has been suspended from "all international cricket" after historical racist and sexist tweets came to light earlier this week when he made his test debut against New Zealand, the country's cricket board (ECB) said on Sunday. Robinson, 27, was the pick of England's bowlers in the drawn test with seven wickets in the match and had released a statement on Wednesday apologising for his "thoughtless and irresponsible" tweets. "England and Sussex bowler Ollie Robinson has been suspended from all international cricket pending the outcome of a disciplinary investigation following historic tweets he posted in 2012 and 2013," the ECB said in a statement. "He will not be available for selection for the second Test against New Zealand starting at Edgbaston on Thursday 10 June. Robinson will leave the England camp immediately and return to his county."

Next elections under new...

From Page 01

Science and Technology Shibli Faraz, Adviser on Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Babar Awan and Adviser on Interior and Accountability Shahzad Akbar after having a meeting with the officials of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) in Islamabad on Monday. The Minister for Information said the government is discussing the features of this new mechanism with the ECP and also presenting the same at the Parliament. He said on Monday, they discussed with the ECP officials the proposed legislation for electoral reforms, electronic voting machines, biometric system. Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the government had proposed forty-nine amendments in the Electoral Reforms Bill tabled in the National Assembly in October last year, and they shared its details with the ECP. He said it was decided on Monday that the Ministry of Science and Technology will present a demonstration on the EVM to the ECP, and then the Election Commission can appoint a consultant to get his opinion on the matter. The Minister said the PTI government has promised to provide right to franchise to overseas Pakistanis, who have an important role in the national development. He said a report has been presented to the ECP in this regard.

Imran, Boris discuss...

From Page 01

The Covid-19 pandemic while saving lives, securing livelihoods, and stimulating the economy. The Prime Minister impressed upon the UK to revisit the decision of placing Pakistan on Red List of travel ban countries. On Afghanistan, Prime Minister Imran Khan reiterated Pakistan's support for an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process. The Prime Minister reiterated his longstanding stance that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and that a negotiated political solution was the only way forward. Underscoring the importance of a responsible withdrawal, the Prime Minister apprised his British counterpart of Pakistan's on-going efforts to support the Afghan peace process, as part of a shared responsibility.

China, Turkey...

From Page 01

On the other hand Turkey also expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in Ghotki train collision. "We are deeply saddened to receive the news that as a result of a train crash in Ghotki district of Sindh province in Pakistan today more than 30 people have lost their lives and many others were injured," the Turkish Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

Putin signs law taking Russia out of Open Skies treaty

"This caused serious damage to the treaty's observance and its significance in building confidence and transparency, (causing) a threat to Russia's national security," the Kremlin said in a statement on its website

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin signed a law on Monday that formalises Russia's exit from the Open Skies arms control treaty, a pact that allows unarmed surveillance flights over member countries. Russia had hoped that Putin and his United States counterpart Joe Biden could discuss the treaty when they meet later this month at a summit in Geneva. But the Biden administration informed Moscow in May that it would not re-enter the

pact after the Trump administration quit it last year. The Kremlin said on Monday that the US decision to withdraw from the treaty had "significantly upset the balance of interests" among the pact's members and had compelled Russia to exit. "This caused serious damage to the treaty's observance and its significance in building confidence and transparency, (causing) a threat to Russia's national security," the Kremlin said in a statement on its website. Moscow had hoped that Biden would reverse his predecessor's decision.



But the Biden administration did not change tack, accusing Russia of violating the pact, which Moscow denied. Russian officials said they regretted the US decision not to rejoin, calling it a "political mistake" and warned the move would not create an atmosphere conducive to arms control discussions at the Geneva summit. In January, Russia announced its own plans to leave the treaty, and the government submitted legislation to parliament last month to formalise its departure. At that time, a Kremlin spokesman said one reason was that the

US was still able to receive information acquired via the treaty from its NATO allies. But US officials have said Russia has breached the treaty by restricting US overflights of Russia's neighbour Georgia and the Russian enclave in Kaliningrad on the Baltic coast. Russia denies committing any violations. The treaty, which was signed in 1992 and took effect in 2002, allows countries to conduct short-notice, unarmed surveillance flights over the entire territory of other parties and collect information on one another's military forces.

78 patients on life support in Kazakhstan

DNA

NUR SULTAN: In the past 24 hours, Kazakhstan has added 989 new cases of the coronavirus infection, Kazinform has learnt from coronavirus2020.kz. Karaganda region leads in terms of number of fresh daily infections with 171 cases. Ranked second is Almaty city with 143 new COVID-19 cases. The Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, posted the third highest number of coronavirus cases - 120. 77 people tested positive for COVID-19 in East Kazakhstan region, 70 - in Akmola region, 60 - West Kazakhstan region, 55 - in Pavlodar region, 54 - in Almaty region, 49 - in Atyrau region, 37 - in Kostanay region, 33 - in Zhambyl region, 31 - in Shymkent city, 28 - in Mangistau region, 22 - in Aktobe region, 20 - in Turkestan region, 10 - in North Kazakhstan region, and 9 - in Kyzylorda region. 579 COVID-19 patients are in critical condition in Kazakhstan as of June 7, the Ministry of Healthcare of the Republic of Kazakhstan said. According to the ministry, 8,724 patients are staying at hospitals, while 15,876 are receiving outpatient treatment. 579 patients are in extremely severe condition and 78 are on artificial lung ventilation.

