



Islamabad POST

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German Ambassador concerned over HR violations in IIOJK

Detailed News On Page-03

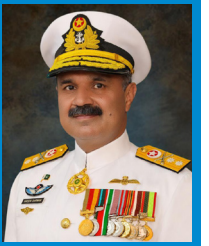
Amb. Tugio for enhanced Pak-ASEAN ties

Detailed News On Page-08



Rear Admiral Naeem Sarwar new DGPR (PN)

Detailed News On Page-08



Briefs

10 million vaccination target met

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Wednesday said the country has met the coronavirus vaccinations target of inoculating 10 million people. The whole world appreciated the way Pakistan fought against the deadly pandemic, he said in a tweet. The manner in which the Prime Minister did not allow the nation to be disappointed in this nerve-racking war against the virus, and the NCOC (National Command and Operation Centre) implemented the policy of the Prime Minister is highly commendable.

UN chief urges unity

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his outrage over the targeted killing of a Pakistani-origin Muslim family in Canada, and called for unitedly standing against Islamophobia. "I am appalled by the targeted and heinous attack on a Muslim family in Ontario, Canada," the UN chief wrote on Twitter. "My heart goes out to the victims, surviving family and loved ones – and the community," he said. According to the Canadian police, the family killed in a hit-and-run incident was targeted for being Muslim. The family had immigrated from Pakistan to Canada 14 years ago.

PTI believes in supremacy of law

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Faruk Habib has said the PTI government sticks to its struggle for supremacy of law and constitution in the country. In a video message, he said the opposition parties will also have to adhere to the law. Farruk Habib pointed out that the court had granted a bail of eight weeks to Nawaz Sharif but he is out of the country over the last one and a half years. He said the courts have also declared him an absconder and a due process was followed for it.

Afghan attack leaves ten aid workers dead

Around 110 men from local communities in northern Afghanistan were in the camp at the time

MONITORING REPORT

KABUL: Gunmen killed 10 people and injured 16 in an attack on a mine-clearing organization in northern Afghanistan, the humanitarian group said Wednesday. An "unknown armed group" entered a de-mining camp in Baghlan Province, north of the capital, Kabul, and opened fire on HALO Trust staff at 9:50 p.m. Tuesday (1:20 p.m. ET), the organization said in a statement. Around 110 men from local communities in northern Afghanistan were in the camp at the time, having finished their work on nearby minefields, the trust said. The Afghan Interior Ministry said initial reports indicated that eight people had been killed and 14 injured. The reason behind the discrepancy in the number of casualties was not immediately clear. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement, which said its gunmen fired automatic weapons on people after locking them up in two rooms.

Islamic State group claims attack

DNA

KABUL: The Islamic State group on Wednesday claimed responsibility for a deadly attack on a compound housing workers from the HALO Trust de-mining group, after the Britain-based charity contradicted a government report and said the Taliban weren't to blame. Its fighters killed or wounded more than 60 "demining workers". So far, the official death toll is 10. The Afghan Interior Ministry said initial reports indicated that eight people had been killed and 14 injured. The reason behind the discrepancy in the number of casualties was not immediately clear.

Pak values ties with 'Iron Brother' China

COAS General Qamar Bajwa expressed these views in a meeting with Chinese ambassador Nong Rong



RAWALPINDI: Nong Rong, Ambassador of China to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS). – DNA

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Nong Rong, Ambassador of China to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), on Wednesday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, progress on CPEC and regional security situation including latest developments in Afghan Peace Process were discussed. COAS thanked the dignitary for China's contribution towards fight against COVID-19 and

Continued on Page 06

Gen Bajwa meets businessmen

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Wednesday assured the business community of the Pakistan Army's "complete support" for the "economic uplift" of the country. A statement issued by the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that Gen Bajwa made the assurances when he met a delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI). The army chief lauded FPCCI for its role in the "development of commercial and industrial hubs in Pakistan". They also discussed the "evolving regional economic environment".



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan unveiling the inaugural plaque of first Ehsaas One Window Center. – APP

Israeli air attacks targeted Damascus

WEB DESK

DAMASCUS: Israeli air attacks struck central Syria late on Tuesday, with state news agency SANA reporting "explosions in Damascus" before adding that its air defences had been activated against the "Israeli aggression". Israeli planes arrived from Lebanese air space, the news agency added. It did not mention any reports of casualties or damage but the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) told AFP news agency at least 11 pro-government fighters were killed in the attacks that took place late on Tuesday. "At least seven army soldiers and four National Defence Forces militiamen were killed," SOHR chief Rami Abdul Rahman said.

FM Qureshi, Canadian FM discuss Islamophobia

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Canada Marc Garneau to discuss the killing of four members of a Pakistani-origin family in the country. The Foreign Office said in a statement that Qureshi stated that "the Islamophobic attack was a matter of serious concern and had caused anguish among the Muslims worldwide." He appreciated the fact that

Continued on Page 06

Covid restrictions further relaxed

Ban on sports lifted; walk-in vaccination for 18+; two-day weekly ban reduced to one day; 100 % attendance in office allowed

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: NCOC Session, chaired by Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, co-chaired by National Coordinator Lt Gen Hamood uz Zaman Khan was held. The forum took a comprehensive review of vaccination process and implementation of Covid SOPs (NPIs). Decisions regarding National mass vaccination campaign

- Country wide mass vaccination campaign will be run under three pronged strategy based on
- Voluntarily Vaccination by all citizens
- Obligatory for public and private sectors employees. In this regard all public sector employees will have to be vaccinated by 30 June 2021.

Continued on Page 06

Lowest positivity rate in four months

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Wednesday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 44,987 with 1,118 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 2,244 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Seventy-seven corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 69 of whom were under treatment in hospital and eight 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 77 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours 33 of them had died who were under treatment on ventilators. Around 869,691 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 90 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. Since the pandemic outbreak, a total of 936,131 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 19,566, Balochistan 25,961, GB 5,664, ICT 81,871, KP 134,928, Punjab 343,031 and Sindh 325,110.

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Israel's arrests 're-energizing the Palestinian movement' – Page 07

Speakers call for people-to-people contacts to promote Pak-ASEAN ties – Page 08

KSA to provide funding for Mohmand Hydropower Project



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Omar Ayub Khan meeting with Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki at his office. – APP

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia will provide a financing of over 37 billion rupees for Mohmand Hydropower Project. This was announced by Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Pakistan Nawaf bin Said

Al-Malki who called on Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan in Islamabad on Wednesday. During the meeting, the Saudi Ambassador informed that Saudi Fund for Development has approved this financing at highly concessional terms with two

energy security by increasing share of hydel power in the country's energy mix.

He said our government is focusing on environment friendly and affordable energy through development of solar, wind and hydel resources.

The Saudi Ambassador assured of continued support at all level to further strengthen the economic cooperation between the two brotherly countries. He said that the Saudi Arabia is committed to play a much stronger role in the socioeconomic development of Pakistan.

Mohmand dam will be constructed on Swat River in District Mohmand of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and generate 800MW electricity. It will also irrigate 16,000 acre land and boost agriculture productivity in the region. This dam will play vital role in socioeconomic uplift of the province.

Briefs

**356,651
people
vaccinated**

FAISALABAD: As many as 356,651 people have so far been vaccinated against the COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Atau Mun'im said on Wednesday that 265,718 people had been given the first dose while 57,778 were administered second dose.

He said 20,332 health workers were also given first dose while 12,823 received second dose of vaccine.

Three die of coronavirus

Three patients died of the COVID-19 while 13 tested positive during the last 24 hours in Faisalabad.

A spokesperson for the health department said on Wednesday that 409 coronavirus tests were conducted in public and private sector labs. He said a total active cases in Faisalabad had been reduced to 433 while 19,938 patients so far recovered from the disease.

He said 339 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 133 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Govt General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for the COVID-19 patients. At present, 106 patients were under treatment at the Allied Hospital, 40 at DHQ Hospital and 21 were admitted to General Hospital district. — APP

PESCO teams detects 58 direct power connections

DNA

PESHAWAR: On the directives of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO), the Task Force teams of Khyber Circle carried out a grand operation in the areas of 11 KV Abdara feeder of Tajiabad sub division. During operation teams detected more than 50 direct connections. Similarly, one span LT conductor used for direct connection was also removed. Furthermore, 8 direct connections were also removed in the areas of Nowshera City sub division that are fed from 11 KV Abakhel Feeder, said a press release issued here on Wednesday. Meanwhile, a spokesman of PESCO has said that drive against illegal use of electricity through direct connections will continue and warned power pilferers to stop their illegal practice forthwith. The power pilferage, he said on one hand inflicts huge financial losses and on the other hand get the whole distribution system over-loaded and the general public faces inconvenience of frequent power break downs.

One killed, 4 injured in rival clash

DNA

FAISALABAD: A man was killed while four others sustained injuries in an armed clash, in the limits of Sadr police station. Police said on Wednesday that two groups indulged in blunt firing on each other over a dispute of animal dealing in Cattle Market Niamoana at Sammundri Road. As a result, 30-year-old Muhammad Ehsan alias Boota received serious injuries and died on the spot while four others sustained bullet injuries. Rescue-1122 shifted the injured identified as Muhammad Waseem, Qaisar, Arshad and Abdusattar to hospital in critical condition. The police took body into custody and started investigation.

Body found in canal
A minor boy was found dead in Rakh Branch Canal, in the jurisdiction of Dijkot police station. Police said on Wednesday that Adnan aka Makhan (5) had slipped and fell into canal near Gol Masjid Sammundri Road a couple of days ago. The divers of Rescue-1122 searched him a lot but in vain. This morning, some passersby spotted the corpse of minor boy floating in canal near Naganwala Bridge at Gojra Road and informed the area police. Rescue-1122 fished out the corpse and handed it over to police.

Opposing electoral reforms supporting rigging: Sarwar

Senior Minister Abdul Aleem Khan called on Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and discussed political and administrative matters during the meeting

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar has said that adamant rejection by the opposition parties to support electoral reforms tantamount to assisting election rigging in the country. During a meeting with Senior Provincial Minister Abdul Aleem Khan at the Governor's House here on Wednesday, said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) believes reforms were vital to transparent electoral system in the country but the opposition

by the democratic forces was incomprehensible, adding that the opposition parties should support government initiative for the good of democracy.

Senior Minister Abdul Aleem Khan called on Governor Punjab Chaudhry Mohammad Sarwar and discussed political and administrative matters during the meeting. Sarwar, during the meeting, said the government believes in transparency and merit and will continue to implement it across various sectors, adding that electoral reforms is a step towards fair and transparent elections.

The Governor Punjab said the government will ensure the right to vote to the overseas Pakistanis, adding that the overseas Pakistanis have played a significant role in the country's development over the years.

"The government is introducing reforms in all sectors including the agriculture, and these are being duly acknowledged by all stakeholders", he said, adding the country is moving in the right direction. The Governor Punjab said the opposition is trying to mislead the nation through negative propaganda as it can not digest economic

growth, adding that the public has rejected opposition's narrative and they stand by the government. He said the anti-Pakistan political alliance of the opposition parties has met its natural end.

Sarwar said the government will complete his constitutional term of five years, urging the political opponents to wait patiently for the next general elections in 2023. He said the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan, has put up effective strategy to contain spread of novel coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic and Pakistan has achieved the

milestone of inoculating 10 million COVID-19 vaccination, adding that the public must continue following coronavirus SOPs.

On Islamophobia, he said Prime Minister Imran Khan has emerged true representative of the Muslim world on Islamophobia, adding that the world must join hands to defeat it. Provincial Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said protests and threats of the opposition do not pose any threat to the government as 220 million Pakistanis have reposed full confidence in the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan.



ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to Prime Minister on religious harmony and Middle East and Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi talking to media after chairing a meeting of Merkazi Majlis-e Shura of Pakistan Ulama Council. — DNA

KPRA achieves registration target of taxpayers

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) Wednesday achieved the milestone by raising its registration of taxpayers to 15,000 in the incumbent financial year recording over 32 percent progress compared to last year. The KPRA was assigned the task to take the number of registered taxpayers, with the Authority, to 15,000 by

the end of June 2021, said the spokesperson. Keeping its upward trend intact, the team of KPRA including its staff at headquarters and regional offices put their efforts to pull off the target and achieved the figure before the completion of the ongoing financial year. The Authority had a total 11,298 registered taxpayers by the end of the last financial year and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa govern-

ment tasked KPRA to take the figure to 15,000 by the end of the current financial year to broaden the tax net. The Authority has now 3,104 registered companies, 2,246 association persons and 9,650 individual service providers. "Achieving the target, particularly in the pandemic-torn economy, speaks for the efficiency and competency of KPRA team. The efforts of my team are commendable," said Fayyaz Ali

Shah, the Director General of KPRA in his statement. "More registered taxpayers mean broadened tax net. Once we broaden the tax net we would be at liberty to further reduce the tax rates as a gift to our taxpayers," the DG KPRA said, adding that the Authority is achieving both the revenue and non-revenue targets assigned to it for the ongoing financial year with the help and support of the incumbent provincial government.

