



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Europe is fighting disinformation every day, says Ursula Leyen

Detailed News On Page-01

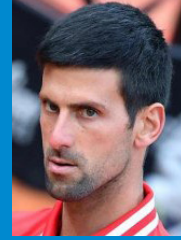
UNICEF Pak supports polio eradication

Detailed News On Page-08



Novak Djokovic wins French Open Final

Detailed News On Page-06



MOFA officers arrested on spying charges

Grade 18 officer working at the Chinese Division at MOFA produced before the court; the said officer is accused of sharing secret information with the Russian intelligence operatives; Bulgarian ambassador in Pakistan was sacked in the past for corrupt practices

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: A few senior officers working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan (MOFA), have been arrested on the charges of spying for other countries. In addition, action has also been taken against officers of the protocol department involved in illegal practices. According to details, Syed Qalbe Abbas, a BS-18 official of the Ministry of Planning and Development, had been working as deputy director of the China Division on deputation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for nearly three years. According to an FIR registered against him with the Counter Terrorism Wing (CTW), he frequently met diplomats and officials of foreign intelligence agencies "to deliver secret information/documents prejudicial to the safety and interests of the state". The sources revealed, the suspect had started his career as a research officer in now devolved ministry of food, agriculture and livestock in early 2000. He later became section officer and was associated with a section in the Economic Affairs Division that deals with the United Nations and foreign training. He became deputy director in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in September 2018. The accused was produced before the Islamabad High Court seeking bail but the Court turned down his post-arrest bail petition. Booked under Section 3 and 4 of the Official Secret Act, Abbas is facing charges of leaking sensitive information. According to an official privy to the development, the suspect was part of an organised network working for Russian intelligence and is being probed to ascertain the identity of his accomplices and how he retrieved such information and official documents.



Sources further revealed that a few other officials are also said to be involved in such practices and thus being proceeded against. It may be mentioned here that a few officers of the protocol division were shown the door for their involvement in the corrupt practices. Those officers were involved in issuing fake note verbal and import of liquor through unfair means. Similarly some diplomats too were pin-pointed by the Pakistani Customs authorities who were found involved in importing liquor beyond the specified quotas and secondly importing the duty free cars for their Pakistani friends. The former Bulgarian Ambassador Aleksandar Borisov Parashkevov's services were terminated and he was called back from Pakistan when it was confirmed that he misused his authority. The Bulgarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, upon getting the news thoroughly investigated the matter. It also wrote a letter to the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs asking it for details about the shady deal. The Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that the ambassador was involved in practices, which were not incommensurate with his status and stature. The Bulgarian Council of Ministers then proposed to the President to terminate the diplomatic assignment of the Ambassador of the Republic Bulgaria in Pakistan. This newspaper had broken this news and a detailed story can be accessed by clicking the following link. <https://islamabadpost.com.pk/bulgarian-ambassadors-services-terminated/>. Similar cases of misuse of office are under way against few other diplomats as well. In such cases the diplomats imported duty free cars and illegally handed over to their Pakistani friends of collaborators.



CARIO: General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chief of Staff Committee, accompanied by Ambassador Sajid Bilal called on Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi in Cairo. – DNA

Netanyahu out as new Israeli govt approved

A new "government of change" will be led by right-wing nationalist Naftali Bennett of the Yamina party

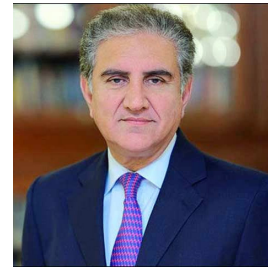
NEWS DESK

TEL AVIV: Benjamin Netanyahu has lost his 12-year hold on power in Israel after the country's parliament voted in a new coalition government. A new "government of change" will be led by right-wing nationalist Naftali Bennett of the Yamina party. He will lead an unprecedented coalition of parties which was approved with a razor-thin majority vote of 60-59. Mr Bennett will be prime minister until September 2023 as part of a power-sharing deal. He will hand power over to Yair Lapid, leader of the centrist Yesh Atid, for a further two years.

PML-N spoiled Jadhav case: FM

Says PM Imran will never give NRO to plunderers and looters of public money

BUREAU REPORT



MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi on Sunday said that the process of accountability would remain continue and the government would not give National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) to plunderers. While commenting on Bilawal Bhutto's reaction on arrest of Khurshid Shah's son Furrakh Shah, during media-talk after laying foundation stone of Albadar Park at Shah Rukn-e-Alam colony, Qureshi remarked that everybody had right to fair trial. However, nobody could create obstacle in accountability process. Qureshi categorically stated that Prime Minister Imran Khan would not offer NRO to corrupt elements. Responding to a question about Kulbhushan Jadhav, foreign minister said that Pakistan Muslim League

N (PML-N) mishandled Kulbhushan Jadhav's case, adding that the present government was taking measures on recommendations of International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Opposition should act sensibly and understand treacherous designs (moves) of India, said FM Qureshi. About Hajj, He stated that Saudi government had decided to allow limited number of local people and some other citizens hailing from countries and already present there (Saudi Arabia) to perform Hajj. Qureshi said that there

were different variants of coronavirus in the world and this step would surely help avoid spread of coronavirus across the globe. To a question about Ahsan Iqbal criticism regarding low budget for Defence, Foreign Minister suggested Ahsan to study budget book to know about the fact. About District Coordination Committee's working, Shah stated that the DCCs were established at every district following direction from Prime Minister Imran Khan with mandate to monitor development projects regularly. The DCC will meet after 15 days to review development projects, Qureshi remarked. Earlier, he laid foundation stone of Albadar Park and said that it would be outstanding recreational facility for the local people, adding that the Parks and Horticulture Authority was also directed to plant trees in the park.