Azerbaijan begins vaccinations with Pfizer

DNA

BAKU: The Pfizer vaccine has been used in Azerbaijan as part of the vaccination against COVID-19 since June 7, the Azerbaijani Ministry of Health told Trend. The use of the vaccine against COVID-19 was launched in the outpatient clinics of the Baku Health Center and the Central Clinical Hospital in Baku. Any citizen older than 18 who has no medical contraindications can be vaccinated against COVID-19. For this purpose, it is necessary to visit the website <https://randevu.its.gov.az> and sign up for the online queue. One must first enter the serial number and FIN-code of the identity card in the corresponding section.

New envoys present credentials..

From Page 01

Congratulations the newly-appointed Ambassadors, the President expressed the hope that they would play their role in further strengthening political, commercial and cultural relations with Pakistan. While talking to the envoys separately, President Dr Arif Alvi said that Pakistan wanted to work closely with the friendly countries to address various challenges being faced by the world. He briefed the envoys about the successful economic policies of the government, saying that Pakistan's economy is performing well despite the Covid-19 Pandemic. The President apprised the envoys that Pakistan offered investment opportunities and the world should take benefit of business-friendly environment by investing in different sectors of economy. He underscored that Pakistan's main emphasis had shifted from geo-political to geo-economics and was focussing on improving regional connectivity and economic integration. The President also highlighted the brutalities committed by Indian security forces against innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He urged the international community to play active role to stop India from committing human rights violations and grant the right of self-determination to the people of IIOJK in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Ghotki: over 50 killed as...

From Page 01

He said there were up to 25 people in one compartment yet to be accessed. The accident occurred after the coaches of one train, the Millat Express, derailed and fell across the opposite track, where they were hit by another train, the Sir Syed Express, a spokesperson for Pakistan Railways had said in a statement. Eight bogies of Millat Express and three bogies, including the engine, of Sir Syed Express derailed. A rescue operation was launched some hours after the accident was reported. The injured and deceased were shifted to hospitals in Sadqabad, Dahrki and Mirpur Mathelo. Sources confirmed that four railway employees are among those killed in the train accident. Sources said that several passengers are still feared to be trapped in the train for which heavy machinery has been called. According to local officials, the rescue operation was hampered at night because of the dark night and the arrival of heavy machinery was delayed due to difficult routes. The Ghotki SSP said that a medical relief camp has been set up at the accident site and medical aid is being provided to the injured.



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmed Khan Called on Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation, and discussed on the way forward in the Afghan Peace Process. - DNA

Federer withdraws from French Open

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Former world number one Roger Federer, who is targeting a record 21st Grand Slam title at Wimbledon, withdrew from the French Open on Sunday, a day after winning a tough third-round match, opting to save himself for the grass-court season. "After discussions with my team, I decided that I should withdraw from the French Open today," Federer said in a statement released by the French Tennis Federation. "After two knee operations and more than a year of rehabilitation, it's important that I listen to my body and not rush back into competition," the 39-year-old Swiss added. Federer, who has hardly played in the last 17 months because of a knee injury, suffered physically in his four-set, late-night victory over German Dominik Koepfer and decided to end his Roland Garros campaign ahead of what would have been a punishing fourth-round match against Italian Matteo Berrettini. He had said after his weekend match that he was pondering whether to participate in the second week of the claycourt Grand Slam as his season goal was Wimbledon, the grass-court major starting in three weeks.

Israeli police bar settler march

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Right-wing pro-settler Israeli groups have scrapped a controversial march that was to take place this week in Jerusalem after police refused to authorise it, arguing that neither the format nor the timing of the event was suitable given the current levels of tension in Israel. The so-called March of the Flags was due to take place on Thursday and proceed through flashpoint spots in Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem. "Police refused to give us authorisation," a spokesman said, prompting a cancellation of the event. News figure of the Palestinian armed group Hamas, it was not clear if the cancellation was linked to his remarks. Israeli police said in a statement that "the current route at this time would review a petition to reschedule manner. "We warn the occupation approach East Jerusalem and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, 106 Israeli settlers stormed the courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, 72 settlers during the morning break-in sessions and 34 during the afternoon break-in sessions. The settlers entered through the Al-Mughhrabi Gate and were provoking the Palestinian worshippers in the mosque courtyards by performing Talmudic prayers before they left it through the Al-Silsila Gate. Local sources said the settlers also put up a sign at the Al-Mughhrabi Gate that says "Hallel Gate", in a reference to Hallel Ariel, a female Israeli settler killed in 2006 in the Israeli settlement of Kiryat Arba in Hebron in the occupied West Bank, in an attempt to judaize the holy site. - DNA

South Darfur: 36 killed in tribal clashes

FOREIGN DESK

DARFUR: At least 36 people have been killed and dozens wounded after clashes between Arab and non-Arab tribes in South Darfur over the weekend. The fighting broke out on Saturday between the Arab Taisha and ethnic African Fallata tribes in the remote Um Dafuq area of South Darfur, witnesses said. Official news agency SUNA said calm was restored by Monday. "Military forces were deployed to the areas of clashes to resolve the

conflict between Fallata and Taisha tribes which left 36 killed and 32 wounded," SUNA reported late on Sunday quoting South Darfur officials. It was not immediately clear what triggered the clashes but similar fighting often erupts in the Darfur region over land and access to water. Um Dafuq resident Eissa Omar told AFP news agency "we heard the sound of heavy weapons throughout the fighting" which broke out Saturday and continued on Sunday. The vast Darfur region, located in western Sudan, has been the scene

of similar bouts of violence in recent months. In April, at least 132 people were killed in West Darfur fighting between members of the Massalit tribe and Arab communities, forcing authorities to impose a state of emergency. In January, renewed clashes between Arab and non-Arab tribes in the West and South Darfur regions killed more than 250 people. The violence came as Sudan navigates a rocky transition following the toppling of longtime president Omar al-Bashir in April 2019, after mass protests against his rule. The transitional government installed after Bashir's removal has been pushing to end long-running conflicts including in Darfur. It signed a landmark peace agreement with multiple key rebel groups in October, and it is currently in talks to forge peace with the remaining two holdout groups. The recent violence in Darfur appeared not to involve any signatories to the October peace deal. On December 31, a hybrid United Nations and African Union peacekeeping mission ended its operations in Darfur.