IT based projects to create new vistas of prosperity

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Science and Information Technology (IT), Atif Khan Wednesday discussed launching of various IT related projects with Asian Development Bank (ADB) country director. He, in a virtual meeting, discussed setting up of proposed Special Technology Zone Mardan, Digital Economy and Skills Centre SankarMardan, City Facilitation Centres, Gandhara Digital City Peshawar, Pakistan Digital City Haripur and IT Park Abbottabad. The minister said the government was taking practical steps for introducing contemporary digital technology in

the province adding it would not only create employment opportunities for the people but also create new vistas of development and prosperity for them. The ADB officials expressed interests in those projects and offered financial and technical assistance to the provincial government. The meeting was also attended by IT Secretary, Dr Ambar Ali, IT Board Director, Asim Jamshed and officials concerned. **Govt to resolve all issues of universities: Bangash**

Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Information and Higher Education, Kamran Bangash on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review various issues of Chitral University. Special Assistant to Chief Minister for Minorities Affairs Wazirza-

Clerk arrested for taking bribe

DNA

FAISALABAD: The Anti Corruption Establishment (ACE) claimed to have arrested a clerk of the Building Department Faisalabad for taking a bribe.

An ACE spokesman on Wednesday said Chaudhary Tariq Javaid of Chak No77-RB Jaranwala, in a complaint, said account clerk of Building Department Abdul Haq was demanding bribe for a legal work.

To which, an ACE team under supervision of Judicial Magistrate Saghir Ahmad conducted a raid and nabbed the clerk red handed while receiving bribe. The team also recovered marked currency notes worth Rs 22,000 from the accused.

Vaccination Centre established in FCCI

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: A Corona Vaccination Centre for the business community of Faisalabad has been established in the basement of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). All paraphernalia and facilities required for this centre has been provided and it is expected that Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad Mohammad Ali along with President FCCI will inaugurate it here on Thursday. President FCCI Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed visited the centre and directed to further improve the facilities for the convenience of the FCCI members who will visit this centre for vaccination. He said that a major chunk of FCCI members are frequent travellers and due to the pandemic, they have to get mandatory corona vaccination along with its proper certification as international airlines and different countries demand it in order to contain the spread of this disease. He said that the most comfortable environment has been provided in the FCCI auditorium where our members could get vaccination in a hassle free environment. He said that the families of FCCI members could also enjoy this free facility in a cosy and privileged climate. He further said that FCCI has hired the services of two vaccinators including one male and one female. He said that health officials have briefed them to keep vaccination safe in special containers which will maintain their efficacy and cold chain. National Command & Operation Centre (NCOC) will provide 200 jabs per day while FCCI has arranged computers and printers to remain in contact with NCOC for real time sharing of data. He further said that CanSino will be injected which is a single dose therapy for the covid-19.



Webinar held in London

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan High Commission in London Wednesday organized a webinar on 'Doing Business in Pakistan' to highlight trade and investment opportunities for British and other international investors in Pakistan. Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK Moazzam Ahmad Khan delivered the keynote address at the webinar, held in collaboration with Pakistan-Britain Business Council and British Expertise International. Other business leaders, government officials, and stakeholders, who addressed the webinar, included Baroness Nosheena Mobarik CBE; Mike Nithavrianakis, Deputy High Commissioner & Trade Director of the UK in Pakistan; Campbell Keir, Senior Infrastructure Advisor, British Expertise International; Susana Córdoba, Head of International Trade, Greater Manchester Chambers of Commerce; Hassan Daud Butt, CEO KP Board of Investment & Trade; Dr Erfa CEO Punjab Board of Investment & Trade; and Muhammad Shafiq Shehzad, Minister Trade, Pakistan High Commission, London. Julian Hamilton Barns, Chairman of Pakistan Britain Business Council moderated the event. — DNA

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For further information please contact the following.

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Swati demands Rs 620bn for Railways upgradation

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Azam Khan Swati on Wednesday said he needed Rs620bn for the total upgradation of the Pakistan Railways, a few days after the fatal Ghotki train accident that claimed over 60 lives and injured over 100 passengers. The railways minister held a press conference where he spoke about the recent Ghotki train accident. "I was at the site till the entire track was not restored," said the minister, stating with regret that 63 people had died in the accident and 23 were being treated in hospitals for injuries.

Swati said relatives of the deceased will be given Rs1.5mn by the government as compensation, adding that every injured person will be provided Rs300,000 by authorities. Speaking about the initial investigation report, the minister said it did not find any fault in the track. "As per the initial investigation report, the 8-mile track at the crash site was fine," he said. Swati lamented that the railways did not have the technology to improve the tracks' conditions, adding that a massive amount was needed for the



railways upgradation. "I need Rs620bn for the total upgradation of the Pakistan Railways," he said. "Will discuss the issue of railways upgradation with the prime minister," he said, adding that if an upgradation was not carried out, more lives could be lost in future. Azam Swati said that the investigation into the accident was underway, saying that those who were found negligent in their duties would be handed strict punishments. "If my resignation is the appropriate substitute for the accident, then I am ready to resign," he said. "if my resignation can heal the wounds of those who lost their relatives and

the injured, I say 'Bismillah' to it," added the minister. The casualties emerged after two express trains collided on Monday in Sindh's Ghotki and killing over 60 and injuring more than 100 passengers.

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 Sadiqabad, Daharki and Mirpur Mathelo.

Prime Minister Imran Khan, hours after the incident took place, had expressed shock at the loss of lives from the Ghotki train accident and ordered a "comprehensive investigation" into it. Taking to Twitter, the prime minister instructed Railways Minister Azam Swati to arrive at the site and help the injured with provision of medical assistance.

CHPE ceremony held at KMU

PESHAWAR: Khyber Medical University (KMU) here Wednesday arranged Certificate in Health Professions Education (CHPE) ceremony. The ceremony was chaired by Vice Chancellor KMU Prof. Zia UlHaq and added by Prof. Hafeezullah, Prof. Mahmud Aurangzeb, Prof. SalimGandapur and Dr. Brekhna Jamil.

It was for the first time that CHPE course for two batches were conducted at Khyber Medical College under the auspices of Institute of Health Professions Education and Research (IHPER), Khyber Medical University, Peshawar. Forty faculty members including Dean KMC were amongst the successful candidates.

Warsak Road cleared of encroachments

District administration and Town Municipal Administration (TMA) Town-II during a joint anti-encroachment operation Wednesday demolished dozens of encroachments erected outside shops on Warsak Road. Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Anwar Akbar Khan and the Enforcement Officer Town-II, Arbab Mir Alam Khan supervised the operation carried through using heavy machinery. — APP

Sino-Pak co-op center set up at KU

KARACHI: Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman, Chairman of Prime Minister's Task Force on Science and Technology, has expressed hope that establishment of the Sino-Pakistan Cooperation Center for TCM at Karachi University would open new horizons for researchers. Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Sino-Pakistan Symposium on Traditional Chinese Medicine-Traditional Unani Medicine held at Prof. SalimUz-Zaman Siddiqui Auditorium of the ICCBS – University of Karachi on Wednesday Prof. Atta underlined the importance of the bilateral relations between Pakistan and China and termed setting up the cooperation centre at the International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences a phenomenal development that would open new horizons for researchers to have new discoveries in the field of traditional medicines. — APP

Briefs

AIOU warns students of plagiarism in online exams

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)'s online examinations of various programs offered in autumn 2020 semester are in progress these days. In a press release, university has informed the students that there are various illegal sources which are offering students of the university to seek their help for solving their question papers and they are utilizing social media platform for their vicious purposes to attract students. The students are, therefore, instructed not to yield to any such temptation and strongly discourage any such offer(s). If any students found guilty of submitting a plagiarized answer script, he/she would be debarred from the examination and a case would be initiated against him/her according to the university rules. It is, further, communicated that using unfair means in the examination is a serious and punishable offence in accordance with the AIOU statutes.

450 TVET institutes accredited

ISLAMABAD:Chairman NAVTTC, Syed javed Hassan Wednesday said that a total of 450 institutes have already been accredited while accreditation reports of 100 TVET institutes throughout Pakistan were presented before the Forum of TA&QEC for the final approval. He expressed these views during the 17th TVET Accreditation and Quality Evaluation Committee (TA&QEC) meeting held here in connection with the World Accreditation Day being celebrated on 9th June(Wednesday) to promote the value of accreditation for improving quality of services. The meeting was held at National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) Headquarters Islamabad. The meeting was convened under the newly established National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream (NAC-Tvs). Speaking on the occasion, Chairman NAVTTC, Syed javed Hassan said that such rigorous proceedings will help in ensuring the merit and transparency in the selection of TVET institutes. The Executive Director, NAVTTC, Dr. Nasir Khan, mentioned that the establishment of the National Accreditation Council for Technical and Vocational Stream reflects the fulfillment of the Prime Minister's vision to impart quality skills to youth and to maximize the employability of Pakistani youth in global job market. – APP

SC summons secretaries in golf course case

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Wednesday summoned the secretaries of Railways, Finance and Planning and Development for consultation on Public Private Partnership Authority. A three-member SC bench comprising Justice Ijaz Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal heard the case seeking implementation of the order of Supreme Court regarding leasing out of the premises of Old Railways Golf course. During the course of proceedings, the court expressed annoyance over the non-appointment of the consultant. Justice Bandial said that a consultant had not yet been appointed despite the passage of time. Court's job was to look after legal matters, not to find a consultant, he added. The court rejected the Golf Club lawyer's request for 15 days to appoint a consultant. Later, the hearing of the case was adjourned till Thursday. – APP

Minister, German envoy discuss security situation

Minister said problems and difficulties faced by the civilian population residing on line of control LOC and said that government has started a 3 billion rupees project for safety and security of life and property of the civilian population residing on line of control

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany to Pakistan, Bernhard Schlagheck called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here in Islamabad. The meeting discussed the overall security situation of the region with particular reference to the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. The Minister highlighted the worst condition of Human rights in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said, India is changing the demography of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir by killing innocent Kashmiri youth in fake encounters. The Minister said that it was the moral and legal obligation of the world community and human rights organizations to stop India from committing heinous crimes against humanity in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed the resolve of his government for peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute as per aspirations of people of Jammu



and Kashmir and according to the United Nations Security Council resolutions. German Ambassador expressed his concerns on human rights violations in IIOJK and said that Germany supports the peaceful settlement of Kashmir dispute through a meaningful dialogue process.

The meeting also discussed the political, social and economic issues of AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. The Minister said that free and fair elections of Azad Jammu and Kashmir legislative Assembly will be held soon, in which all political parties will actively participate. The Minister also highlighted the problems

and difficulties faced by the civilian population residing on line of control LOC and said that government has started a 3 billion rupees project for safety and security of life and property of the civilian population residing on line of control. He further added that health Insurance card has been provided to

each family of Azad Jammu and Kashmir which is a great achievement of the current government. Highlighting the development process in Gilgit-Baltistan, the Minister said that the Federal government has started development projects worth 370 billion Rupees. He said that the said package would prove a game changer for the economic and social prosperity of Gilgit-Baltistan. He also shared the steps taken by the current government for promoting tourism in Gilgit-Baltistan. The Ambassador appreciated the steps taken by the current government for development of Gilgit Baltistan and said that his government is also cooperating in social and economic uplift of the said area. He also discussed the potential of hydro power generation in Gilgit Baltistan and said that his government was ready to further cooperate in social and economic sectors of Gilgit Baltistan. The Minister said that his government welcomes the foreign investment and is extending maximum cooperation in this regard.

NAHE launches int'l recognized fellowship

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The IPFP Fellows, who have successfully completed the National Faculty Development Programme (NFDP), are now eligible to apply for an internationally recognized Fellowship in teaching and learning launched by the NAHE in collaboration with the British Council's Pak-UK Education Gateway programme and Advance HE, UK. There are now over 140,000 Fellows recognized by the Advance HE Fellowship Scheme worldwide. Advance HE is a global not-for-profit charity headquartered in the UK. Using their expertise and sharing best practice, they work to improve higher education for all. Advance HE has expertise in governance, leadership development, teaching and learning enhancement, and equality, diversity, and inclusion. The HEC launched the IPFP programme to create an opportunity for fresh PhDs to obtain academic experience and mentorship for one year in HEIs, federal/provincial government post-graduate colleges, or public sector R&D organizations, prior to their formal entry into the academic job market.

Top Actress Minal Khan finally joins Snack Video

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Snack Video has been the most popular app for entertainment these days, and dozens of celebrities are flooding in the universe of the platform. On June 4, the darling of Pakistani TV, Minal Khan officially joined Snack Video and became the latest starry addition. On June 4, Minal posted her first debut on her SnackVideo account @Mi-

nalKofficial, and attracted nearly 1 million views and over 28k followers in no time. Top newspaper and fashion magazines in Pakistan have reported her debut on Twitter, gaining hundreds of likes and comments. Snack Video is also planning to create duet music videos with Minal. By selecting famous scenes from Minal's hits and creators' best duets, SnackVideo aims to breathe a new life into Minal's classics with great inspiration.