Government committed to welfare of people

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has said PTI govt is committed to progress and prosperity in the country and revolutionary relief measures have been proposed for deprived segments of society. Speaking at a news conference in Faisalabad yesterday, he said the govt has presented an excellent budget and huge funds have been allocated for the welfare projects. The Minister of State said allocation for Ehsaas has been increased from 210b to 260b rupees and more beneficiaries have been registered through survey.

Fawad demands local bodies polls in Sindh

Says 1800 billion rupees provided to the Sindh govt

NAZIR SIYAL



KARACHI: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry has said PTI-1600 to 1800 billion rupees have been recent budget and provided to Sindh said that the decision to impose nearly Rs375 billion worth and 27 percent of taxes on the mass more budget will be provided in the next fiscal year. Talking Bilawal said that the government did not to media persons in Karachi on Sunday, spare a single item of the common man's he said federal government provided additional 500 Megawatt electricity to Karachi which resulted in less load shedding during extreme hot weather. The Information Minister said law and order situation in the province is also bleak afraid of the public's reaction to the storm and street crimes are on the rise which shows pathetic performance of provincial government. He said people belonging to all walks of life have appreciated the federal budget and hopefully next year will be growth year economically.

New taxes injustice with masses: Bilawal

Government is "robbing people" in the name of the 'PTIMF' budget

ATHAR SUFI



KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has commented on the PTI-1600 to 1800 billion rupees have been recent budget and provided to Sindh said that the decision to impose nearly Rs375 billion worth and 27 percent of taxes on the mass more budget will be provided in the next fiscal year. Talking Bilawal said that the government did not to media persons in Karachi on Sunday, spare a single item of the common man's he said federal government provided additional 500 Megawatt electricity to Karachi which resulted in less load shedding during extreme hot weather. The Information Minister said law and order situation in the province is also bleak afraid of the public's reaction to the storm and street crimes are on the rise which shows pathetic performance of provincial government. He said people belonging to all walks of life have appreciated the federal budget and hopefully next year will be growth year economically.

Continued on Page 06

US can count on Turkey after Afghanistan troop pullout: Erdogan

Turkish officials had informed their American counterparts about Ankara's plans in Afghanistan after the US troop pullout

NEWS DESK

ANKARA: President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday said Turkey would be the "only reliable" country left to stabilise Afghanistan after the US pulls out its troops, indicating Washington could rely on its NATO ally. Erdogan also said he would discuss the issue in his first face-to-face meeting with US President Joe Biden on the margins of a NATO summit in Brussels on Monday, after strained relations between their two countries. "America is preparing to

leave Afghanistan soon and from the moment they leave, the only reliable country to maintain the process over there is obviously Turkey," Erdogan told reporters at an Istanbul airport on Sunday before leaving for Brussels. The United States is in the final stages of completing a military drawdown, alongside NATO forces, by September 11 - 20 years after they invaded Afghan-



istan and toppled the Taliban. Turkey has reportedly said it is prepared to keep troops in Afghanistan to protect Kabul airport, the main exit route for western diplomats and humanitarian workers. Erdogan said on Sunday that Turkish officials had informed their American counterparts about Ankara's plans in Afghanistan after the US troop pullout, without providing details.

They are "pleased and happy. We will be able to discuss the Afghanistan process with them," he said. Turkey has made clear its intentions to stay in the war-torn country, but the details remain unclear. A Turkish official said Turkish troops could remain "as long as certain conditions including legal and financial are met." "If Turkey is to stay it will do so under which frame: under NATO umbrella or bilateral terms? And if it will be under NATO auspices, under which authorisation?"

Continued on Page 06

WHERE
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Inside...

- FCCI chief terms budget pro-industry – Page 02
- Use of blood components essential in saving lives – Page 03
- PIA has provided business opportunities: Chairman – Page 04
- Politics of the budget – Page 05
- United stuns Qalanders with 28 run victory – Page 06
- Pakistani nation stands with victims of London tragedy – Page 07
- UNICEF supports polio eradication in Pakistan – Page 08

Briefs

Coronavirus patients decreasing in KTH

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: The turn out of the coronavirus patients was decreasing in Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) wherein 106 beds were allotted for Covid patients in the hospital.