Azerbaijan-China bilateral ties gear up

Azerbaijan-China are countries that strongly oppose separatism and always support each other's territorial integrity. Aliyev has repeatedly stressed that Azerbaijan consistently supports the One China policy

DNA

BAKU: Against the background of Azerbaijan's increasing regional leadership and significance in global politics, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev received two phone calls of extreme importance from two global power centers at once. Chinese President Xi Jinping and European Council President Charles Michel called Baku on June 2. This can be seen as a manifestation of assessment of the aforesaid facts about Azerbaijan after the last year's victory in the 44-day war with Armenia. The trade turnover of China, which is one of the global power centers today, being the second economy in the world, reaches \$ 500 billion and it is growing despite all the obstacles. Even

its enemies assess its prospects very highly. Undoubtedly, it will occupy a special place in the post-pandemic world order, the outlines of which are already visible today. In the light of this picture, developing Azerbaijani-Chinese relations are considered to be fundamentally important. It is gratifying to note that China assigns one of the key positions in its grandiose plans to Azerbaijan. The country's advantageous geographical position is not the only important point here. Azerbaijan is an established state, pursuing an independent policy, leading in its region in all respects, capable of setting broad goals and achieving them. Moreover, as a conscientious and responsible partner, Azerbaijan's interests and actions do not depend on the state of affairs in the global political arena. For example, if today, a US-pro-

posed campaign starts in Europe for the EU countries to withdraw from China's One Belt, One Road initiative, this does not mean that Baku, being a long-standing EU partner, will follow someone's example in order to keep up. On the contrary, under such circumstances, the Middle Corridor of the New Silk Road, which passes through Azerbaijan, acquires even greater significance. In his conversation, Jinping stressed that Chinese-Azerbaijani relations are on the threshold of a new historical stage. Both countries are developing traditional friendship, deepening cooperation, and expanding mutual support. The Chinese leader emphasized the importance of partnership with Azerbaijan in the implementation of the One Belt, One Road initiative and expressed readiness to further encourage

Chinese companies to invest in Azerbaijan. For his part, President Ilham Aliyev expressed his readiness to further strengthen ties with Beijing in all spheres and welcomed the expansion of the activities of Chinese companies in Azerbaijan. It should be noted that Azerbaijan's national leader Heydar Aliyev laid the foundation of high-level political dialogue and economic partnership by his official visit to China in 1994. During Aliyev's official visit to China, Baku and Beijing signed a joint statement to lay the foundation of friendly relations between China and Azerbaijan on March 7, 1994. The parties pledged to develop relations of friendship and cooperation based on the principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and

mutual benefit, as well as peaceful coexistence. Baku and Beijing still continue to adhere to all these principles in their relations. President Aliyev has successfully developed and moved to a qualitatively new stage the Azerbaijani-Chinese dialogue and bilateral ties. China is one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence. The two countries will mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022. Azerbaijan and China are countries that strongly oppose separatism and always support each other's territorial integrity. Aliyev has repeatedly stressed that Azerbaijan consistently supports the One China policy. For his part, Jinping has repeatedly noted China's support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and independence.

Briefs

Libya to sign Paris climate deal

FOREIGN DESK

TRIPOLI: The Libyan government has decided to sign the landmark Paris Agreement on climate change, Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh announced on Sunday.

"Libya is one of the few countries that has not signed the Paris Climate Agreement, and the Government of National Unity has today decided to sign it with pride and responsibility," the state television quoted Dbeibeh as saying at a ceremony marking World Environment Day. The agreement will be sent to the parliament for approval, he added. He said that his country is among the countries most affected by the negative effects of climate change due to its climate and geographical location. The Paris Agreement is considered a landmark document in global climate change efforts and a legally binding treaty.

Fujimori leads in tight Peru presidential vote

LIMA: Right-wing populist Keiko Fujimori held a narrow lead Monday in Peru's presidential election, but the crisis-hit nation's race was too close to call as votes were still being tabulated from countryside bastions of support for radical leftist Pedro Castillo.

Fujimori had 50.27 percent of ballots to Castillo's 49.7 percent, according to partial results from Peru's electoral body, with about 90 percent of polling stations counted after voting Sunday in a country battered by years of political turbulence.

Whoever wins will take leadership of a nation in crisis, suffering from recession and with the worst coronavirus fatality rate in the world after recording more than 184,000 deaths among its 33 million population. Peruvians will also look to the winner to end years of political turmoil after four presidents in the last three years, and with seven of the last 10 of the country's leaders either having been convicted or investigated for corruption.

The head of Peru's top electoral body (ONPE), Piero Corvetto, warned that many polling stations from rural areas - Castillo's stronghold - had yet to be tallied. "They haven't counted our votes yet," Castillo told supporters Sunday in Tacabamba, in the northern Cajamarca region where he lives. Castillo, 51, had earlier urged his supporters to "stay calm." - APP

Johnson faces parliamentary rebellion

WEB DESK

LONDON: Prime Minister Boris Johnson is facing a possible parliamentary rebellion over his government's contentious decision to slash the United Kingdom's foreign aid budget.