Legendary TV actor 'Jamil Fakhri' remembered

ISLAMABAD: Iconic versatile theater, TV, film and stage actor 'Jamil Fakhri' was remembered on his 10th death anniversary on Wednesday to pay him a rich tribute for his lifetime acting services for entertainment industry. Jamil Fakhri was born in Lahore, Pakistan in 1946. After finishing his basic education, he started working for National Bank of Pakistan. Then he started doing theater at WAPDA Auditorium and Alhambra Arts Council, Lahore and started working with some already established TV actors and directors. Jamil Fakhri worked with many prominent TV actors of the time including Irfan Khoosat, Khayyam Sarhadi, Firdous Jamal, Masood Akhtar, Kamal Ahmed Rizvi and Nanha, private channels reported. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General of United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari inaugurating the Pound land Toy Shop at F-11 Markaz. – DNA

Govt for relief to traders in budget Zafar Bakhtawari

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General of United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the business community across The country is ready to take the economy on a new footing after corona pandemic but due to weekly holidays and shorts business hours the business condition is not in proper atmosphere. Traders have positive expectations from the government. The government should announce incentives for traders in the next budget and new taxes should be avoided. He expressed these views while inaugurating the Pound land Toy Shop at F-11 Markaz yesterday. He further said that hard work and honesty is the basic condition for success and continuous hard work is required to create a brand. Congratulating on starting the business, the president of F Markaz Asad Aziz and Secretary General Abdul Rehman Siddiqui said that the traders

are very worried about their businesses. It is difficult to pay the rent of the shops, electricity bills and salaries of the employees. They demanded for abolishing the weekly holidays. Former Senior Vice President of Islamabad Chamber Khalid Chaudhry, Zahid Qureshi and Shahid Khan were also the prominent participant on the event.

Rs 900b allocated for federal development projects in Budget

ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives on Wednesday informed that Rs 900 billion have been allocated for federal development projects in upcoming Budget 2021-22. The committee notified that in total Rs 900 billion have been allocated for federal and Rs 1,202 billion for provincial development projects.

The 1st Pre-Budget meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives was held under the Chairmanship of Senator Mandviwalla here at the Parliament House. In the meeting, a detailed briefing was taken on the funds set aside for the Annual Development Program in the upcoming budget from the Ministry of Planning, De-

velopment and Special Initiatives as well as the agencies affiliated to the Ministry. According to the presentation on the upcoming PSDP, details on National Lay Out 2021-2022 were proposed federally as well as provincially and Ministry-wise funds Allocation were proposed and presented. The committee informed that Punjab has been allocated Rs 500 billion and Sindh

has been allocated Rs 321 billion for development projects in upcoming Budget 2021-22. The committee briefed that Rs 133 billion has been allocated for Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been allocated Rs 248 billion for various development projects. Timely evaluation monitoring and administering of projects at provincial and federal level. – APP

President ICCI opens more vaccination centre in Capital

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan lauded the NCOC vaccination drive across the country and congratulated the government for completing the vaccination of 10 million people, which is a great achievement

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has inaugurated vaccination centres in collaboration with NCOC and DHO Islamabad in I-9 Industrial Area, Blue Area and Super Market F-6 Markaz Islamabad while another vaccination centre is being opened in Kahuta Industrial Triangle, Islamabad to intensify the vaccination of business community, their families and employees in order to curb the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and pave way for removal of all restrictions on businesses. Expressing his view after inauguration, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan lauded the NCOC vaccination drive across the country and congratulated the government for completing the vaccination of 10 million people, which is a great achievement. He said that due to these efforts of the government, the overall positivity rate has come down to less than 4 percent. It showed that Pakistan is



been set in Islamabad and hoped that the vaccination centres being opened in markets and industrial areas would be helpful in meeting this target. He said that the only viable option for Pakistan to come out of coronavirus is to maximize vaccination of people and urged that the business community of the federal capital should take utmost benefit of these centres for their vaccination including their family members and employees to make Islamabad the first corona free city of the country. He further emphasized that as Islamabad has now the lowest positivity rate in the country, therefore, the NCOC should lift all restrictions on businesses in its next review meeting in order to normalize the business and economic activities in the Capital. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President ICCI, Tariq Sadiq and Zafar Bakhtawari former Presidents ICCI, Umar Hussain, Raja Hasan Akhtar, Khalid Chaudhry, Yousaf Rajput, Syed Amin Pirzada, Tehmas Butt, Shehzad Shabbir Abbasi, Muhammad Hussain, Saeed Khan and others were also present at the occasion.

Sector D-12 gets new police post

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have set up a new police post at Sector D-12 to maintain law and order in the area and ensure safety of the people in the locality. In this connection, Islamabad Police arranged a special inauguration ceremony. Inspector General of Police (IGP) Qazi Jamil ur Rehman formally inaugurated the police post. DIG (Operations) Afzaal Ahmed Kausar, SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer, senior police officials and notables of the area were also present on the occasion. The IGP briefed the in-charge of the newly established check post and nine other personnel about their new assignment and directed them to do their utmost efforts for maintaining peace and tranquility in the area. Policemen were responsible for helping and resolving problems of the people, he said and directed all the policemen deputed at the check post to make utmost efforts for the satisfaction of the people. He informed that one vehicle and two motorbikes of Eagle Squad had been provided to the post for patrolling. An assistant sub-inspector and a total of nine policemen would perform duties at the check post while the strength may be increased keeping in view the requirements in the area, he added.

Excise dept extends vehicle token tax

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Excise and Taxation (E&T) department, Islamabad has extended the deadline for submitting the vehicle token tax without penalty till June 30. According to an office order issued here on Wednesday, the last date for payment of token tax without penalty has been extended, in order to facilitate the vehicles' owners. The citizens could submit their token fee at the excise office from 9 am to 8 pm even after their office time. On the direction of chief commissioner Islamabad, the E&T office would be opened on Saturday till June 30, for the convenience of the public. The Pakistan Post has authorized for collection of token tax of vehicles without any fine. The appellants could submit their token to the authorized Pakistan Post offices, located in various sectors of the city.

FIA takes action against fake EC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: On request of the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) a fraudster named Saleem Akhter landed in hot waters after the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) took action against the culprit and caught him red-handed. "Saleem wrote letters to the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), International Chess Federation (FIDE), and CFP pretending to be an election commissioner (EC) of Chess Federation of Pakistan," CFP vice president and international delegate Mohammad Amin Malik told APP on Wednesday. Amin said Saleem was using the fake letterheads of CFP to claim himself as an election commissioner in the upcoming elections of CFP. "On CFP's request FIA took action against Saleem on June 8 (Tuesday) and seized him red-handed with all shreds of evidence and devices used in cybercrimes," he claimed. It may be mentioned here that the elections of the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP) were scheduled to be held on June 27, here at a local hotel. As many as four provinces (Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Sindh); three units (Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan); and five departments (Wapda, Pakistan Railways, Services Sports Control Board, Higher Education, and Pakistan International Airlines, PIA) would be attending the elections.

Briefs

IHC seeks
degrees'
record of MPA

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday sought record of degrees of member Punjab Assembly Sardar Farooq Amanullah Dareshak in a petition challenging his qualification as MPA. Justice Farooq remarked that the court was not serving notices to respondents at this stage instead it was seeking degrees' record first.

Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by a citizen Sherdil Gorchani challenging the qualification of MPA under Article 61 and 62 of the constitution. The petitioner's lawyer Yaqoob Mastoi adopted the stance that the member provincial assembly Dareshak had submitted false information about his educational degrees in Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) along with his nomination papers during elections 2018. The petitioner had named secretary Punjab Assembly, ECP and others as respondents in the case. The court adjourned hearing of the case for two weeks with above instructions.

Govt to
increase
'education
budget'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Wajihah Qamar has said that the government is bringing educational reforms and increasing 'education budget' this year. She was talking to a delegation of Anjuman-e-Talaba-e-Islam (ATI) led by Amir Ismail, member advisory council and Imran Shareef, vice president who were called on her in her office the other day. The delegation presented recommendations and suggestions related to the education budget. Talking to the delegation, she said, "The policies of the former HEC chairman have harmed the higher education sector. Development of Pakistan is not possible without development in the field of education. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is working on several important projects for the youth. Education policies of previous governments cannot be remedied in two or three years." She went on saying that providing facilities to the students is top priority of the PTI government. The ATI delegation asked for the inclusion of student representatives in preparation of the budget. The participation of student representatives in the university syndicate has become inevitable, they added.

IHC stays
action against
PSB DDG

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday stopped the administration of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) to take any action against petitioner Mansoor Ahmed Khan who challenged the appointment of director general PSB. The court also clubbed the plea with the petition against the appointment of DG PSB. Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case filed by Mansoor Ahmed Khan who is serving as deputy director general PSB Admin. The petitioner informed the court that PSB's executive board meeting was summoned to take disciplinary action against him. The petitioner's counsel submitted that his client is serving as acting DG of the department and there was not a single evidence against his client. The lawyer argued that his client was being victimized due to filing a case against DG PSB in IHC. The court stopped the PSB administration to take action against the petitioner and adjourned hearing of the case. — APP

Women hardest hit by the
pandemic: Chairman CDA

The pandemic has made things harder for women particularly those involved in business and those facing poverty due to multiple reasons

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Capital Development Authority (CDA) Amer Ali Ahmed on Wednesday said women are hardest hit by the pandemic and we will try our best to provide them relief as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to empower women.

The pandemic has made things harder for women particularly those involved in business and those facing poverty due to multiple reasons, he said.

Talking to a delegation of women entrepreneurs lead by the founder President of Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce Samina Fazil, he said that the pandemic has disproportionately pushed many working women out of employment



reversing decades of progress. Worldwide, 740 million women work in the informal economy and their income has fallen up to 70 percent, he observed.

It is estimated that maternal deaths have increased by 39 percent poor

countries and 13 million more child marriages are projected to take place by 2030 due to school closures and because of increased poverty reversing the gains of the last 20 years of global progress made on girls' education.

Amer Ali Ahmed said that CDA will try its best to support businesswomen as the majority of them are related to the services sector. We will provide space for an office and a display center to IWCCI and try to accommodate as many women

entrepreneurs as possible.

He agreed to the allocation of space in F-9 Park or any other suitable place where IWCCI can conduct two day exhibition thrice in a year

At the occasion, Samina Fazil and other members of the delegation lauded the initiatives of CDA to remove encroachments, combat pollution, providing relief to traders, investing heavily in industrial areas of Islamabad and Kahuta and efforts to make Islamabad a model city. She said rehabilitation of roads and parks should be preferred and the issue of traffic congestion should be resolved so that the Capital city can become liveable again.

Farida Rashid, Rozina Lahooti, Naima Ansari, Rubina Shafqat, Rabia Raheel, Samina Akhter, and Sajida Anwar were also present at the occasion.

Schools
timing
changed
in Capital

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday changed the timings of the schools in Islamabad owing to the ongoing heatwave that has gripped the city. A notification said that institutes operating in a single shift can remain open from 7am till 11am from Monday to Thursday. It further stated that schools operating two shifts will have classes on Friday and Saturday from 7am till 11am. The government also allowed all schools of the federal capital to operate at 50% capacity on the allotted days. Earlier, the school timings were 8am till 1pm. — DNA

Police to get
training on modern
investigation

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory police on Wednesday organized a training course for its personnel on modern techniques of investigation and prevention of human trafficking. The prominent figures from various schools of thought shared their experiences with investigation of officers on crime prevention. Parliamentary secretary for Interior Shaukat Ali graced the occasion as chief guest, while Inspector General of Police Islamabad (IGP) Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman, DIG headquarters, Kamran Aadil, SSP headquarters, Naveed Atif, Principal Training school, Tahir Khan and

other officials of Capital police attended the event.

The Parliamentary secretary while appreciating the performance of police said Islamabad was ranked safest city due to tireless efforts of personnel. Lauding the role of IGP Islamabad, he said he had taken multiple initiatives in a short span of time to bring reforms in the department. The IGP worked hard to change public perception about police by promoting friendly police culture, he added. Shaukat Ali assured of his full cooperation for improving performance of the force. It may be mention here that Islamabad police was arranging various courses regularly to enhance the capacity of its personnel under the directions of IGP.

MMBL, Teamup for financial boost
to entrepreneurial ecosystem

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited (MMBL), the largest digital bank in Pakistan and Teamup, a leading incubation and acceleration platform, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding on the 8th of June 2021, in a ceremony attended by key personnel from both organizations.

Ghazanfar Azzam, President & CEO MMBL and Zouhair Khaliq, co-founder Teamup signed the MoU to open

avenues for collaboration between the two parties. Both parties hope to leverage each other's network of strategic partners and knowledge experts to promote growth, innovation, financial inclusion, and digitalization in the start-up ecosystem.

Both organizations are keen to leverage their respective institutional expertise to design financial products tailored for startup needs. There will be a special focus on introducing programs to facilitate women entrepreneurs in gaining access to finance and for up-

skilling those to bring them at par with male entrepreneurs. Both parties will conduct events including seminars, workshops, and networking events for the development of new projects.

"We are extremely happy to initiate this collaboration and future prospects for this partnership are bright. Initiatives like these can be a game-changer for Pakistan's entrepreneurial ecosystem, and we are keen to explore new avenues for collaboration between the two parties." Zouhair Khaliq, Co-founder,

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Accreditation Council (PNAC), Ministry of Science and Technology has celebrated World Accreditation Day on 9th June 2021 and organized a seminar at Legend Hotel Islamabad. The theme of the seminar was Accreditation, Supporting the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This seminar also highlighted the Role of the Pakistan National Accreditation Council, Need and Importance of Accreditation for Pakistan Economy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The seminar was conducted in two sessions.