Giving details of the patients, the Khyber Teaching Hospital official said, Corona positive patients were admitted to 50 beds and the hospital had 25 ventilators for Corona patients with only eleven patients were admitted in intensive care at Khyber Teaching Hospital. There were currently 14 patients being treated at HDU, he said, adding, twenty-five patients were being treated for low oxygen levels and three more corona patients had been admitted.

Corona patients in LRH drops further to 90

DNA

PESHAWAR: The number of Corona patients in Lady Reading Hospital (LRH) Peshawar has further reduced to 90. According to spokesperson Muhammad Asim, six patients have been admitted to the ICU in the hospital. He urged upon the people visiting the hospital to ensure implementation of SOPs. According to the spokesperson, Corona is not over yet, OPDs is providing uninterrupted treatment to Corona patients as well besides dealing and facilitating other patients coming to hospital.

Murder accused arrested

SARGODHA: The police have arrested an alleged killer in Bhalwal police limits. Police sources said on Sunday that about a week back Muhammad Shahbaz (23) was murdered during a firing incident in Chak No 6-SB.

During investigation, it was revealed that one Muhammad Saddique had murdered Shahbaz over a monetary issue. Police arrested the accused Saddique and during investigation he confessed to his crime. Police registered a case against the accused. – APP

11 more police officials suspended

PESHAWAR: 11 more police officials were suspended for refusing coronavirus vaccination in Bannu district, said a notification issued here on Sunday. The constables who refused to be vaccinated against coronavirus were included HC Abdur Rashid Khan, HC Driver Aman Ullah, LHC Jahan Zeb, LHC Tariq Aman, LHC Shakeel Khan, FC Amjed Rahim, FC Barkat Ullah, FC Amir Nawaz, FC Shahid Khan, Operator Nasir Iqbal and Operator Rahman Ullah. It is worth mentioning here that six ladies constables had also refused to get corona vaccines. DPO Bannu had issued their suspension order yesterday. All departments have issued final warnings to employees as per government orders regarding corona vaccine. – APP

KP cabinet meeting rescheduled for Tuesday

DNA

PESHAWAR: The meeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet was scheduled for Monday has changed and rescheduled for Tuesday June 15.

A Spokesperson of Chief Minister on Sunday said, Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mehmoor Khan would chair the cabinet meeting. A 40 point agenda would be discussed in the meeting including health, local government, education, corona, civil servant laws and others.

FCCI chief terms budget pro-industry

Regarding tax collection, he said that an ambitious target of Rs.5800 billion has been fixed but it is a good gesture that government would generate additional taxes from new tax payers instead of twisting the arms of existing tax payers

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Engineer Hafiz Ehtisham Javid President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has termed federal budget 2021-22 as pro-industry as the government has withdrawn regularity and custom duties on 1600 tariff lines of raw material with total financial impact of Rs.4200 billion.

Giving his immediate reaction after announcement of federal budget in FCCI here today, he said that this step will ensure sustained and stable economic development and its trickle-down effects will not only facilitate the masses but also have salutary impact on the all sectors of national economy.

He said that most of the proposals presented by different chambers including FCCI have been accommodated in this budget and hence we could term it as historic budget. Regarding SME sector, he said that government has announced a fixed tax scheme for this most important sector which is contributing about 66% in national exports.

He also mentioned IT sector and said that a special regime with

zero rating has been announced for the promotion of this sector which will also play a major role in the development of IT sector and increase export of its products.

He said that major chunk of our population consistent of middle class. The government has withdrawn excise and other duties on small cars up to 850-cc which will encourage mediocre class to have their own vehicles.

He said that government has announced multiple concessions in addition to allocating Rs.900 billion for the development budget.

Commenting on the environmental changes, Engineer Ehtisham Javid said that government has decided to continue 10 billion tree tsunami scheme during this year which will bring positive impact on the overall environment. Regarding tax collection, he said that an ambitious target of Rs.5800 billion has been fixed but it is a good gesture that government would generate additional taxes from new tax payers instead of twisting the arms of existing tax payers.

He also welcomed the self-assessment scheme and third party audit for small traders. However, he said that this proposal must be further fine-tuned to give required



and tangible results. He said that minimum salary has been fixed at Rs.20,000 which will give much needed benefit to the low-income groups. He said that inflation is one of the most daunting challenges. It is at 9.1 percent but the government is determined to bring it down to 6.5 percent during the next financial year.

He also welcomed the government decision to enhance 10% salaries and pension of government employees. Giving an overview of the budget speech, he said that it will accelerate the pace of industrial growth and if government succeeded to ensure its trickle-down effects, it will give maximum

benefits to the people and downstream industry. He also welcomed the government decision not to yield the IMF pressure on enhancing electricity tariff and said that government must ensure continuity of its policies. He hoped that current federal budget will be for a period of next financial year and no mini budget will be announced during this year. President FCCI said that Pakistan's biggest economic zone is being developed in Faisalabad and government has committed to give maximum facilities to the new investors. In this connection, the rate of turnover tax has brought down to zero.

About the welfare aspects of the federal budget, he said that the government will give affordable houses to the low-income groups. Similarly, interest free loans will be provided to the farming community. In this connection, he said that the threshold of Rs.0.2 million is very negligible as a farmer cannot purchase a tractor or other appliances with this amount. The government must enhance it to a reasonable level with a minimum interest rate, he added.