Breaking a manifesto promise, Johnson's Conservative government in November said it would reduce spending on aid by billions of pounds this year to help mend coronavirus pandemic-battered public finances. But the decision to turn back on a legally enshrined commitment - 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) on international development - enraged charities and the opposition. Dozens of Conservative MPs also oppose the move, including former prime minister Theresa May; they say shrinking the outlay to 0.5 percent of GNI will leave the UK as the only G7 member which fails to meet the 0.7 percent target.

The top five countries receiving UK aid in 2019 were Pakistan, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Yemen and Nigeria, with almost all the money going to countries in Africa and Asia, according to official data published last September. Britain spent 1.5 billion pounds on humanitarian assistance mostly in Yemen, Syria and Bangladesh, government statistics showed.

Two Fintech deals add to Startup funding rush in Pak

Covid has helped us because previously investors' due diligence process would usually involve them coming to the country. It was not that easy for them to visit Pakistan," Ali Farid Khwaja, chairman at Karachi-based KASB Securities, said in an interview

DNA

KARACHI: A flood of overseas capital into Pakistan's fintech startups that began during the coronavirus pandemic is continuing unabated, with two new fundraising deals announced on Monday. Khadim Ali Shah Bukhari Securities Pvt.'s fintech trading app KTrade as well as former Morgan Stanley fund manager Omair Ansari's early wage access platform have raised a total of \$6.6 million, adding to the \$19.3 mil-

lion funding for the country's startups in the first quarter of 2021.

Of that, nearly \$15 million came from foreign investors, which poured a record \$48 million into the sector last year, according to an April tweet by Invest2Innovate that support startups. The decrease in global air travel during Covid-19 has been an unexpected boon for startups in the South Asian nation, which has had travel advisories issued against it by many nations. "Covid has helped us because previously investors' due dili-

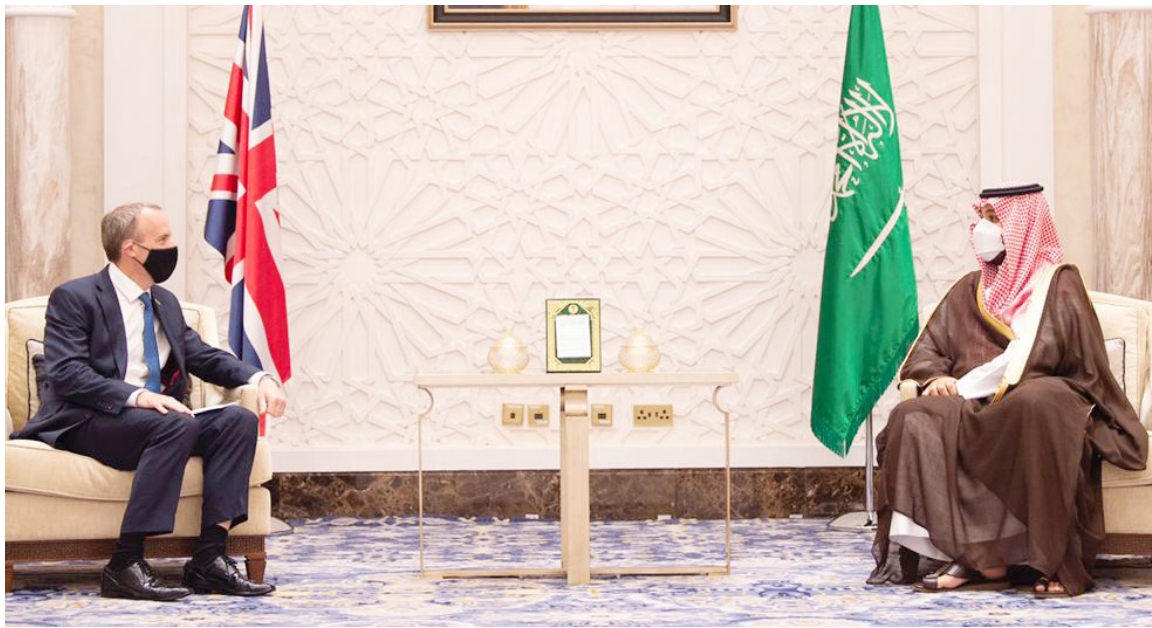


gence process would usually involve them coming to the country. It was not that easy for them

to visit Pakistan," Ali Farid Khwaja, chairman at Karachi-based KASB Securities, said in an interview.

"Now they can't go to any country, they became open to speaking with founders over Zoom and other digital means." KTrade, which allows investors to buy and sell equities on the Pakistan Stock Exchange, raised \$4.5 million in a funding round led by Hong Kong-based TT Bond Partners and HOF Capital from New York, according to a statement by the company. German investor Christian An-

germayer also participated in the round. Ansari raised \$2.1 million in seed funding for Abhi, which like Payactiv Inc. and Wagstream Ltd. allows employees to access already earned wages before they're paid out. Investors included VEF Ltd. and Village Global, Ansari said in an email. "There are always stages in an ecosystem," said Talal Gondal, Chief Executive Officer at TAG Innovation Pvt., which recently raised one of the highest pre-seed fundings in the region. "Pakistan's fintech wave is just starting."