The inaugural session started with the recitation of Holy Quran followed by the Na-



tional Anthem. During the inaugural session welcome address was given by DG PNAC Ms. Ismat Gul Khattak who highlighted the importance of accreditation towards the implementation of supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The guest of Honor Federal Secretary for Science and Technology Mr. Nadeem Irshad Kiyani emphasized on the awareness of accredita-

tion. The Honourable Chief Guest Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Shibli Faraz appreciated PNAC for its work towards Accreditation and highlighted its importance to achieve a sustainable and quality lifestyle. On this occasion, the Chief Guest also launched the PNAC database for the online application for Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs). At the end of the inaugural

session, Honourable Chief Guest distributed the certificates of appreciation and DG PNAC presented the shields to Honourable Chief Guest and Guest of Honor.

After the inaugural session, the technical session was chaired by DG, PNAC along with Deputy DG and Director (CB). In technical session Deputy Director, PNAC gives a presentation on the Accreditation, the role of PNAC, and its achievements and representatives of different CABs highlighted the journey of Accreditation and achieved different goals in different schemes of Accreditation such as for medical labs, Halal Certification Bodies etc.

After the technical session questions answered session was conducted. The session was ended with vote of thanks by DG, PNAC.

Economic Survey
2021: External debt
reaches \$116.30b

ISLAMABAD: According to the main features of the Economic Survey of Pakistan, there was a three percent increase in the external debts of the country.

The federal government will launch the pre-budget document, Economic Survey of Pakistan 2020-21 on Thursday with a higher GDP growth rate of 3.94 percent and positive performance of almost all the macroeconomic indicators during the year. The Survey is scheduled to be shared with media at a press conference here during which an overview of the economic progress made in recent years in Pakistan would also be provided, official sources said.

According to the sources, the external debt had reached \$116.30 billion in March 2021 as compared to \$109.92 billion in March 2020. The internal debts and payables have reached Rs25552 billion while they were Rs24478 billion in March 2020. The current account deficit from July 2020 to April 2021 remained \$770m in surplus. — DNA

Ruet-e-Hilal
to meet
for moon
sighting

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of Zonal/District Ruet-e-Hilal Committees would be held on Thursday for sighting the crescent of Zul Qad'ah 1442 AH at its respective headquarters. Chairman Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad will attend the meeting of Zonal Ruet-e-Hilal Committee, to be held in Ministry of Religious Affairs & Interfaith Harmony, Islamabad. Whereas, the other members will join the meetings at their respective provincial / District Ruet-e-Hilal Committees on Thursday. The information regarding the sighting of crescent moon should be passed on to Maulana Syed Muhammad Abdul Khabeer Azad on his mobile no 0321-9410041; Syed Mushahid Hussain Khalid, DG (R&R), Ministry of Religious Affairs. 0300-6831822; Hafiz Abdul Qudoos, director (R&R) 0333-2697051.

According to Astronomical parameters, there is no chance of sighting the new crescent of Zul Qad'ah 1442 AH on the evening of Thursday. Therefore, the first of Zul-Qad'ah is most likely to commence from Saturday, said Malik Qadir, an expert. — APP

IESCO
issues power
suspension
programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Wednesday issued a power suspension programme for Thursday 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 02:00 PM Iqbal Town, Air Force, Tarlai Highway, Gharial, Mahfooz Shaheed, Club-1, Gulshanabad, Maj Masood Kiyani, BB Shaheed, Ratta, Race Course, Mongtal, D.M. Mills, Industrial Area, Carriage Factory feeders, from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM Takkantirila, Matwa, Kot Dhi-mak, Sohawa City, Riaz Shaheed, Sohawa City, Chamala, Dina City feeders, from 06:00 AM to 12:00 PM Raman, Nishan Haider, Dhadiyal City, Express, Latif feeders, from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM Takchakri, APF, SPD, Padial, Gagan, Chahan, Mahota, Dharnal, Kot Sheera, Kot Galla, Circle, Khanabad, Munirabad, Lalazar, Lala Rukh, Purnima, Industrial Estate, Ghari Afghan, AWC, Shaiya, Rashid Minhas, Burhan, Shafi Chauhani, Industrial, Kohistan, Kashif Gul, Max Industrial, Model Town, Ghazi Kohli, Industrial Estate, Hussainabad, Islampura, KSB, Col. Sher Khan, Sarai Kharboza, Pind Padian, ECHS (D-18), Sangjani, Paswal, Shahullah Dutta, Behlot, Taxila, Nawazish Shaheed, Salar Gah, Museum, Ghauri, Haro, Boi Garh, Qutbal, Karima feeders and surrounding areas.

PBM's
e-Ketchery
for resolution
of problems

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Over 90 complainants hailing from different walks of life and mostly hailing from far flung areas of the country have contacted the first ever e-Ketchery of Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) on Wednesday for registering their complaints and sharing their woes.

Managing Director PBM Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar took the immediate notices of poor and deserving persons and passed necessary directions for a prompt action to resolve the raised issues in e-ketchery. MD ordered the resolution of the issues of deserving students, patients, disabled persons and widows. The e-Ketchery has been arranged in compliance with Prime Minister's directive to address the issues of its beneficiaries and general public, according to a press release.

Emphasizing the vision of Prime Minister of Pakistan on digitalization for efficient services, Malik Zaheer Abbas said digital infrastructure and e-governance will not only enable us to accelerate our social services but such innovation & technical steps will lead us towards transparency, improvised response and credibility of public sector serving in social protection.

Experts stress on ecosystem
restoration

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, the Ministry of Climate Change, Pakistan, World Habitat Awards and the United Nations Habitat Programme, co-organized an international virtual seminar on Ecosystem Restoration for Quality of Life. The seminar was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Climate Change, the United Nations, INGOs, Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) agencies and partners, donor agencies, academia, media and community organizations. The virtual seminar, held on 8 June 2021, was part of a series of official events celebrating World Environment Day (WED). Recognizing Pakistan's glob-



al leadership in advancing ecosystem conservation and protection, it was selected to host this year's WED together with the United Nations Environment Programme. This year's WED theme was restoring the earth's damaged ecosystems to go from exploiting nature to healing it. WED also launched the

UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, a global rallying call for the protection and revival of ecosystems around the world, for the benefit of people and nature.

In his message, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam, shared that "Although our contribution to

global GHG emissions is less than 1%, Pakistan's people, biodiversity and economy are severely impacted by climate change, with more frequent disasters. I am glad to see development institutions like the Aga Khan Development Network and UN-Habitat contributing to these efforts for a greener Pakistan".

During the seminar, speakers from UN-Habitat, Aga Khan University, Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, and Aga Khan Agency for Habitat shared their experiences in ecosystem restoration and improving quality of life for communities living in mountainous areas to coastal belts and urban centres of Pakistan and globally.

In his opening remarks, Rafael Tuts, Director Programme Division, UN-Habitat, said that "We have been exploiting and destroying our planet's ecosystems, and the pandemic has also shown how disastrous the consequences of ecosystem loss can be. We urgently need to reverse our unsustainable lifestyles and how we design, plan and manage cities. UN-Habitat in collaboration with the Minis-

try of Climate Change carried out a study on "Policy Guidelines for Development of Green Building Code", based on which 'Green Building Guidelines were developed for the Prime Minister 5 Million Naya Pakistan Housing Programme'.

Mountain ecosystems are particularly rich in terms of biodiversity, culture, and critical natural resources such as water. Onno Ruhl, General Manager of the Aga Khan Agency for Habitat, explained, "mountains and mountain communities are on the frontlines of climate change, facing the threat of melting glaciers, unpredictable weather, and flash floods. AKAH is working to restore these fragile ecosystems and build resilient habitats for these communities to thrive.

Dosing off

AMIDST the encouraging news that Pakistan reported the lowest number of positive cases on Monday since March 8, a report revealed that around 300,000 individuals who received the first dose never returned to receive the second jab of the Covid-19 vaccine. This revelation is of serious concern that needs to be dealt with the utmost of urgency as it could undo a lot of the effort the government has put into the vaccination drive.

The government is faced with an uphill task as it must fight disinformation surrounding the vaccine from a variety of sources and compensate for poor planning and irresponsible behaviour on part of its citizens.

In an attempt to categorise these individuals, it appears that some may have died before getting the second jab, while another group has been identified as those who contracted the virus after receiving the first dose and then decided against getting the second one. The most concerning category however is composed of those individuals who fell prey to negative propaganda and chose to skip the vaccination of their own volition.

The NCOC is moving swiftly to establish a call centre to contact these individuals and convince them to complete their vaccination. However, at the same time, it is crucial that a public information campaign is broadcasted on all media platforms to counter conspiracy theories, and also educate citizens about the temporary side effects they may experience after receiving the vaccine.

Moving forward, the government must also consider an arrangement where those consenting to a first dose sign a commitment form that obliges them to come in for the second one. Experts claim that if an individual does not receive the second dose within six months of getting the first jab, they will be treated as a fresh case and will have to receive two doses. Keeping in mind the time-sensitivity of this challenge, the government will have to act fast if it is to preserve the gains of its hard work.

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

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Vol: 02 Issue: 33
 Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com
 Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960
 Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



New members of Biden's administration

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

US President Joe Biden is set to announce names of three new nominees to senior diplomatic and foreign aid positions. This will include the top State Department official on refugee issues. Reports claim that Julieta Valls Noyes, a veteran career diplomat, is expected to be nominated as the assistant secretary of state for population, refugees, and migration. This senior post may play a significant role in the Biden administration's efforts to reverse former President Trump's restrictions on refugees to enter the US. Another nominee includes two senior posts of the U.S. Agency for International Development. Paloma Adams-Allen, president and CEO of the Inter-American Foundation, a U.S. government agency that funds development projects in Latin America and the Caribbean, will be nominated as the deputy USAID administrator for management and resources. Isobel Coleman, a senior member of the Biden transition team and former U.S. envoy to the United Nations for management and reform under the Obama administration, will be nominated as USAID's deputy administrator for policy and programming. The US under Trump's era faced a lot of brunts when it came to aligning relations with refugees and non-Americans residing in the US. It is yet to be seen how effectively these nominations – once in power – will work to streamline the issues at hand. The US needs to restructure its policies on various fronts to undo all the wrong that Trump did. However, countries such as Pakistan, China, and Russia would be carefully observing how the US policies affect the South Asian and Central Asian states. The problem of refugees and displaced persons in the US must be addressed at the earliest so any human rights crisis and violation can be averted. Biden announced last month he would allow as many as 62,500 refugees into the United States this fiscal year, reversing Trump's historically low cap of 15,000. The announcement came after the president faced widespread backlash on an initial plan to temporarily keep the Trump-era limits in place.

Kashmir: Surviving Covid-19 under military boot

Umar Lateef Misgar



Hospitals in the region have an intensive care capacity of 450 units for a population of 12.5mn – or one ICU bed for every 27,000 residents. In one district in northern Kashmir which is home to 400,000 people, there are six ventilators available that could not be used during the surge of patients, as there was an acute shortage of trained medical staff

IN April and May, as India experienced a massive surge in coronavirus cases due to the Indian government's criminal mismanagement of the COVID-19 response, the news from

Indian-administered Kashmir was disturbing. The highly militarised region, which had already suffered a debilitating lockdown before the pandemic started, was struggling. Reported infections and deaths were breaking grim records each day as Kashmir's healthcare system was overwhelmed by thousands of new cases. The public health response was crippled by inadequate equipment and staffing of medical facilities. Hospitals in the region have an intensive care capacity of 450 units for a population of 12.5 million – or one ICU bed for every 27,000 residents. In one district in northern Kashmir which is home to 400,000 people, there are six ventilators available that could not be used during the surge of patients, as there was an acute shortage of trained medical staff. In Kashmir, one doctor is employed for every 3,866 people, way below the average for India of 1 to 2,000. By contrast, the region has no shortage of military infrastructure and personnel. Known as the world's most intensely militarised zone, it hosts one Indian soldier for every 14 residents. Kashmir also lost people due to the shortage of oxygen – something the government continues to deny. During the surge, one just had to open social media to see the shocking scale of shortages of oxygen, hospital beds and medicines. The desperate pleas of people trying to save their loved ones were heart-breaking. Yet the government continued to insist that everything was under control. Worse still, it was New Delhi's triumphalist projections of normalcy in Kashmir taking precedence over people's health that helped trigger the coronavirus surge in the region. In early April, when the second wave of coronavirus was already under way, the Indian authorities in Kashmir organised crowded cultural festivals and encouraged unregulated tourism from India and elsewhere. With no proper testing or quarantine regime in place, more lethal variants of the virus slid into Kashmir. According to local doctors, these new variants were more transmissible and intensified the severity of the disease. Consequently, by early May, Kashmir recorded a 700-percent increase in the number of active coronavirus cases. A lockdown was swiftly announced but, in a mili-

tarised space such as Kashmir, it resembled more of a siege, with roads and intersections blocked by barbed wire, armoured vehicles and paramilitary personnel. Doctors, paramedics and journalists reported being assaulted at these roadblocks. This was the third lockdown Kashmiris had to suffer through in the past two years. The first one, which started in August 2019, after New Delhi revoked the region's special status against the will of its people, lasted six months. A curfew was imposed, internet and mobile phone access were cut off, businesses were forced to close, schools and universities suspended classes, and life came to a complete halt under the full control of the Indian army. Shortly after some of these restrictions started to be relaxed, COVID-19 hit the country and another lockdown was imposed. These three lockdowns have devastated the local economy. In just the past year, according to estimates by business groups, Kashmir's economy has lost about \$5.5bn. Another \$2.4bn was lost during the 2019 lockdown, which eroded the Kashmiri people's economic resilience and their ability to cope with the subsequent COVID-19 lockdowns. A social support culture of local non-governmental organisations and volunteers, however, remains robust and was able to mobilise to provide medical and economic assistance to people. They had to work in a rather hostile environment where Indian authorities created various barriers to stem their efforts. For example, in early May the local government issued an order banning the supply of medical oxygen to NGOs, which made the work of volunteers trying to help patients who could not breathe extremely difficult. Keeping people well-informed about the pandemic was also a major challenge in Kashmir. This was because Kashmiri doctors were banned from speaking to the media and people had to rely solely on information issued by the local authorities, whose reliability in some cases was questionable. On top of that, internet shutdowns in some areas of Kashmir continued during the coronavirus surge, hindering access for some Kashmiris and Kashmiri medical professionals to up-to-date information on COVID-19-related research. Having no internet access also prevented some