He said that despite of facilitation by the government, the commer-

cial banks are creating hurdles for the farmers and other small industrialists. Government should take necessary measures to pass on maximum benefits to the target groups. President FCCI also responded to the questions of the journalists' community and said that government should introduce a simple registration system for the unorganized SME sector. About technology upgradation fund, he said that under it Rs.260 billion was released to the textile sector out of total allocation of Rs.450 billion. Thus 250 major industrialists benefited from this scheme while its major chunk must be passed on to the SME sector. He also repeated his previous demand of forensic audit of entire textile chain starting from spinning to the fashion garments. It will help government to identify the mafia which is plaguing the economic and industrial sector. Senior Vice President FCCI Chaudhary Tallat Mehmood, Chaudhary Muhammad Nawaz, Rana Ikram Ullah, Rana Fayyaz, Khurram Shehzad, Mirza Muhammad Aslam, Abdullah Qadri, Kashif Zia, ZeeshanulHaq and Rashid Muneer were also present on the occasion.

IGP directs completion of corona vaccination

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab, Inam Ghani said on Sunday the process of corona vaccination should be completed in all districts of the province as soon as possible so that police force would continue to perform its duties while remaining save from the pandemic. He said that supervisory officers should complete vaccination of the subordinate force under their personal supervision and reports in this regard should be sent to the Central Police Office regularly. DIG Welfare Agha Muhammad Yousuf told the IG Punjab that so far 18,870 officers and personnel aged 50 to 60 years and 22045 officers and personnel aged 40 to 50 years had been vaccinated against corona. He said the process of corona vaccination of officers and personnel in the age group of 30 to 40 years was also in full swing and so far 26578 officers and personnel in the age group of 30 to 40 years had been vaccinated against corona. Collectively, 67493 officers and officials more than 30 years age had been vaccinated against coronavirus and the remaining force and staff were being vaccinated without any interruption.



KARACHI: Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting meeting with representatives of Pakistan Film Producer Association PFPA at Governor's House. – APP

Ehsaas initiative to help ensure sustainable growth

DNA

LAHORE: Under the modern welfare state concept, a state is like a mother for its citizens, which takes care of all their needs. And any government that reflects on the concept of a welfare state can be true representative of the public. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government is the first government in the history of the country that has taken such measures which are reflective of a mother's love and care for its children, and Ehsaas initiative stands atop the long list.

In the fiscal year 2021-22, the PTI federal government has increased allocations for the Ehsaas programme from Rs210 billion to Rs260 billion, which is 24 per cent higher than the previous year. There is no denying the fact that the initiative is helping a great deal in ending poverty in the country by supporting the destitute

strata, and providing various relief packages through coordinated efforts, amid the coronavirus pandemic. The low-income strata of the country had been waiting for such relief-incentives for the last 74 years, as they had always been deprived of basic needs of life: food, shelter, health and works facilities. The International Labour



Organisation (ILO), in its recent report, compiled by the UN Labour Affairs experts, revealed that the global economic crisis, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, is likely to contribute to global unemployment of more than 200 million people by 2022. The report revealed that woman and youth laborers were the worst affected of the crisis.

However, the Pakistan government initiatives, especially for the low-income strata including the labour class, women and youth, have won praise across the world since the outbreak of the pandemic. Coming up to the expectations of such segments of society once again, the federal government not only continued these initiatives but also increased budgetary allocations for the Ehsaas programme.

The federal budget 2021-22 was unveiled on June 11. A cursory look on it showed that the government focus was, once again, on provision of jobs to the employed people, uplift of the marginalized segments of the country and ensuring sustainable economic growth through provision of incentives to various sectors including industry, agriculture and housing. Through the Ehsaas survey, around four million poor households would be provided interest-free business and farming loans.

223 fresh corona cases reported in Punjab

LAHORE: Coronavirus claimed another 22 lives while 223 new cases were reported in Punjab during the last 24 hours. According to the data shared by the spokesperson of Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD), the total number of coronavirus cases reached 343,926 while death toll 10,501 and recoveries 321,879.

The P&SHD confirmed that 75 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, 2 in Nankana Sahib, 21 in Rawalpindi, 1 in Jhelum, 2 in Chakwal, 5 in Gujranwala, 1 in Sialkot, 1 in Gujrat, 22 in Faisalabad, 7 in Jhang, 8 in Sargodha, 10 in Mianwali, 17 in Khushab, 4 in Bhakkar, 15 in Multan, 7 in Vehari, 1 in Khanewal, 1 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 8 in Rahimyar Khan and 15 in Bahawalpur during the last 24 hours. – DNA

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (Directorate of Environment Regional)

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are invited on single stage sealed envelope on percentage basis to supply the brand new Excavator from the Manufacturer / Authorized Distributors / Dealers for the project Model Forestry Park Mulpur (Phase-I), Directorate of Environment Regional, CDA:

S#	Name of Work	NIT Cost (In Rs.)	Earnest Money (In Rs.)	Date & Time of receiving tender	Date & time of tender opening
1	Supply of Excavator 163hp / 120Kw with a standard specification with origin of Europe, Korea, Japan etc except for Italy, & China.	3,11,61,096/-	934,833/-	28-06-2021 11:00am	28-06-2021 11:30am

TERMS & CONDITIONS:

- Tender document can be obtained from the office of Deputy Director (Forest) CDA, F-9, Park Islamabad on any working day before the date of opening of tender on cash payment / payable of Rs.2000/- (non-refundable). No tender will be issued / sold on the date of opening. Detailed specification special terms & conditions are available in bidding document.
- Tender will be received and opened in the office of Director Environment Regional, CDA in F-9 Park, Islamabad in presence of quote representatives at the fixed date and time given above.
- Earnest money in the shape of deposit at call in favor of Drawing & Disbursing officer Dte of Environment Regional, CDA must be accompanied with the tender at the time of submission. No tenders will be issued without valid Authorized Distributor / Dealership certificate and call deposit. The competent authority reserves the right to reject any or all tenders. The competent authority shall upon request communicate to any contractor who participated in tendering, the grounds for its rejection, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- The validity of offer shall be applicable for 150 days.
- Authorized Distributor / Dealers shall provide a valid authorization certificate as well as (3S) dealership from the manufacturer at the time of purchasing of tender.
- Authorized Distributor / Dealers shall provide the proof of relevant working with the same brand from the last 10 years and having ISO certifications.
- Manufacturer shall provide proof of manufacturing license and relevant ISO certifications.
- In case of the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit an additional call deposit as performance security equal to the difference between NIT amount and the total quoted amount less than 10% of NIT amount. That is the required performance security=NIT amount – total bid amount – 10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. The bid not carrying this performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after the completion of the project.
- The bidders are required to provide the following additional documents while submitting the tender; otherwise, it will be liable for rejection. (Power of attorney, Partnership deed, Programme of work nonjudicial stamp paper worth 10/- Professional Tax Certificate, NTN, STRN).
- Tender rates shall be written in the figure, without any cutting / overwriting and the same shall also be shown in words without cutting/overwriting.
- The Authority may reject all the bids at any time before the acceptance of tender as per PPRA rules. However, the authority shall upon request communicate to any contractor who submitted a bid, on the ground of its rejection of all bids, but not bound to justify those grounds.

(Dr. MUHAMMAD BILAL KHILJI)
DEPUTY DIRECTOR (FOREST)

PID (I) No.6881/20

Forests Deptt planting saplings on barren lands

APP

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Forest Department, Rawalpindi Division has started growing forests by planting saplings on thousands of acres of barren and uncultivated privately owned lands under Prime Minister Imran Khan's Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Project (TBTP). "Only in Chakwal District of Rawalpindi Division, some 5000 kanals of such land has so far been turned into dense forests", said District Range Forest officer of Punjab Forest Department Rawalpindi (Extention) Sher Afzal Raja. He informed that district office of range forest Chakwal would distribute 400,000 saplings among the farmers.

He urged the farmers and cultivators to resettle their barren lands through afforestation and announced that the forest department would provide them saplings at the rate of Rs 2 per seedling.

"They would plant these saplings in their barren lands and forest department would help them grow these saplings in a proper way", he said adding, millions of these plants would be given to farmers in all districts and tehils of the division. He further said that practical measures have also been taken to expand the forests on the lands owned by the department and to protect the existing forests, which has led to a massive increase in the forest area for the first time.

"Along with these practical and solid steps, we are also raising public awareness to highlight the need and importance of trees for which a massive publicity campaign has been launched," he said.

Meanwhile, Conservator Forests North, Rawalpindi Saqib Mehmood while talking to RAWP informed that the Rawalpindi Forest Department had planted nearly five million saplings in civil division areas during 2020-21 financial year. He said, the department was making all-out efforts to make the plantation campaigns a success as per vision of the Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said prime minister's full focus on global warming and environmental pollu-

tion was a reflection of the thinking of a genuine leader. "We will make all out efforts to make the PM's 10 billion tree tsunami campaign a success which is the ever biggest practical effort in the world to this direction", he added. He said, the hectic efforts were being made by the departments concerned as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan to make all available areas green. He informed that 'Plant for Pakistan' campaign had been inaugurated in the region and the forest department had planted over 3.6 million saplings in Rawalpindi civil division in four districts of the division and over 1.3 million on private lands during 2020-21 financial year.

Briefs

Lok Virsa normalize museums' timing

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa, National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (NIFTH) decided to normalize the timings of both its museums namely Heritage Museum and Pakistan Monument Museum.

In an announcement issued here, Lok Virsa said that the decision has been taken in view of reduction in Covid-19 cases in Islamabad. New timings are 10: 00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

However, both museums will observe Saturday and Sunday as holidays till further improvement in the reduction of Covid-19 cases in accordance with the directions of NCOC.

June 15 deadline for PNCA's program

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA) has announced June 15, the last date for registration in its one year online film production session.