JEDDAH: Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman meets with British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab in Jeddah where they discussed developments in the Middle East. - DNA

Israel turned Gaza into "human slaughterhouse"

PYONGYANG: The North Korean Foreign Ministry has slammed the occupation state of 'Israel' following its 11-day aggression on the Gaza Strip, saying 'Israel' has turned Gaza into "a huge human slaughterhouse." In a statement on Friday, the North Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs said "Israel's horrific crime of killing the bud-like children, yet to be bloomed, is a severe challenge to the future of humankind and a crime against humanity." "It is no exaggeration to say that the whole Gaza Strip has turned into a huge human slaughterhouse and a place of massacring children," the ministry continued. "Soon after the end of the bombardment, [Israel Prime Minister Benjamin] Netanyahu and the Israeli authorities are trying to conceal their crime of killing even the children." It added that international news outlets are "strongly condemning Israel for continuing to massacre children, pointing at Israel as a culprit of expulsion of Palestinians, illegal settlement expansion and sowing the seeds of hatred by suppressing their peaceful praying ceremony."

It also accused Israel of "sowing the seeds of hatred by suppressing [the Palestinians'] peaceful praying ceremony," an apparent reference to Israeli forces violence in the Al-Aqsa Mosque against Palestinians. 19 families in the Gaza Strip have been wiped off the population civil registry during Israel's 11-day aggression, the Palestinian Health Ministry said, including 41 children and 25 women. - Foreign Desk

Sino-Pak co-op in sugar industry to bring sweet revolution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Pakistan and China can produce high-grade sugar in abundance and export it across the world. What the two 'iron brothers' need to do is to enhance cooperation to uplift sugarcane industry in Pakistan," Dr. Gu Wenliang, Agricultural Commissioner of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan said, according to China Economic Net (CEN). "As the saying goes: 'The friendship between China and Pakistan are higher than the Himalayas, deeper than the ocean.' Sugarcane cooperation between China and Pakistan will bring sweet revolution to the iron brothers, and will literally turn the friendship between the two nations 'sweeter than honey'," he remarked. Dr. Gu Wenliang was speak-

ing at "China-Pakistan Sugarcane Industry Cooperation and Exchange Forum" held online where experts from both China and Pakistan participated and exchanged views.

"It is a great forum. Our responsibility is to connect people and experts from China & Pakistan and provide them a platform. This is what we are doing with zeal and zest. China and Pakistan should join hands to promote sugarcane production and processing to produce high-grade sugar. Believe me, two iron friends can export sugar to the world if they enhance cooperation in this field," he said, adding that the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan will continue connecting people from both sides.

Mr. Liu Kui, Director of International Cooperation Department, Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural

Sciences (CATAS), introduced different aspects of CATAS, and gave an impressive industrialization application of 'Tissue Culture' which, according to him, can bring revolution in the production of sugarcane.

"Chinese Academy of Tropical Agriculture Science has been giving training to the scientists across the globe. It has introduced 100 training courses for 4,000 participants from more than 90 countries. More than 40 young scientists from Asia, Africa, and Latin America came to CATAS for medium and long term visits and exchanges," he said, adding that CATAS has sent its experts to more than twenty countries to conduct agriculture technology guidance and demonstration of extension. Liu said CATAS has been transferring technology

and Pakistan can also benefit from it. "CATAS and agricultural enterprises at home jointly carry out international technology transfer," he said adding that the Plant Rapid Propagation Research Center of CATAS was established in 2003 and mainly engaged in plant tissue culture and in vitro conversation of tropical plants.

"During the past three years, the center has finished the in vitro cultures of about 140 varieties which belong to more than 40 families," Mr. Liu said, adding that his center can extend training to Pakistani experts as well as initiate transfer of technology. "We are planning to set up the China Asia-Pacific Tropical Agricultural and technology Cooperation Network and hope to get your (Pakistanis') support," he concluded.

Trade gap hits economy

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Monday expressed concern over increasing circular debt, ballooning trade deficit, and receding FDI. Power sector circular debt and trade deficit should be

controlled otherwise it will create problems for the masses and the economy and result in a mini-budget soon after the annual budget, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that reforms in the power sector is slower than needed which will push circular debt to Rs2.7 billion by the end of this fiscal. - DNA



TOKYO: Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan Imtiaz Ahmed opens Pakistani mangoes exhibition in Tokyo. Pakistani mangoes recently arrived in Japan. The king of fruits was given a rousing welcome by the Japanese people. - DNA

CPEC Agri development allocation to be doubled

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In connection with CPEC phase II tech-savvy Agriculture cooperation between Pakistan and China, Punjab budget 2021-22 is going to have double allocation for agriculture projects with emphasis on improving the quality of seeds and agricultural services to boost production, Gwadar Pro reported on Monday. Inspired by incentives given by China to farmers and implementing new priorities laid down in CPEC phase II, Punjab budget 2021-22 is ushering in a new era of agricul-

ture taxes to boost agro-based initiatives as well as corporate farming.

The tax rate on agricultural services is being curtailed to 1 per cent from 16 per cent for the corporate sector in order to make the sector attractive for investment. CPEC authority Chairman Asif Saleem Bajwa in a media talk said that efficient and corporate farming is going to be introduced for the first time in the country in cooperation with China under CPEC. "Model farms are going to be started on vast areas of land under CPEC from the next crop, and a 25-percent enhancement in local yields is

expected under the guidance of Chinese experts on the farms," he said. In order to make Budget farmer-friendly, many measures have already been taken and whose fruits are quite visible now. Numerous private companies interested in corporate farming have applied. The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered 50 companies regarding corporate agriculture farming in May 2021. As many as 18 projects worth around Rs83 billion have been identified in the agriculture sector under the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

(CPEC) Project, with an aim to exploit its true potential and modernize it for sustainable economic growth. About twelve short, medium and long-term projects identified by the China-Pakistan Joint Working Groups (JWG) are related to Livestock Wing, Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFS&R) and Livestock and Dairy Development Department. Six projects are related to research and development to be executed by Pakistan Agricultural Research Council while one project has been identified for the establishment of Aquaculture Park in Coastal Areas of Pakistan.