Kashmiris from registering in the national vaccination system. Lack of access to the online portal is one of several problems that have plagued the vaccination campaign in Kashmir, the massive shortage of vaccines being another one. As of mid-May, 2.8 million jabs had been administered in the region, but a great number of those did not go to civilians. Priority was given to security forces and the police, most of whom had received two doses by then. Many in Kashmir also worried about the thousands of Kashmiri political prisoners held in Indian jails in horrendous conditions. As the pandemic ripped through state prisons with increased intensity, the Indian government did not announce any plans to release political detainees. Due to censorship, it is hard to estimate how many prisoners have been infected by the virus, but some tragic cases have already surfaced. In early May, 78-year-old Ashraf Sehrai, a popular political leader, died in prison. His family maintains that he was ill with COVID-19 for some time and was denied proper medical care. For those Kashmiris who survived the COVID-19 surge and the latest lockdown, the future, however, also looks bleak. Having learned nothing from the superspreader events it allowed in the spring, the Indian government now plans to conduct the annual Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage from June to August. The event draws more than half a million Hindu pilgrims to ecologically fragile, remote areas in Kashmir. To provide security, the Indian government will also mobilise tens of thousands of troops and station them in residential areas along the routes leading to the destination of this pilgrimage. This influx of masses of people will undoubtedly put the local population at risk of yet another surge in infections. Kashmir would have to face that new COVID-19 wave with the same inadequately equipped and short-staffed hospitals and with the same shortages of oxygen and medicines. Kashmiris would likely have to go through yet another debilitating militarised lockdown that would push them even closer to the edge.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Palestine's Generation Z nullifying Israeli narrative

Osama Al-Sharif



For the first time in many decades, Israel's "hasbara" – its powerful propaganda machine, deployed to positively spin information about Israeli actions around the world – has been repulsed. Israeli diplomats tried frantically to whitewash their country's tarnished image, but they were immediately confronted by activists of all stripes, including anti-Zionist Jews

WHEN Israel arrested Muna and Mohamed Al-Kurd on Sunday, there was a digital tsunami of support for and solidarity with the most famous twins in Palestine. On Twitter and Facebook, activists from all over the world called for their immediate release. The international media again headed to the besieged Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in East Jerusalem, while the twins' father, Nabil Al-Kurd, held a press conference in front of the Israeli police station where his children were being held. Both were later released on bail, but not before armed Israeli police used stun grenades to disperse peaceful activists and the media. Israel had lost another round in the vital PR showdown, as its international image was dented even further. It was a foolish move by the Israeli authorities, just like its recent provocations of Palestinians in the Old City, at Al-Aqsa Mosque, and in the Sheikh Jarrah and Silwan neighborhoods, which also all backfired. At the heart of the Palestinians' peaceful resistance and defiance are thousands of young people – what many in the media now call "Generation Z," who are aged between about 6 and 24 years. Thousands of their images, online posts, podcasts and interviews have gone viral over the past few weeks, exposing Israel's brutal occupation and persecution of defenseless Palestinians in Jerusalem and the West Bank. They helped Sheikh Jarrah become a household name all over the world. Israel's attempts to displace and forcibly evict the residents of this Palestinian neighborhood were debated in parliaments, including the US Congress, on popular talk shows and in clubhouses worldwide. Twitter, TikTok, Instagram and other social media sites were flooded with posts from all over, stripping bare Israel's discriminatory laws and

barbaric policies. Tel Aviv's 11-day war against Gaza has been widely denounced by politicians, peace activists, the international media, and human rights organizations. For the first time in many decades, Israel's "hasbara" – its powerful propaganda machine, deployed to positively spin information about Israeli actions around the world – has been repulsed. Israeli diplomats tried frantically to whitewash their country's tarnished image, but they were immediately confronted by activists of all stripes, including anti-Zionist Jews. The often-used cliché that "anti-Zionism is equal to anti-Semitism" was exposed as failing to hold water. The saga of Sheikh Jarrah has become a symbol of the Palestinian struggle for freedom from occupation and for national salvation. At the forefront of the peaceful resistance are the Al-Kurd twins. At 23 years of age, well-educated and enlightened, they introduced a new, often ignored, generation of Palestinians to the world. It is this generation, which makes up about 24 percent of the total Palestinian population of the West Bank and Gaza, that now leads the peaceful resistance against Israeli occupation. This generation has mastered the use of social media and is able to bypass the often indifferent and sometimes biased Western media to reach millions of people, mostly their own age, around the world. While an aging Palestinian leadership grows more distanced from its own people, it is the youths who have become Israel's main challengers on the ground. In 2013, UNICEF published a report entitled "Children in Israeli Military Detention," in which it revealed that, over the previous 10 years, an estimated 7,000 children had been detained, interrogated, prosecuted and/or imprisoned within the Israeli military justice system – an average of two per day. In April, the

Palestinian Prisoner Society said that the Israeli authorities had arrested 230 Palestinian children since the beginning of the year. The rising influence of Palestinian youth is not an isolated phenomenon. Young people around the world are being mobilized to reject discriminatory laws and injustice at home and abroad. This is why, in the past few weeks, millions of young people from all walks of life have held protests against Israeli atrocities and raised placards labeling Israel as an apartheid state. The growing Black Lives Matter and Me Too grassroots movements have identified themselves with the peaceful Palestinian struggle and have posted hashtags, including the viral #PalestinianLivesMatter. The erosion of Israel's image can also be blamed on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who, in his feverish and incendiary last-ditch attempt to save his political future, has ignited the situation in Jerusalem and elsewhere in a bid to appease his fanatic far-right settler following. However, what he has succeeded in doing instead is uniting Palestinian youths not only in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, but also inside the Green Line. Meanwhile, far-right, anti-Arab Israeli lynching gangs stormed Palestinian neighborhoods in Lod, Jaffa, Haifa and other areas during the Gaza war, exposing the growing political and socioeconomic rifts within Israeli society, which is leaning further to the right. For years, Israeli politicians claimed that younger Palestinian generations would forget about their national cause and identity. But, in the past few weeks, the peaceful resistance of Palestine's Generation Z and the subsequent global solidarity have proven them wrong, as they have been able to nullify Israel's narrative.

– Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

**Olympics:
India drops
Chinese kit
sponsor**

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has dropped Chinese sports-wear maker Li-Ning as its official kit partner citing public sentiment in the country and saying its athletes will wear unbranded apparel at the Tokyo Games instead. Chinese companies have faced a backlash in India since 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a clash with Chinese forces in a Himalayan border dispute last year. The IOA at that time decided to review its tie-up with Li-Ning, which was due to expire after the Tokyo Games. It unveiled an Olympic kit six days ago but said late on Tuesday it had ended the association out of respect for the "sentiments of the people of the country". "We are aware of the emotions of our fans and we ... have decided that we will withdraw from our existing contract with an apparel sponsor," IOA President Narinder Batra and Secretary General Rajeev Mehta said in a statement. "Our athletes, coaches and support staff will wear unbranded apparel." Li-Ning's India representatives were not immediately available for comment. Speaking in Beijing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin said: "We hope India can view regular cooperation between countries objectively and fairly, and avoid politicising the issue."

**Norway
offers J&J
vaccine to
volunteers**

OSLO: Norway will offer the Johnson & Johnson Covid vaccine to volunteers under strict conditions from mid-July, the government said Wednesday, flouting the advice of various health authorities who say the risks outweigh the benefits. The Nordic country, which has dropped the AstraZeneca jab from its vaccination programme amid concerns about rare but severe blood clots, had also suspended the use of the J&J vaccine over similar concerns earlier this year. But the government said on May 12 that it planned to offer the J&J single-dose jab to volunteers. On Wednesday, it detailed the strict conditions that would apply to those who, after a medical consultation, want to be vaccinated with the J&J jab as of June 15. — APP

**Sweden
Euro squad
tightens Covid
measures**

STOCKHOLM: Sweden's Euro 2020 squad will be subjected to stricter Covid measures after two players tested positive, star winger Dejan Kulusevski and midfielder Mattias Svanberg who will both miss the team's opener against Spain, the Swedish FA said Wednesday. While Kulusevski was ruled out on Tuesday, Svanberg's second test on Wednesday confirmed he will also have to sit out Monday's match in Seville. "Svanberg won't be able to play," a team spokesman told AFP. Brentford defender Pontus Jansson skipped Wednesday's morning practice after feeling "tired", but coach Janne Andersson told a press conference that his Covid test had come back negative. Other players tested earlier in the day also returned negative results.

**Vietnam to
postpone
SEA Games**

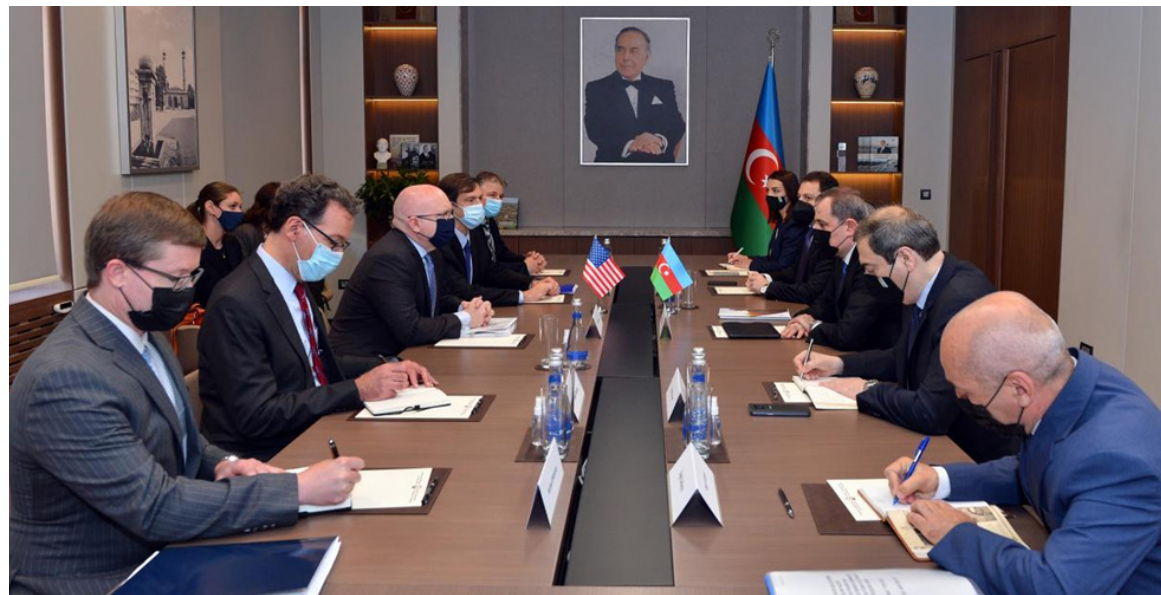
HANOI: Vietnam plans to postpone this year's Southeast Asian Games, state media said Wednesday, as the country grapples with a new virus outbreak. The regional Olympics are due to be held in Hanoi and 11 other locations — some of them at the epicentre of the fresh Covid-19 wave — from November 21 to December 2. But Vietnam reportedly wants to move the 31st SEA Games to next year. An online meeting between the Olympic committees of the nations due to compete at the games was held Wednesday, according to Vietnam News Agency. — APP

Baku, Washington mull strategic partnership

The US official praised the agreement reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia on the cessation of hostilities and expressed concern over the recent developments in the region, including the tensions at the border

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and visiting U.S. Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker have discussed bilateral strategic partnership and regional challenges, including the Armenian-Azerbaijani border tensions, the Foreign Ministry reported on June 9. At a meeting held in Baku on June 9, Bayramov stressed the strategic nature of partnership relations between Azerbaijan and the United States and noted the positive impact of mutual visits to the development of these relations. Bayramov informed Reeker about the post-conflict regional situation, the lack of Azerbaijan's interest in aggravating the situation, and steps taken by Azerbaijan to fulfill the trilateral statement signed by Azerbaijan, Armenia and Russia



in November 2020. He also spoke about Armenia's irresponsible behavior and its refusal to share information on mine maps and sending saboteurs to plant mines on the Azerbaijani territory. U.S. official Philip Reeker

noted that Azerbaijan is a strong partner country and stressed that the United States attaches great importance to bilateral relations. He recalled with satisfaction his telephone conversation with Azerbaijani President

Ilham Aliyev. Reeker expressed U.S. regional interests and desire to be helpful in addressing the existing challenges in the region. The U.S. official praised the agreement reached between Azerbaijan and Armenia on

the cessation of hostilities and expressed concern over the recent developments in the region, including the tensions at the border. He also expressed regret over the recent death of two journalists and an official

as a result of a landmine explosion. Reeker stressed the U.S. desire to help resolve existing tensions and referred to the efforts as a co-chair of the OSCE Minsk Group. The sides also discussed various aspects of the bilateral cooperation agenda, as well as cooperation in the fields of energy and security. Other issues of mutual interest were also discussed at the meeting. Reeker earlier called on Baku and Yerevan to resolve border tensions peacefully. "We must all be concerned that the situation may worsen. We call on the two sides to resolve this issue peacefully and as soon as possible. We call on the parties to return to the substantive negotiations under the chairmanship of the OSCE Minsk Group," the US official said. Reeker stated that the U.S. is ready to render technical assistance to demarcate the border between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

Brazil rules out Copa America boycott

SPORTS DESK

BRASILIA: Brazil's national football team has agreed to play in the upcoming Copa America despite concerns over the late decision to stage the continental tournament in its home country. The tournament, postponed from last year due to the coronavirus pandemic, was scheduled to be jointly hosted by Colombia and Argentina. Can COVID-stricken Brazil host Copa America? Brazil to host 2021 Copa America after Argentina ruled out COVID-19 in Brazil: Copacabana beach filled with symbolic graves Colombia was dropped last month amid a wave of protests against President Ivan Duque while Argentina was ruled out due to an increase in COVID-19 cases in the

country. Brazil has reported more than 17 million cases of coronavirus. More than 476,000 people have died of the virus in the country whose death toll is second only to the US. Experts have warned it is facing a new surge that could be exacerbated by a major international sports tournament. On Wednesday, Brazilian players used social media to publish a message saying they are "unsatisfied" with South American football's governing body, CONMEBOL, which decided to move the tournament to Brazil. They said they did not want to make the organisation of Copa America a political debate though. "We are against organizing the Copa America, but we will never say no to the Brazilian national team," the players said in a joint statement.