Talking to APP, Director General (DG) PNCA Fouzia Saeed said the programme aims to showcase talent of young generation through providing them such a platform where they could show their potential by learning various activities in this online course including cinematography, sound production, film production, script writing and film history.

She further informed that the international and national faculty had been arranged to deliver the session.

This will provide a productive opportunity for the promotion of new talent and will also ensure the provision of possibilities for skillful artists, she added. – APP

IRSA releases 297,300 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 297,300 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 456,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbella Dam was 1454.52 feet, which was 70.52 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 225,000 and 130,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1136.40 feet, which was 98.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 78,700 and 15,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 160,600, 141,200 and 79,000 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 78,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 45,100 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

ICT establishes 25 mobile shops

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A total of 25 mobile shops have been set up in various areas of the ICT to provide essential items to the people at cheaper rates, an official of the ICT administration told APP.

In a brief chat, he said the ICT administration has deputed some 14 assistant commissioners and magistrates in various localities to check prices of various commodities. He said the local administration was closely monitoring the hoarding of essential food items.

He said the shopkeepers were strictly directed to display the price list at prominent place of their shops. The prices and hoarding were being regularly checked under the Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding Act, 1977.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Omar Ayub Khan along with Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada witnessing historical pictures during his visit to Azerbaijan embassy. – DNA

Use of blood components essential in saving lives

Quran says, “He who saves the life of one man saves the whole of humanity

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad D-Watson Lions Club Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the use of blood and blood components is of fundamental importance in saving human lives.

Donating blood saves the lives of people in need, he said in his message on the occasion of World Blood Donor Day, adding that the purpose of celebrating this day is to encourage blood donors to It saves people's lives as well as

emphasizing the importance of healthy blood and blood supply to save the lives of other human beings. Thanking blood donors and raising awareness for blood donation. Blood can be donated months later, according to scientific research it is a natural process that red blood cells are eliminated or lost within 90 to 120 days, so why not donate it so that it can be used as a valuable human.

To save lives... There is a Qur'anic verse that says, “He who saves the life of one man saves the whole of humanity.” Pakistan needs 8000



bottles of blood daily while only one percent (01%) of the total pop-

ulation donates blood which is not enough, if the proportion of blood donation in Pakistan reaches 04-05% then the lamps of precious human lives can be kept lit which are extinguished due to non-availability of blood donation.

On the occasion of this day, awareness campaign on print, electronic and social media should be launched and seminars should be organized to increase the number of blood donors at the national and provincial level to increase the trend of blood donation.

In my opinion, blood donation

should be made a part of the curriculum and blood donors should be welcomed at the federal and provincial levels and they should be awarded certificates of appreciation. Regular blood donors should be given special relief in college and university fees.

At the federal and provincial levels, such ceremonies should be held officially in the Governor's Houses, Chief Minister's Houses, the Prime Minister's House and the President's House. Will help to encourage blood donors and help the community to save lives.

Health budget allocation insufficient

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said the federal government has earmarked Rs21.72 billion for the health sector in budget 2021-22 which should be increased to improve the country's healthcare system and make it more robust.

Pakistan needs a monumental increase in allocation of funds for the ailing health sector in the wake of increasing challenges, it said. The healthcare sector has been a key driver of growth

which requires a holistic approach for improving the system and promotion of alternative medicine including the Unani and Homeopathic system of medicine, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President PEW. He said this while talking to Dr. Asad Pervaiz Qureshi, Chief Executive Officer Kamal Laboratories, Dr. Imtiaz Gondal, Dr. Azam and others.

Dr. Mughal said that a neighboring country has dozens of Homeopathic universities and 225 Homeopathic colleges and it is spending hundreds of billions of rupees on alternative medicines which are cheaper and without side-effects but this sector is yet to attract the attention of policymakers in Pakistan.

He said that Pakistan urgently need a Homeopathic medical college in every province, a state-of-the-art research center and we can establish Homeopathic hospitals and dispensaries across Pakistan if this sector is patronized, he said.

According to the WHO, Homeopathy is the second-largest medicine system in the world benefitting billions of people as it is free of complications, he informed.

Budget pleases everyone except the IMF

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Saturday said the budget is encouraging for the masses and the business community but discouraging for the IMF. Developmental spending has been increased by 40 percent which will trigger growth and create employment opportunities, he said.

Taxes have been reduced on manufactur-

ing and financial services, the minimum wage has been increased by 20 percent while government servants will see a rise in salary by ten percent, he added. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the wage and salary raise will force the private sector to increase salaries which is a good omen.

The industrial sector will grow due to tax and Customs duty relaxation which will benefit sectors like textile, paper and board, pharmaceutical, steel, paints, chemical, leather, electronics, cable, fiber, optics, and automobile sector.

Uplift of Agri sector Govt's top priority

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) senior leader Humayun Akhtar Khan Sunday said government places high priority to the development of agriculture sector as it was neglected during previous tenures.

Talking to a private news channel, he said incumbent government paying special attention to uplift agriculture sector due to its strong linkages with other sectors of economy.