Kazakhstan exceeds 395,000 covid cases

DNA

NUR SULTAN: In the past 24 hours, Kazakhstan has added 989 new cases of the coronavirus infection, Kazinform has learnt from coronavirus2020.kz. Karaganda region leads in terms of number of fresh daily infections with 171 cases. Ranked second is Almaty city with 143 new COVID-19 cases. The Kazakh capital, Nur-Sultan, posted the third highest number of coronavirus cases - 120. 77 people tested positive for COVID-19 in East Kazakhstan region, 70 - in Akmol region, 60 - West Kazakhstan region, 55 - in Pavlodar region, 54 - in Almaty region, 49 - in Atyrau region, 37 - in Kostanay region, 33 - in Zhambyl region, 31 - in Shymkent city, 28 - in Mangistau region, 22 - in Aktobe region, 20 - in Turkestan region, 10 - in North Kazakhstan region, and 9 - in Kyzylorda region. Kazakhstan registered 989 new cases of the coronavirus infection, pushing the total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Kazakhstan to 395,064 since the start of the pandemic. Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic 367,285 people fully recovered from the novel coronavirus nationwide.

Rohingya feel trapped: HRW

MONITORING DESK

LONDON: Rohingya refugees moved to a Bangladesh island fear they will be exposed to terrible conditions during the upcoming monsoon season, and are struggling with "inadequate" health and education facilities, a Human Rights Watch report said. About 18,800 refugees have been moved from the Cox's Bazar region - where approximately 850,000 people live in squalid and cramped conditions after fleeing Myanmar - to the low-lying silt island of Bhasan Char in the Bay of Bengal. A spokesman for the prime minister's office told the AFP news agency that another 80,000 Rohingya would be moved to the island soon.

The Bangladesh government has insisted the relocation is voluntary, and that the island is safe from cyclones and its facilities are far better than the Cox's Bazar camps.

Commodore Abdullah Al Mamun Chowdhury, the director of Bhasan Char project, has assured that the island has enough preparation to tackle the monsoon and tidal surge. "Bhasan Char has a total of 120 cyclone shelter centres. Each of these centres can accommodate 1,000 people and 200 cattle during a storm. Those are also being constructed in a systematic manner. I don't think any of the refugees living here are in danger," he told Al Jazeera.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
(WORKS DIVISION-II)

TENDER NOTICE

CDA invites the sealed tenders on percentage basis duly filled in figures as well as in words from the contractors registered with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in relevant category, specific codes and Income Tax Department for the year 2020-21, as per details given below:-

Sr.#	Name of Work	NIT Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Tender Fee (Rs.)	Bid submission date & Time	Bid Opening date & Time
1	Construction of Police Station I-16 Islamabad. (S.H Santhry Post, Drp down barrier, wooden Ward robe and Additional Grill work and other allied balance Works)	1,080 Million	Rs.32,500/-	3,000/-	22-06-2021 at 11.30 AM	22-06-2021 at 12.00 Noon

Tender details are also available at CDA web site www.cda.gov.pk and PPRA website www.ppra.org.pk

- Bidding documents can be obtained from the office of Dy. Director, Works Division-II CDA, located at Room No. 22, CDA Office, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad, on cash payment as given above per set (Non-refundable) on any working day up to **21-06-2021 before 12.00 PM** against written request.
- Application should be on letterhead having name, address, phone numbers and signature of the contractor enclosing call deposit and attested copies of CNIC, valid PEC registration certificate with codes **CE-09, CE-10, & EE-04** Income Tax registration number/certificate, valid Professional Tax certificate and ownership proof in shape of partnership deed/sole proprietor/power of attorney in favour of authorized representative.
- In case of incomplete documents mentioned in Sr. 2, bidding documents will not be issued to the applicant. Original documents should also be available with the applicant/authorized representative for verification, if deemed necessary.
- The earnest money in shape of bank draft/call deposit (CDR) from local scheduled banks in favour of Dy. Director, Works Division-II must accompany with the application for issuance of tender documents.
- That only legitimate attorney holder may be allowed to get tender documents.
- The Bid Security of all bidders would be deposited in the CDA bank account and same may be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidders.
- The eligibility criteria of the firms with the relevant experience i.e. at least three number of work in last two financial years may be observed / fulfilled before issuance of tender documents.
- Bids will be received/opened publicly as per date and time given above in the office of Director Works, CDA located at Room No. 21, Old Navel Complex, G-6 Markaz, Islamabad.
- CDA reserves the right to accept or reject any/all tenders as per PPRA rules 33(1) CDA, upon request of bidder/contractor who submitted a bid, will communicate the grounds for its rejection, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- Conditional tender will not be entertained.

(Jamil Ahmed)

Dy. Director, Works Division-II, CDA

PID (I) No. 6755/20

Briefs

Army Rescue operation continues in Ghotki

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team among Pakistan Rangers troops were busy in rescue operation being carried out at the train accident site near Ghotki to evacuate the injured and deceased. The relief and rescue efforts were in progress by Army and Pakistan Rangers troops, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release received here Monday. The Army's USAR team carrying disc cutter, Hydraulic spreaders, life locators and search cameras was specially flown from Rawalpindi that was busy in relief and rescue efforts, it added. Moreover, Rescue 1122 team from Rahim Yar Khan was also part of rescue operation whereas frame cutting of train was in progress to evacuate people inside bogies (train carriages). The ISPR stated that most of the injured have been evacuated to hospitals of Rahim Yar Khan, Ghotki and Mirpur Mathelo. However, seriously injured people were being airlifted to Pano Aqil through helicopter.