Iraq releases Iran aligned commander

FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: Iraq has released an Iran-aligned armed group commander who was arrested in May on terrorism-related charges after authorities found insufficient evidence against him. Two Iraqi officials said Qasim Mahmoud Muslih was released at 8am (05:00 GMT) on Wednesday. His supporters greeted him with hugs and kisses on Baghdad's central Jadriya Bridge, taking photos and videos with him to celebrate. Muslih, from the southern holy city of Karbala, was arrested on May 26. The military had said the charges were terrorism-related but did not give details. He is the head of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (PMF) in Anbar province. Security officials told Reuters news agency at the time that the arrest was linked to attacks on US forces stationed in Iraq. Some media and analysts said it was because of Muslih's alleged involvement in the killing of peaceful pro-democracy activists. Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has placed himself publicly in opposition to Iran-backed militias and parties, and Muslih's arrest was a major attempt to rein in their power. His release without prosecution is a blow to those efforts and one of a number of unsuccessful attempts to crack down on armed groups. The two most high-profile moves against Iran-backed factions — Muslih's arrest and the detention in June 2020 of fighters allegedly involved in rocket fire against US targets — have each resulted in no prosecutions and all of those arrested being released. On both occasions, heavily armed militiamen stormed Baghdad's fortified Green Zone, where foreign embassies and government buildings are located, threatening al-Kadhimi.

Central Asian migrants prefer Kazakhstan

DNA

NURSULTAN: An investigation revealed that migrant workers from Central Asian countries prefer to seek their fortune in Kazakhstan, where earnings are much lower than in Russia, but there are fewer risks and fewer problems. They mainly move from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan. Airline tickets to Russia have risen greatly in the year of the pandemic, and work permits have also become more difficult to obtain, with the risk of being repatriated without warning. Kazakhstan is the richest of the countries in the former Soviet region, still largely Russian-speaking, but also compared to the less accessible Afghanistan and Pakistan, not to mention the western regions of China.

HAF restores mosques in Shusha

DNA

SHUSHA: The Heydar Aliyev Foundation (HAF) is working on restoration and repair of religious monuments in Shusha after years of destruction under Armenian occupation. The historic mosques, namely, Ashaghi Govhar Agha Mosque, Yukhari Govhar Agha mosque and Saatli Mosque were designed by architect Karbalayi Safikhankarabakhi, one of the representatives of Karabakh architecture schools. These mosques have been included in the list of historical and cultural monuments of national importance. The religious monuments were vandalized the occupation of Shusha city by the Armenians. The interior of Yukhari Govhar Agha Mosque was destroyed, the

decor of the minarets was damaged. The covering and other architectural elements were destroyed as well. The first stage of the reconstruction has been completed. Now the work is underway in the second stage. Stones in the walls of the mosque are put in accordance with the original project. Assessment work is being carried out with the participation of foreign experts in Ashaghi Govhar Agha Mosque, which was destroyed as a result of the Armenian occupation. After the occupation of Shusha city by Armenians, Saatli historic mosque was destroyed and turned into ruins. Heydar Aliyev Foundation is engaged in restoration work of Azerbaijan's religious and historical monuments in the Nagorno-Karabakh region after the liberation of the

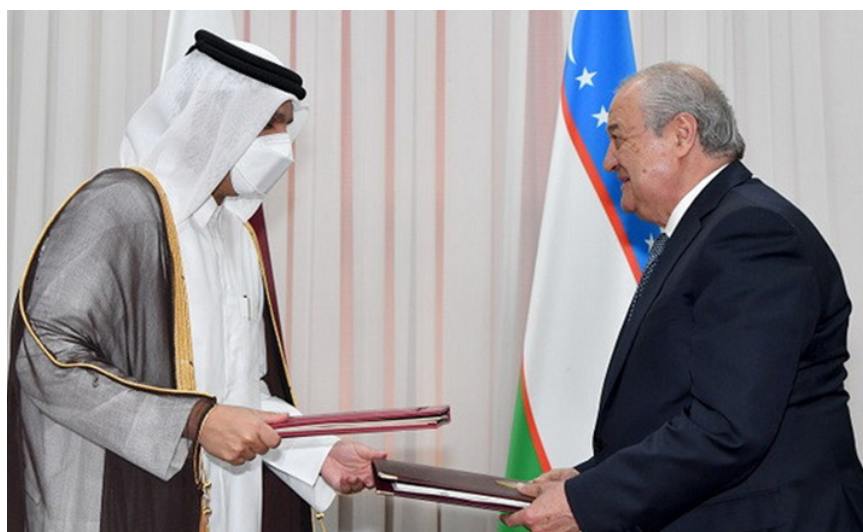
country's territories from the Armenian occupation. As a result of Armenian vandalism, hundreds of cultural institutions were destroyed on Azerbaijan's occupied territories. Over 700 historical and cultural monuments registered by the state before the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were looted, including the 11 and 15-span Khudafarin bridges in Jabrayil, Ganjasar and Khudavend sanctuaries in Kalbajar, the mausoleum in Aghdam's Khachin Turbetli village, Azykh cave in Fuzuli as well as Shusha state historical and architectural reserve. Local and foreign experts are working on the restoration of Azerbaijan's liberated territories. The clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan resumed after Armenia launched large-scale attacks on Azerbaijani forces and civilians on September 27.

Uzbekistan-Qatar signed agreement on air traffic

The agreement provides that for the development of air communication between Uzbekistan and Qatar, airlines will be provided with benefits on a reciprocal basis to ensure regular flights and exemption from customs duties, taxes and other fees

DNA

TASHKENT: An intergovernmental agreement on air traffic between Uzbekistan and Qatar was signed today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as part of an official visit of the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani to Uzbekistan. The agreement was signed from the Uzbek side by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov, with the Qatari side — by the Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani. The agreement envisages the organization of air traffic, the designation of airlines that will be given the right to operate flights, the determination of destinations, the recognition of certificates and licenses, and the regulation of airline representative offices in two countries. According to the provisions of the document, the designated airlines on each side will have the appropriate rights to land at the agreed addresses on the territory of



the second state and fly through their territory without landing. The agreement provides that for the development of air communication between Uzbekistan and Qatar, airlines will be provided with benefits on a reciprocal

basis to ensure regular flights and exemption from customs duties, taxes and other fees. In addition, the document sets out the rules for ensuring aviation security and settling possible disputes between the avi-

ation organizations of the two countries, and other conditions for cooperation. The document will give a positive impetus to the further development of bilateral cooperation, open up new prospects for the further expansion of trade and economic ties between the two countries and will contribute to the formation of a mutually beneficial air transportation market. Recall that the delegation headed by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov during his visit to Tashkent. The parties exchanged views on the current state and prospects of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Qatar. Topical issues of the bilateral and regional agenda were discussed. For information, on April 6-7 this year in Tashkent, representatives of the aviation administrations of the two countries held negotiations on the further development of cooperation between Uzbekistan and Qatar in the field of civil aviation.

EU starts digital Covid certificate

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: European Union lawmakers have endorsed a new travel certificate that will allow people to move between European countries without having to quarantine or undergo extra tests for the coronavirus, paving the way for the pass to enter force in time for summer. The widely awaited certificate is aimed at saving Europe's travel industry and prime tourist sites from another vacation season hindered by virus restrictions. Holiday destination countries like Greece have led the drive to have the certificate, which will take both paper and digital form, rapidly introduced.

Covid restrictions further relaxed

FROM PAGE 01

- Incentivized campaign for which NCOC is considering to introduce certain incentives for various sectors to encourage vaccination.
- All vaccination centres will remain open from 8 AM to 10 PM daily from 11 June 2021 (less Sunday).
- Vaccination centres will remain open on Friday instead of Sunday.
- From 11th June onwards 18 years+ citizens will be able to avail the walk-in facility in vaccination centres
- NCOC is in the process of developing IT based solutions for verification of vaccination certificates which shall be completed by end June 2021.
- Decisions on NPIs These decisions will be implemented from 15th June onwards
- Restriction on closure of two days a week will be relaxed to 1 day. Choice of day will be at the discretion of Federating units.
- Partial opening of indoor gyms for vaccinated members only.
- Only selective non contact sports will be permitted, while ban on contact sports (Karate, boxing, MMA, Rugby, Kabbadi, Wrestling, water polo) and festivals, cultural and other events will remain imposed.
- Ban on closure of shrines will remain imposed.
- Cinemas will remain closed.
- Existing 50% work from home policy will be relaxed to 100 % office attendance.
- Two days weekly ban on inter-provincial transport port will be lifted.
- Restriction regarding 50 % occupancy for public transport will be relaxed to 70% occupancy.
- Current Restrictions already announced by NCOC regarding recreation, education Sector, mask wearing SOP, Railways and inbound passengers policy will remain in place till further orders.

Pak values ties with 'Iron Brother'...

FROM PAGE 01

provision of vaccines to Pakistan and said that Pakistan greatly values its friendly relations with its "iron brother" China. COAS also felicitated the dignitary for holding grand ceremony in Beijing on the occasion of 70th Anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations. Visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's sincere efforts for bringing peace and stability in the region, especially the Afghan Peace Process.

FM Qureshi, Canadian FM discuss..

FROM PAGE 01

the Canadian government, civil society, the media and the general public had extended support to the family of the victims in their hour of grief and hoped that the perpetrator of the crime would be brought to justice. Qureshi briefed Garneau of the efforts undertaken by Pakistan to raise awareness and to curtail the growing Islamophobic tendencies. He underscored that the international community must show a common resolve against the rising trend of Islamophobia and promote peaceful coexistence and interfaith harmony. The two foreign ministers agreed to work together on countering Islamophobia through coordinated efforts at the various international fora, the statement said.

Briefs

China to roll out 3rd COVID vaccine

DNA

BEIJING: China will roll out its third COVID-19 vaccine on Wednesday after it was approved for emergency use. "An inactivated COVID-19 vaccine... is recommended for use on adults 18 years and older in a two-dose schedule with a spacing of two to four weeks," local news outlet People's Daily reported. China's other two vaccines – Sinopharm and Sinovac – have already been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO) and are in use across the globe. The country has 20 vaccine candidates currently undergoing clinical trials. China has supplied its vaccines to at least 66 countries and international organizations. Earlier, a Chinese health official had asked the WHO to exempt new vaccine candidates from human trials for emergency use. Besides, Chen Wei, a Chinese military infectious disease expert, last week said her team is "applying for emergency use of a kind of COVID-19 vaccine that can be administered through inhalation." Chen works with Chinese vaccine producer CanSino.

US changes travel warnings for 114 countries

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: The US State Department updated travel warnings for dozens of countries worldwide on Tuesday, including Turkey. In all, the department changed its travel advisories for 114 countries, according to a State Department statement. The majority of the revisions – 58 – were countries being upgraded from Level 4 Do Not Travel to Level 3 Reconsider Travel, including Turkey. Other nations that saw their travel warnings loosened include Summer Olympics host Japan as well as France and Germany.

People who are thinking of visiting Japan should reconsider travel due to COVID-19, the department said as the East Asian country prepares to hold the Olympics beginning in late July. It pointed to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Level 3 travel warning, as it did with Germany and France and dozens of other nations. Three countries – the British Virgin Islands, Samoa and Sudan – were downgraded to Level 4.