He said prudent policies of the present government would bring huge inflow of investment and create massive economic, employment opportunities in the country. He said provision of necessary facilities to farmers was essential for promoting agri sector and added that all-out resources were being utilised for the prosperity of the farmers. The PTI leader said government had announced relief package for the farmers in the budget.

Humayun said the economy of the country was significantly improving and revenue target would be achieved in next fiscal year. There were no unrealistic targets in the budget, he added.

CDA chairman, PCRWR chief discuss water issues

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held between chairman CDA Amer Ali Ahmed and PCRWR chairman Ch. Ashraf at CDA head office to discuss various solutions to resolve water related issues of the capital. In the meeting long term and short term solutions came under discussion. It was decided to construct 100 underground water wells and 20 observatory wells at various locations in the city to harvest the rain water. To maintain green belts of Srinagar highway and Islamabad highway sprinkling irrigation system will be installed to conserve water. In this regard PC 1 of 57 million will be presented by the third week of June. A liaison committee consisting of Deputy DG water Management Sardar Zamir and Dr. Naveed has been formed to expedite the implementation of the meeting. – DNA

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Briefs

Ongoing pre-monsoon to continue till today

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The ongoing pre-monsoon rain spell would continue till Monday in few parts of the country including twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Spokesman Pakistan Meteorological Department Dr. Zaheer Babar on Sunday said the current rain spell would cover the regions including Lahore, Sargodha, Mianwali, Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir. He said moist currents from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal were penetrating towards upper and central parts of the country. Hailstorm occurred at few areas dropped the mercury significantly, he told APP adding, it reduced temperature more than five degree Celsius which provided a sigh of relief to people.

0.4 mln saplings to be distributed

DNA

RAWALPINDI: District Range Forest officer of Punjab Forest Department Rawalpindi (Extension) Sher Afzal Raja Sunday said the district office of range forest Chakwal will distribute 0.4 million saplings to the farming community. He appealed to the farmers to resettle their barren lands through afforestation and announced that the forest department would provide them saplings at the cheapest rate of Rs 2 per seedling. "They would plant these saplings in their barren lands and forest department shall help them grow these saplings in a proper way," he said and added that millions of these plants would be given to farmers in all districts and tehsils of the division. He further said that practical measures have also been taken to expand the forests on the lands owned by the department and to protect the existing forests, which has led to a massive increase in the forest area for the first time. "Only in Chakwal District of Rawalpindi Division, 5000 kanal land has so far been turned into the dense forest," he added. "Along with these practical and immediate steps, we are also raising public awareness to highlight the need and importance of trees for which a massive publicity campaign has been launched," he said.

AIU starts admissions for autumn 2021

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) will commence admissions for the first phase of autumn 2021 semester from July 15. According to details, the matriculation/FA and Merit Based (BS/MA/MSc) (Fee to Fee) and (M.Phil/PhD) programmes will be offered during this phase while admissions for the second phase will start from September 1. The second phase will include BA/BS (ODL) and B.Ed programmes. Students are informed that the university has recently shifted all its academic, financial and administrative operations to the online system. Therefore, admissions to all academic programmes including Matric and FA programmes, will be online. The students will be required to deposit admission fee online, through Jazz Cash, EasyPay and UPay's mobile app * 786 # USSD String/Retailer Agent/ Franchisor and Mobilink, Telenor, UBank branches. Admission forms and prospectuses for all programmes will also be available online. Students without internet access will be able to use the 'computer laboratories' set up at the university's regional offices free of cost to submit their admission application forms.

PIA has provided business opportunities: Chairman

The role of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan is of paramount importance, he said during a visit to the UK-Pakistan delegation in, Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman PIA Arshad Malik has said that the generous policies of the Government of Pakistan along with infrastructure development have provided business opportunities to industrialists and traders, especially export opportunities and especially the development of industry and trade in Pakistan which has strengthened the national economy. The role of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan is of paramount importance, he said during a visit to the UK-Pakistan delegation in Islamabad. The role of UK Pakistan Business Council is commendable - On this occasion Khurshed Barlas, President of UK Pakistan Business Council Pakistan Chapter thanked PIA and said that PIA is an important asset of Pakistan which needs further development. The UK Pakistan Business Council is always present for.



ISLAMABAD: UK-Pakistan Business Council Delegation led by Mr. Khurshid Barlas President (Pakistan Chapter) had a meeting with Mr. Arshad Malik, CEP Pakistan International Airline and Presented an award, Secretary General Mr. Ata ul Haq and Mrs. Ata ul Haq also seen in the picture. - DNA