India offers condolence to Ghotki victims

ISLAMABAD: The Indian High Commission in Islamabad on Monday sent commiserations to the victims of the Ghotki train collision, which killed nearly 50 people and left more than a hundred injured. The Commission, taking to its official Twitter account, wrote: "We are saddened at the tragic train accident that took place in Ghotki, Sindh today morning. We offer condolences to families of the deceased and wish a speedy recovery to the injured." Two express trains collided on Monday in Sindh's Ghotki and killed nearly 50 passengers, while more than 100 others have been injured, said police and rescue officials. The Millat Express derailed and the Sir Syed Express train hit it soon afterwards, railways officials confirmed, saying that the collision took place between the Raiti and Obaro railway stations. A rescue operation is underway at the site of the crash and the injured are being shifted to hospitals. — DNA

India re-opens major cities

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Key Indian cities re-opened for business on Monday, with long queues for buses in the financial hub of Mumbai while traffic returned to the roads of New Delhi after a devastating second wave of coronavirus that killed hundreds of thousands. The 100,636 new infections of the past 24 hours were the lowest in the world's second most populous nation since April 6, and well off last month's peaks of more than 400,000, allowing authorities to re-open parts of the economy. "We have to save ourselves from infection but also bring the economy back on track," Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Twitter. He ordered half the capital's shops to open on odd and even numbered days of the month respectively, in a bid to limit crowds, but allowed offices and the Delhi underground rail network to run at 50% of capacity. But some curbs were retained, such as the ban on dining in restaurants and the use of theatres and gyms in a city still slowly recovering from a surge in the months of April and May that overwhelmed hospitals.



SADIQABAD: Rescue operation under way after train collision near Sadiqabad on Monday morning. Inquiry has been ordered. News on the Front Page. — Photos by Jan Ali Laghari



Naval Chief stresses need for saving aquatic life

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Monday said there was a dire need to mend our ways in which we were affecting the oceans and aquatic life existing in them. In his message on World Oceans Day, the Naval Chief emphasized that we could only protect the Earth's ultimate source of life through joint efforts, a Pakistan Navy news release here received said. Admiral Niazi said, "Today, on 8th of June 2021, we celebrate 'World Oceans Day', to focus on the maintenance and development of the oceans and coastal areas." He added that the oceans; a major source of sustenance of life on earth, act as lungs to our planet as they provide more than 50 percent of the oxygen produced on this planet. "They are also major absorbers of greenhouse gases and carbon dioxide. Thus, human activity on land is directly affecting the oceans and the life that flourishes within," he underscored. The purpose of World Oceans Day, celebrated globally under the ambit of UN, was to enlighten the world community regarding the impact of human actions on the oceans and to explore ways and means for their sustainable use and the marine resources we derived from them, the Naval Chief said. The theme selected for World Oceans Day 2021 by UN is 'The Ocean: Life and Livelihoods'. This offers an opportunity to explore the human life relationship with the oceans.

US approves Alzheimer's drug in almost two decades

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The first new treatment for Alzheimer's disease for nearly 20 years has been approved by regulators in the United States, paving the way for its use in the UK. Aducanumab targets the underlying cause of Alzheimer's, the most common form of dementia, rather than its symptoms. Charities have welcomed the news of a new therapy for the condition. But scientists are divided over its potential impact because of uncertainty over the trial results. At least 100,000 people in the UK with a mild form of the disease could be suitable for the drug if it were to be approved by the UK regulator. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said there was "substantial evidence that aducanumab reduces amyloid beta plaques in the brain" and that this "is reasonably likely to predict important benefits to patients".

COVID-19 claims 58 more lives

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Monday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 47,376 with 1,490 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,820 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Fifty-eight corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 55 of whom were under treatment in hospital and three out of the hospital in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the past 24 hours, most of the deaths have occurred in the Punjab followed by Sindh. Out of the total 58 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours 29 of them had died who were under treatment on ventilators. There were 3,205 covid infected patients under treatment in critical care in various covid dedicated healthcare facilities in past 24 hours. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 3.02 percent.

Forbes lauds Pak economic revival amid COVID-19

The report quoted Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Reza Baqir as having said the unexpected growth in GDP was due to accommodative monetary and fiscal policy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a Coronavirus pandemic situation, which has created difficulties for big economies of the world, Pakistan has succeeded in reviving its economy, which is expected to grow by nearly 4 percent in FY2021, exceeding initial projections, Forbes Magazine reports. "Even giants like the United States and India have had difficulty dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic. Donald Trump, Dwayne Johnson, and Ellen DeGeneres have all been infected by this virus. In this situation, Pakistan has succeeded in reviving its economy, which is expected to grow

by nearly 4% in 2021, exceeding initial projections," the magazine says. It says that the services sector, which is forecasted to grow by 4.43% in 2020-2021, is responsible for the majority of the growth. This is certainly remarkable for a country like Pakistan which is becoming successful in expanding its services sector. The agricultural sector's predicted growth is 2.77%, while that of the industrial sector is 3.57%, it adds. The report quoted Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Reza Baqir as having said the unexpected growth in GDP was due to accommodative monetary and fiscal policy. SBP quickly reduced its

policy rate by 625 basis points to 7% and released a stimulus amounting to 5% of GDP. In addition, the governor said that the government was able to control the coronavirus situation reporting 12 new cases per million, compared to 62 new cases per million reported globally. Pakistan reported the highest traded volumes on the Pakistan Stock Exchange at 1.56 billion shares and 2.21 billion shares respectively on May 26 and May 27. Investors are optimistic because of the populist budget proposal and improved growth forecasts. According to the report, the IMF's world economic outlook numbers Pakistan's public debt to GDP re-

mained broadly unchanged in 2020 over the previous year, as reported in Bloomberg. This statistic for most emerging countries increased by 10% during the coronavirus pandemic. Reza Baqir explained that this was caused by a "prudent fiscal and aggressive monetary policy." Meanwhile, the country's recently reported a CPI of 11%, up from 6% a few months ago. The country expects inflation to range between 7% and 9%, with experts predicting that it will be closer to the higher end. The recent high inflation was caused by a small number of products such as energy and food. Because of supply-side factors, Baqir described these factors as