Kazakhstan elected to ECOSOC

DNA

NEW YORK: At the 73rd plenary session of the UN General Assembly, Kazakhstan has been elected to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) for the term of 2022-2024, the Kazakh Foreign Ministry said. Kazakhstan's membership to the Council was supported by 180 UN Member States. Kazakhstan, as a member of ECOSOC, intends to strengthen cooperation with international financial and trade organizations for the effective implementation of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and address key humanitarian challenges in Central Asia. Membership in Council will also contribute to attracting successful global practices to Kazakhstan in order to support its national reforms to accelerate economic and social progress and enhance its public administration. ECOSOC is the main organ of the United Nations, which is responsible for coordinating policies and programmes of the UN system in the economic, social, and environmental spheres. It is the central platform for promoting solutions to pressing problems and challenges in these areas. According to the voting results, the other countries that became members of ECOSOC were Afghanistan, Belize, Belgium, Eswatini, India, Italy, Canada, Chile, Cote d'Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Mauritius, Oman, Peru, Tanzania, Tunisia, and the USA.

Israel's arrests 're-energizing the Palestinian movement'

Muna and Mohammed were barely 11 years old in 2009 when Jewish settlers moved into their home in Sheikh Jarrah and took over half of it as per another court order back then

FOREIGN DESK

JERUSALEM: It is not the first time that Israel has detained or arrested Palestinian activists. But the mass arrests undertaken since a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas – agreed upon to end the recent cycle of violence – may backfire. The detentions of Palestinian activists and journalists this time around are re-energizing a long-simmering peaceful resistance and launching a new generation of Palestinian icons fighting to protect their homes, as well as advocating self-determination. In a statement, Israeli police said it launched "operation law and order" to bring rioters to justice and to "maintain public peace". It added

so far, "2,142 detainees have been registered". Palestinians, however, said Israeli police arrested those who had been peacefully protesting with the unstated but obvious aim to crush the momentum of their movement, which has picked up pace over the last month. The Israeli police might have proved the Palestinians right as they arrested Muna al-Kurd. The 23-year-old activist had been highlighting an Israeli court's order that her family, and several others, be forcibly evicted from their homes in Sheikh Jarrah – a neighbourhood in the heart of East Jerusalem. Her twin brother, Mohammed al-Kurd, was also summoned and questioned by police. Their arrests came a day after a journalist for Al Jazeera Media Network, Givara

Budeiri, was briefly detained while reporting from Sheikh Jarrah. While the siblings were later released, their arrests will only add impetus to their struggle. Their story mirrors the tale of dispossession of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians and is getting much more prominence now. Muna and Mohammed were barely 11 years old in 2009 when Jewish settlers moved into their home in Sheikh Jarrah and took over half of it as per another court order back then. Her father had been forced out of his ancestral home in Haifa in 1948 and was resettled in Sheikh Jarrah in 1956 by Jordan and the United Nations' refugee agency in exchange for giving up his refugee status. Muna and Mohammed not

only inherited generational trauma but were forced to share their home with strangers. They had been campaigning against the Israeli settlements since they were children, filming tensions between Palestinians and settlers, and interviewed often by international filmmakers. But in March this year, as the court ordered their eviction from the other half of their home, the siblings put up a fiercer fight on social media. They are seen to be behind #Save-SheikhJarrah that has been trending on Twitter. A video clip of Muna challenging a Jewish settler, reminding him for "stealing" her home, went viral online while Mohammed was interviewed by several American broadcasters, among other international networks.

Asked in an interview about whether he supports "violent" protests taking place in support of Palestinians in Sheikh Jarrah, Mohammed succinctly asked a question in return: "Do you support the violent dispossession of me and my family?" That clip went viral, too, hitting a chord with Palestinians at home and in the diaspora. Muna and Mohammed are examples of a new generation of influencers in Palestinian society with a large following on social media. They effectively used the medium to organise dissent and spread their message to both local and international audiences. Anwar Mhajne, assistant professor at the Department of Political Science at Stonewall College, said the sophistication of the siblings'

activism in utilising social media, their young age, and persistence to fight for the Palestinian cause has mobilised momentum among more activists, who also have hundreds of thousands of followers. "Muna and Mohammed al-Kurd have been at the forefront of spreading awareness of the threat of expulsion that Palestinian families face in Sheikh Jarrah," Mhajne told Al Jazeera. "Social media users rallied to the support of the siblings following the release of a video posted by their friend showing Muna being detained from her home in the presence of her father." Outside the police station, a dozen peaceful protesters were threatened with stun grenades by the police force.

1m children need support in Gaza

WEB DESK

GAZA CITY: UN and UNICEF representatives launch appeal from Gaza for support for mental health, medical systems, schooling, access for long-term development after Israel's 11-day bombing pushes besieged enclave to economic brink. One million children in Gaza are in need of support, UNICEF Special Representative for Palestine Lucia Elmi has said, highlighting the critical need to support family centres that provide mental health and psychosocial support to children in the territory. Elmi while addressing a press conference with Lynn Hastings, UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Gaza on Wednesday, said that fellow Palestinians who are trying to ensure that Gaza is free of explosive remnants of war are real-life action heroes. "Half of the population in the Gaza Strip are below the age of 18. So we are talking about one million children today in Gaza in need of our support," Elmi said. "So it's really important that we continue to support our children and their families including the parents to detect signs of stress and trauma so they can be referred to centers like these and to the counselors to be provided support as soon as possible," she added.

Melbourne to exit lockdown

FOREIGN DESK

MELBOURNE: Authorities in Melbourne will relax a COVID-19 lockdown as planned on Thursday night, saying people's adherence to the strict rules had "changed the course" of a coronavirus outbreak in Australia's second-largest city. Melbourne's five million residents have had to remain at home for all but the most essential reasons over the past two weeks after a cluster of cases emerged that were linked to the Delta variant of the coronavirus, which is thought to be more transmissible. The relaxation will take effect from 11.59pm local time (13:59 GMT) on Thursday, although some restrictions on travel and gatherings will remain in place for a further week. "This is a good day. Everyone should be absolutely proud of what we have all achieved together," Victoria state acting Premier James Merlino told reporters in Melbourne on Wednesday. "But we know this isn't over yet and until we have widespread vaccination across Victoria and the country, the virus will still be with us." Even when the rules are eased, people will have to remain within 25 kilometres (15 miles) of their homes, officials said.

Israeli forces storm archeological site

DNA

NABLUS: Israeli occupation forces today stormed the archeological site of Sebastia in Nablus in the occupied West Bank, closing its entrances. Mohammad al-Azem, head of the Sebastia municipality, said a number of Israeli forces raided the town and proceeded to close the site, preventing Palestinians from entering it. He also said that several Israeli military vehicles raided the town, including the force's bus, and headed towards the archeological site. Al-Azem has said that Israel's archeological activities in Palestinian territory aim to extend the policy of dispossessing Palestinians of their lands and cultural assets. Al-Azem has also stressed that indigenous of Sebastia will not allow the Israeli occupation to one day steal their heritage and will confront every attempt to take over the lands. Sebastia is an ancient town dating back 3,000 years. It extends over 5,000 dunums [1,235 acres] and is inhabited by 3,500 people. Herod the Great named the city Sebastia – meaning Augustus – in honor of Roman Emperor Augustus Caesar in 27 B.C. The city, famous for its dozens of Roman archaeological pieces and sites, continuously faces attacks by Israeli settlers and the Israeli forces, who have their eyes set on its archaeological sites.



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmed Khan calls on Chairman Afghan High Council for National Reconciliation Dr. Abdullah Abdullah and discuss Afghan peace process and related matters. – DNA

Honorary Consulate of Kazakhstan opens in N. Portugal

DNA

GUIMARAES: Kazakhstan's Honorary Consulate was inaugurated in Guimaraes, Portugal, the Foreign Ministry said. Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Portugal Daulet Batrashev, the Mayor of Guimaraes Domingos Bragança, the leadership of the regions that make up the consular district, as well as representatives of the country's academic, social, political, business and media attended the event. The Honorary Consul of Kazakhstan, Gil Vieira, head of "Resumesferico", will operate in the districts of Braga, Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, Bragança, Porto, Aveiro, Viseu, Guarda, Coimbra and Castelo Branco. At the ceremony, the Ambassador emphasized that the establishment of the Honorary Consulate of Kazakhstan is a visible evidence of the development of the Kazakh-Portuguese friendship, contributing to further expansion of trade, economic, investment and humanitarian cooperation between the countries. The Kazakh diplomat thanked the leadership of Guimaraes for their support and presented Gil Vieira with state symbols to be used in the activities of the Honorary Consulate. The dignitaries of the northern regions of Portugal, welcoming the opening of the Honorary Consulate, expressed confidence that it would contribute to the development of inter-regional bilateral cooperation. For his part, Mayor of Guimaraes Domingos Bragança noted the interest in expanding mutually beneficial relations with Kazakhstan, emphasizing the wide range of opportunities that the city can provide to further develop cooperation between the regions of the two countries.

Trauma haunts Gaza children after Israeli aggression

MONITORING DESK

GAZA CITY: Mohammad Alaf can't forget the moment when a missile struck near his home in Gaza City during Israel's bombardment of the Palestinian territory last month. The father of five recalls that the sound of explosions has left his 6-year old daughter's in total panic. "I felt her heart will stop. She was living real horror," Alaf told Anadolu Agency. The following day, his daughter has become completely speechless and withdrawn. "She was living a trauma and was unable to sleep for more than 24 hours," her father said. "Is this what Israel was seeking to achieve?" At least 260 Palestinians were killed and thousands injured in 11 days of Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip on May 11. Sixty-six children and 39 women were among those killed in the onslaught. Thirteen Israelis were also killed by Palestinian rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

The fighting, the fiercest in years, erupted against the backdrop of an Israeli court ruling to evict eight Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood in occupied East Jerusalem in favor of settlement groups. The violence came to a halt under an Egyptian-brokered truce that came into effect on May 21. Alaf, whose

children are aged between 3 and 15, said his kids have lived long days of anticipation and kept asking about what will happen to their relatives and friends nearby in case of Israeli attacks in the area. "They were asking me what will happen to children who live in these buildings, or if the warplanes will bomb our home," he said.

"Their questions showed how much they were afraid of being killed under the rubble of their home. Unfortunately, I did not have an answer about their questions." To ease their panic, Alaf engaged his children in activities like drawing, singing, storytelling and games in an attempt to reassure them amid the Israeli onslaught.



UN warns of 'mass deaths' in Myanmar

"This crisis could push people across international borders seeking safety," it warned, calling for all parties to "take the necessary measures and precautions to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure"

FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: A United Nations rights expert has warned of "mass deaths from starvation, disease and exposure" in eastern Myanmar after "brutal, indiscriminate attacks" by the military forced tens of thousands of people to flee their homes in Kayah State. In a statement on Wednesday, Tom Andrews, the UN special rapporteur for Myanmar, called for urgent international action, saying attacks by the military – which took power after a February coup – were "threatening the lives of many thousands of men, women and children" in Kayah or Karen state. "Let me blunt," Andrews said. "Mass deaths from starvation, disease, and exposure, on a scale we have not yet seen since the February 1 coup, could occur in Kayah State absent immediate action." The plea came hours after the UN

office in Myanmar said the violence in Kayah had displaced an estimated 100,000 people, who were now seeking safety in forests, host communities and southern parts of neighbouring Shan state. Those fleeing and those in locations affected by the bombing and artillery fire were in dire need of food, water, shelter, fuel and access to healthcare, the UN office said in a statement. "This crisis could push people across international borders seeking safety," it warned, calling for all parties to "take the necessary measures and precautions to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure". Myanmar has been in chaos since the military takeover, with daily protests across the country and fighting in border areas between the military and armed ethnic minority groups. Human rights groups say security forces have killed at least 849 people since the coup and de-

tained 5,800 others. People living in Kayah told Al Jazeera the military has launched indiscriminate air attacks and shelling in civilian areas after fighting broke out on May 21 between the security forces and a civilian resistance group calling itself the Karenni People's Defense Force (KPDF). There have been several deaths, including that of a 14-year-old boy who was shot dead in Loikaw township and a young man who was shot in the head with his hands tied behind his back. The military has repeatedly attacked churches in the predominantly Christian area, in one instance killing four people who were among 300 villagers sheltering at a Catholic church in Loikaw. Security forces have also attacked and threatened humanitarian workers, while Andrews said he had received reports that soldiers were "stopping aid from reaching these

desperate people" by setting up military blockades and laying landmines on public roads. "Any pressure or leverage UN member states can put on the junta must now be exerted so that junta leader Min Aung Hlaing will immediately: (1) open access roads and allow lifesaving aid to reach those in need, and (2) stop terrorizing the population by ceasing the aerial bombardment, shelling, and shooting of civilians." Andrews said the military's attacks against civilians in Kayah was the "latest in a series throughout Myanmar causing massive displacement and humanitarian suffering, including in Mutraw in Karen State, Mindat in Chin State, and the Bago City, among other areas". "Now more than ever, the international community must cut off access to the resources the junta relies on to continue these brutal attacks against the people of Myanmar," he added.

Myanmar's military has so far ignored international criticism of its violent crackdown and showed little sign of heeding a "Five-Point Consensus" agreed between Min Aung Hlaing and Southeast Asian leaders in April. The agreement – reached at a special summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – called for an end to violence, political talks and the naming of a regional special envoy. On Monday, ASEAN foreign ministers met a Myanmar military envoy in China's Chongqing and expressed concern over the army's "painfully slow" progress on implementing the consensus. Wunna Maung Lwin, the military's foreign minister, however, told the meeting: "The only way to ensure the democratic system that is disciplined and genuine" was through a military drafted five-point programme announced in the wake of February's coup.