"one-time," but officials are prepared to respond quickly to demand-side pressures if they arise, the reports quotes Raza Baqir. Baqir further stated that the government was successful in converting a \$19 billion current account deficit into a \$900 million surplus, as well as more than doubling the country's foreign reserves from \$7.2 billion to \$16 billion. These objectives were met not through borrowing, but through "high-quality measures." Talking about the measures taken by the government to check Coronavirus, the report says last year, the country saw a surge in cases during the Eid-festival, but the government was quick to move this time, imposing par-

tial lockdowns, closing non-essential enterprises, and prohibiting domestic tourism, which helped the country avoid a spike in cases. According to the report, the government hopes to have vaccinated 70% of the population by the end of 2021. 5.3 million citizens have been vaccinated so far. With the help of CanSino Bio, a Chinese company, Pakistan has developed its own "PakVac" vaccine, bolstering the country's vaccination program. The successful management of the Corona Virus pandemic and the success of the IMF program, as evidenced by the growth in GDP to 4%, demonstrate Pakistan's ability to grow and serve as a good investment opportunity.

Saudi Arabia to announce 2021 Hajj plans 'in coming days'

ISLAMABAD: Saudi minister of media, Dr. Majid Al-Qasabi has stated that announcements about this year's Hajj could be made in the coming days as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) completed its assessments of the challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Al-Qasabi said the Saudi authorities are following up on (the pandemic) updates and the minister for Hajj and Umrah and Minister for Health will soon announce a decision. He said due to COVID variants, it was important to evaluate the damage from the spread of the virus carefully and correctly, "We don't

want this year's Hajj to be an epicenter for the spread of the disease in the Kingdom or the Muslim world," Arab News reported. The Ministry of Hajj and Umrah has worked hard to improve the services provided in the Hajj and Umrah sector, amid the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic. Last year's Hajj and the gradual return of Umrah in October was permitted after a safe model had been developed, focusing on modern technology and digitizing the procedures to provide pilgrims with the services they needed through different options provided by the ministry. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Pir Noor-ul-Haq Qadri in a meeting with Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Saeed Al-Maliki. — DNA

Over 150 Afghan troops killed or injured in a day

KABUL: Over 150 Afghan troops have been killed or injured in the last 24 hours in a surge of attacks by Taliban militants as foreign forces withdraw, senior government officials said on Monday. Fighting is now raging in 26 of the country's 34 provinces, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity. Casualties were "shockingly high", one added. The government says clashes over territory have increased as the United States pushes on with an operation to withdraw all its remaining troops by September 11. The Taliban seized Shahrak district of western Ghor province on Monday and forced Afghan troops to retreat to nearby villages after a heavy fire-fight, local officials said. A powerful car bomb targeting a police headquarters in the Khas Balkh district of Balkh province killed at least four people and wounded 50 more including civilians on Sunday, officials said. Government troops have launched an operation to recapture a strategic district of Nerkh of Wardak province that lies less than an hour's drive from the capital Kabul, a defence ministry official said. On the same day, Taliban fighters stormed the Qaisar district of northern Faryab province, killing and wounding dozens of Afghan security forces, a police official said. — Agencies

Voting for new Israeli govt on June 14

TEL AVIV: Israel's legislature announced on Monday it will vote on approving a new government, formed by opponents of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on June 14. "A session of parliament to establish the government will be set within seven days, that means by 14 June, 2021," parliamentary speaker Yariv Levin said, setting in motion preparations for a confidence vote in the new government to take place. "An announcement regarding a date for the session to establish 36th government will be conveyed down the line to members of parliament." Opposition leader Yair Lapid garnered enough support last week to form a new government comprising of an eight-party coalition. — Agencies

Pak-China-Afghan FMs Dialogue welcomed

BEIJING: The China-Pakistan-Afghanistan Foreign Ministers' Dialogue has become an important platform for the three sides to enhance understanding, deepen mutual trust and cooperation, said Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law and former defence attaché in the South Asian countries. The Fourth China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Foreign Ministers' Dialogue on Afghanistan's Peace and Reconciliation Process was held via video link on June 3. "Since the establishment of the dialogue mechanism, remarkable results have been achieved, a series of important consensus have been reached and implemented,

high-level communication and practical cooperation among the three countries have been promoted," Cheng Xizhong said in a statement. He said the forum had become an important platform for the three sides to enhance understanding, deepen mutual trust and cooperation. He said as the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan was being accelerated, the peace and reconciliation process there had been challenged, with armed conflicts and terrorist activities had become increasingly frequent. The security and stability of Afghanistan and the region were facing new challenges, he added. In that situation, he said, strengthening communication and cooperation among

China, Pakistan and Afghanistan could promote the development of the situation in the later in meeting common interests of it and other countries in the region. He opined that the dialogue among foreign ministers of the three countries had sent out four important signals: "First, early ceasefire, end to violence, and effective promotion of the process of peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan should be achieved. "Second, the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan should be carried out in a responsible and orderly manner, so as to prevent the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan and prevent the return of terrorist activities." — APP