Briefs

Rear Admiral
Naeem
Sarwar new
DGPR (Navy)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Rear Admiral Naeem Sarwar SI (M) has been appointed new Director General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy).

Rear Admiral Naeem Sarwar got commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1990. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, National Defence University Islamabad and has qualified National Defence Course from Indonesia. The Admiral has an illustrious Service career having vast experience of Command & Staff appointments. By profession, he is an aviator (Helicopter Pilot). His important appointments include Command of an Aviation Squadron, Chief Staff Officer to Commander Pakistan Fleet, Commander Jinnah Naval Base Ormara, Drafting Authority, Director Naval Aviation and Deputy Chief of Naval Staff (Personnel) at Naval Headquarters Islamabad.

In honour of his meritorious service career, the Flag officer is awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military). On assuming the appointment of DGPR (Navy), the Admiral will act as official Spokesperson of Pakistan Navy.

Pakistan to
attract more
Chinese
enterprises

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haq Wednesday said Pakistan's favorable business environment would attract more Chinese enterprises.

He said this while attending a business forum, organized by the Changsha High Tech Zone during his visit to Hunan Province of China. Ten leading local enterprises from diverse sectors such as; biotechnology, steel manufacturing, mining, home appliances, agriculture and services sector participated in the forum. Addressing the forum, Ambassador Moin briefed the participating companies about Pakistan's economy which was projected to grow 4% this year despite Covid-19 pandemic.

He said Pakistan was an emerging destination for overseas investment, and invited them to benefit from the attractive investment friendly policies of the government. The ambassador further briefed them about the Phase-II of CPBC which envisaged development of Special Economic Zones in Pakistan with special incentives offered for relocation of industries from China. — DNA

Moderate to
heavy rain
from Friday

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department on Wednesday warned of moderate to heavy rainfall across several cities in the East and Central parts of Pakistan starting Friday and lasting up to Monday.

The Met Office, in an advisory, said that moist currents from the Arabian Sea are likely to penetrate the eastern parts of the country Friday evening. Under the influence of the system, wind and thunderstorms can be expected in Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan (Astore, Kharmang, Ghanchane and Shigar), Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Murree, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Hafizabad, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Sialkot, Lahore, Kasur, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Nowshera, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, Dera Ismail Khan, Mardan, Buner, Dir, Shangla and Kohistan from Friday evening to Monday.

The Met Office also warned that the heavy rainfall "at times may generate urban flooding in low-lying areas of Lahore, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Jhelum and Rawalpindi on Saturday and Sunday".

Speakers call for people-to-people
contacts to promote Pak-ASEAN ties

CGSS organizes roundtable at the Indonesia embassy; Indonesian ambassador sheds light on the concept of ASEAN awareness in Pakistan; Vietnam ambassador keen to make his country well-understood in Pakistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad in collaboration with Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Islamabad organized Dialogue with Experts on the topic "Pakistan-ASEAN Cooperation". The event was organized in virtual format at the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, Islamabad.

This dialogue was attended by the Ambassadors and Diplomatic staff of the ASEAN countries residing in Pakistan. The business community of the ASEAN countries also actively participated in the session.

The session commenced with the opening remarks by Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad. He expressed his gratitude to all the participants and diplomatic staff of the ASEAN countries. He stated that the initiative of creating awareness about the new framework of cooperation between ASEAN-Pakistan would bring immense benefits in multiple fields.

Adam M. Tugio, Ambassador of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan gave the welcome remark. He welcomed all distinguished participants and panelists. He shed light on the concept of ASEAN awareness in Pakistan. Adam Tugio stated that this initiative would enhance the bilateral relations between Pakistan and ASEAN. He stated that this broader engagement would further increase people to people and government to government contacts. Therefore, would promote tourism and cultural integration.



A view of CGSS sponsored roundtable on ASEAN at the Indonesian embassy



Ambassador of Indonesia flanked by envoys of Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei and Myanmar



Prof Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar speaking on the occasion

Aamer Ahmed Atozai, DG, East & Asia Pacific Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan stated about a greater aim of Pakistan's look East policy, especially, the ASEAN member states. He explained that in 1993 Pakistan became the Sectoral Dialogue Partner (SDP) of ASEAN and since then it has been enhancing its efforts to gain the status of full dialogue partner. He

discussed that Pakistan's status of full dialogue partner would provide momentum to the multilateral and bilateral relations between ASEAN and Pakistan. Mr. Aamer Ahmed enlightened the audience that Pakistan's look East policy accounts to increase business-trade relations mainly with ASEAN countries.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of the Punjab, Lahore gave a detailed presentation on Enhancing Academic Cooperation between Pakistan and ASEAN Member states. He gave brief analysis on ASEAN 2020 targets to be achieved in multiple fields. He stated that Pakistan holds immense academic potential for the ASEAN region to engage into meaningful intellectual activities. Prof. Dr. Mu-



DG Foreign Office Amir Atozai (right) and VC and Executive Director Sialkot University



Ambassador of Vietnam Nguyen Tien Phong speaking during the roundtable

hammad Saleem Mazhar explained that Pakistan has been offering many of scholarship programs in English Language for the ASEAN member states. He stated that academic cooperation among ASEAN members and Pakistan would increase people to people connectivity and cultural integration. He offered to host scholars from ASEAN countries. Prof. Dr. Shabir Ahmad

Khan, Director, Area Study Center (Russia, China, & Central Asia), University of Peshawar gave a comprehensive presentation on Pakistan role in bringing peace and stability in the region. He stated that Pakistan is playing a constructive and significant role in regional stability and resolving the Afghanistan conflict. He stated that Pakistan believes regional integration is the

only way to facilitate peace process. It will develop inter-dependence and stakes of regional states in each other's stability. He also gave his analysis that Pakistan considers inter-organizational cooperation with BRI, CPEC, ASEAN, and CAREC. He highlighted Pakistan's role in the Afghan peace process. He stated that bringing peace to Afghanistan is the responsibility of each state.

Justice Siddiqui punished for
speaking truth: Maryam

Maryam has said there is no division in the Pakistan Democratic Movement

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) Vice-President and daughter of PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz has said that former judge Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui is being punished for speaking the truth, insisting on an independent inquiry against the former judge.

She was talking to media outside Islamabad High Court on Wednesday. While referring to the case of former Islamabad High Court justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui, Maryam called for an independent inquiry into the allegation of justice Siddiqui. She said justice Siddiqui should not be punished for speaking truth. She said that the court should understand that it was not a matter of a single judge. She said if one judge tells another judge that it was beyond his demure then he should also understand that the judiciary should take such steps where nobody could obtain wrong judgements from any judge. Maryam said that the state-

Javed Latif
granted bail

LAHORE: A Lahore Sessions Court on Wednesday granted bail to the member of the National Assembly (MNA) and PML-N leader Javed Latif in a session case. Javed Latif was arrested on April 27 after the public prosecutor requested the sessions court to revoke Latif's release on bail. After Latif's interim bail was dismissed, the police arrested him from the court-room. However, Additional Sessions Judge Hafeez-ur-Rehman heard the application and approved the bail, with a condition that he submits bail bonds worth Rs200,000. The sessions court reserved the judgment today and announced it later in the day. Javed Latif's post-arrest bail hearing has been held a total of four times since his arrest on April 27. In March, Latif had made a controversial comment which was deemed "anti-Pakistan" by the government, and a case was registered against him. — Staff Report



ment of former FIA DG Bashir Memon showed that how the authorities used state institutions for the purpose of political revenge. On the matter of drone bases, she said the international media had informed that the government had given air bases to the US. She said it was a matter of grave concern. She

said such deals could not be reached through clandestine talks. She, however, said the government had not denied it anyhow. She said she would oppose to grant the Pakistan air bases to America. She alleged that the government had given Kashmir to India. In the same way it is giving Pakistani land to the

US, she added. She said the PTI in order to save its government, had resorted to mean tactics.

Maryam has said there is no division in the Pakistan Democratic Movement as all parties which are part of the movement have same point of view, insisting that they hold the same perspective which is held by PML-N supreme Nawaz Sharif, media reported.

She said People's Party was no longer the part PDM. She said she didn't think there should be any talk on this issue. On National Accountability Bureau (NAB), she said Prime Minister Imran Khan in fact was the chairman NAB. She mocked that remove one and appoint the other. She said the way the NAB chairman had become a tool in the hands of Imran, the PM would have to face such things in the future. The PML-N vice president said that the government was doctoring economic figures and informed that her party would make a party regarding budget.

Israeli right-wing
march may be
held next week

MONITORING DESK

JERUSALEM: Israeli officials said on Tuesday they would allow a right-wing march in Jerusalem's Old City to go ahead next week under certain conditions, a day after police barred the event's route fearing it would rekindle violence between Israel and Palestinian fighters in Gaza.

Several right-wing Israeli groups had planned a flag-waving procession through the walled Old City's Damascus Gate and into its Muslim quarter on Thursday, drawing warnings from Gaza's rulers Hamas of renewed hostilities should it proceed. The far-right groups cancelled the Thursday march after police denied them a permit. But following a meeting of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cabinet on Tuesday, his office said ministers had agreed the march could be held next week if organisers and police reached an agreement. The principal issue is the route. "The parade will take place this coming Tuesday (June

15) in a format to be agreed between the police and the parade's organisers," a statement from Netanyahu's office said.

Netanyahu faces an end to his long hold on power on Sunday when the country's legislature is scheduled to vote on approving a government of diverse parties that came together to unseat him. If that vote is successful, it will be up to prime minister-hopeful Naftali Bennett and his partner opposition leader Yair Lapid to decide whether to proceed with the march.

Tal Schneider, a leading political reporter in Israel, said on Twitter: "The flag parade has been postponed to June 15, two days after the government is sworn in, meaning it will be Naftali Bennett's headache." Tensions are likely to remain high in Jerusalem whether or not the march goes ahead. Protests have flared in the East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, where Palestinian families face forced eviction after an Israeli court accepted Jewish settler land claims.

US Naval
Ship visits
Karachi

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: U.S. guided-missile cruiser USS Monterey (CG 61), deployed with the Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group (IKE CSG), conducted a scheduled sustainment and logistics port visit in Karachi, Pakistan June 8-9.

During the ship's visit, U.S. Embassy Chargé d'affaires a.i. Lesslie Viguerie came aboard and met with the crew. "The military-to-military ties between the United States and Pakistan are strong and enduring," said Chargé Viguerie. "Through staff exchanges and joint exercises, we are working together to protect the world's most important shipping lanes, combat piracy, and counter terrorism."

Sanaullah
Abbasi new
DG FIA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Wednesday transferred Wajid Zia to the National Police Bureau and replaced him with Sanaullah Abbasi as the director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). According to a notification issued by the federal government, Wajid Zia has been posted as the director general of the National Police Bureau "with immediate effect".

On the other hand, Moazzam Jah Ansari will take over from Abbasi as the inspector general of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police. Ansari was previously serving as the commandant of the Frontier Constabulary. Zia had taken charge as the DG FIA in November 2019 after PM Imran Khan's government unceremoniously removed Bashir Memon. He had shot to fame after he headed the Panamagate joint investigation team. Abbasi was appointed as the KP police chief in January 2020 and had replaced Dr Naeem Khan. — DNA

UN, Pak launch 'Pak Humanitarian Response Plan'

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Wednesday said Pakistan was making steady progress in achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), notwithstanding the challenges of climate change and COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing here at the joint launch event of '2021 Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan', the Foreign Minister said the government was striving to ensure effective response to humanitarian situations, followed by inclusive recovery and sustainable rehabilitation.

The '2021 Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP)' was launched at a joint event hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations in Pakistan. FM Qureshi said the policies of the

government were guided by two important principles – 'inclusivity' and 'sustainability'. "Our efforts must take into consideration the aspects of efficient and effective response to humanitarian situations, followed by inclusive recovery and sustainable rehabilitation," he said.

This Response Plan, he said, is intended to strengthen Pakistan's capacity in the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters including through the provision of relief services by building cross-institutional and stakeholder linkages". Federal Minister for SAFRON Sahibzada Muhammad Mehboob Sultan in his remarks said that "during the challenging COVID-19 pandemic period, we have efficiently provided relief to Afghan Refugees and other Afghans. He said replicating the government's Ehsaas Program, the Ministry of SAFRON with support of UNHCR



had provided Rs.12,000 to over 75,000 Afghan refugee families. Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Lieutenant General Akhtar Nawaz highlighted the policies and measures taken by the Government of Pakistan regarding disaster-risk reduction, mitigation and adaptation. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said, "In the face of grave implications of the pandemic, Pakistan also continues to

make sure no one is left behind and includes Afghan refugees in its COVID-19 response including the government vaccination programme." UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator Julien Harneis said the people in Pakistan had to cope with the humanitarian consequences of extreme weather events and conflicts in Afghanistan. "The causes of these humanitarian needs are in part global and regional, and so although the Pakistani

state and society have significant capacity to respond to these needs, it is appropriate that the international community share this burden," he said. In launching the HRP, he said the UN was laying out the roadmap of how the UN and humanitarian partners aim to support and complement the response of the Government of Pakistan.

The Plan seeks to highlight the main humanitarian needs, share the efforts and steps taken by the Government of Pakistan to handle these challenges in collaboration with the UN and other partners, and set out a well-coordinated and inclusive plan of action to respond to the needs of the people. The HRP is holistic, with a multi-sectoral approach covering the themes of health, education, protection, food security, shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and refugees.