Date extended for submitting vehicle tokens

RAWALPINDI: The Excise and Taxation (E&T) department Rawalpindi has extended the deadline for submitting the vehicle token tax without penalty for the defaulters till June 30, the department said on Sunday. An E&T spokesman said the last date for payment of token tax without penalty has been extended to facilitate the vehicle owners. Five percent special concession would be given to the vehicle owners, who would pay the token tax through e-Pay, he said. He warned that strict action in accordance with the law would be taken against token tax defaulters after June 30. He said in order to ensure transparency during the transfer of ownership, the Excise and Taxation Department, Punjab will make the process of biometric verification mandatory for the transfer of vehicles from July 1. He also advised the vehicle owners to avail the opportunity and get the vehicles transferred to the buyer's name without biometric verification before the deadline. About the biometric verification system he said it would help eliminate the tout mafia involved in preparing fake registration documents as the buyer and sellers would have to appear physically at the excise office to get their vehicle registered or transferred. The fingerprints of the owners of the vehicles shall be verified in real time from the online database of NADRA. - Staff Report

Budget to support low and middle-income groups

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said budget is balanced and it will support low and middle-income groups reducing their problems. Budget is encouraging for masses and the business community but discouraging for the IMF as developmental spending has been increased by 40 percent which will trigger growth and create employment opportunities, he said. Taxes have been reduced

on manufacturing and financial services, the minimum wage has been increased by 20 percent while government servants will see a rise in salary by

grow due to tax and Customs duty and it will trigger local manufacturing of automobile and mobile phones and increase investment in the stock mar-

sidies up to Rs530 billion but Rs682 billion have been allocated for subsidies in which the power sector will eat up Rs 596 billion.

Agreement with the IMF has not been considered regarding industrial support package and zero-rated industrial rebate which will also support industrial expansion.

Last year, K-Electric was given a subsidy of Rs16 billion but it will get Rs78 billion as per the budget document.

However, he said that the government should take steps to arrest the circular debt which may increase due to relaxations.



ten percent, he added. Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the wage and salary raise will force the private sector to increase salaries which is a good omen. The industrial sector will

ket due to tax breaks, he observed.

Despite agreement with the IMF, the tax target has been reduced by Rs134 billion while IMF was assured to keep sub-

Green Bonds testament to Pakistan's economic stability

Says reason behind issuing green bonds was that the country required funding for building dams which the multilateral banks denied due to Indian propaganda against Pakistan

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam said successful launch of first-ever Green Bonds was testament to Pakistan's economic stability and green credibility at the global level. The Prime Minister's aide in his exclusive interaction told APP that the Green Bonds was unique financing instrument to achieve global funding for environmental conservation projects and the first of its kind being issued by the country. Amin said the reason behind issuing green bonds was that the country required funding for building dams which the multilateral banks denied due to Indian officials' propaganda against Pakistani hydropower projects. "Pakistan, therefore approached the commercial market of one trillion dollars that has plethora of opportunities to bag green financing for environment friendly and sustainable projects," he said. The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) told that the issuance of Green bonds was Pakistan's first entry into a one trillion dollars market. However, in response to our US\$500 million Green Bonds issued by Water and Power

Development Authority (WAPDA) there was a six times bigger response of US\$6 billion dollars funding extended by the market, he added. Amin said, "This shows that there is positive appetite in the market based on Pakistan's economic stability and green credibility which will provide us the first window to enter in the green market."



This, he said was also WAPDA's efforts acknowledgment for this issuance of the bonds which would be opening venues for Pakistan to the global market. He underscored that the financing would be used in renewable energy projects, green transport particularly electric vehicles, green buildings or in-

frastructure development and waste to energy initiatives.

"All these projects can come under these green financing. The most interesting part of the Green Bonds is that there is no sovereign guarantee involved in the issuance of these Green Bonds," Amin told. He went on to mention that it was win-win situation for Pakistan and a clear signal that Pakistan's credibility was very high in international Green Bond market. The SAPM remarked that Pakistan had come at a very right time to give a strong message on green financing to the world on this World Environment Day. The SAPM remarked that Pakistan had come at a very right time to give a strong message on green financing to the world on this World Environment Day. To a query, he responded that the Ministry of Climate Change would serve as a conduit to other ministries for issuing Green Bonds for eco-friendly and sustainable projects.

Replying another query, he said there were two parameters for issuing financing to a green bond based on a country's economic status and environmental feature of the project where ours situation has been very promising and credible which was a proud moment for the nation.

Over 170,000 youth completes skill courses: Dar

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Youth Affairs said on Sunday that massive investment in skill development of the youth had started paying dividends as more than 170,000 completed their courses in high-tech trades from public and private universities under the 'Skill Scholarship' programme. He said the government had disbursed an amount of Rs 10 billion among the youth under the 'Skill Scholarship' programme. Young people were getting trainings in the high-tech courses of their choice under the technical and vocational institutes, he added. Usman Dar said billions of rupees had been allocated for the youth as the government was striving to extend all-possible technical and financial assistance to them in line with the instructions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, said a statement issued here.



He urged young people to reap benefits of 'Skill Scholarship' programme, aimed at creating job opportunities for the youth in the local and international market. Meanwhile, he shared success story of Nadia Hassan who got an online job after completing the course in coding and device management from National University of Technology, Islamabad.

The SAPM posted her documentary on his twitter account and said Nadia had set an example for other young people.

How to improve school education in Pakistan

The lack of proper standard in Pakistani government schools lead to the establishment of private schools; some elite and most of them small ones. Then there was a prudent matter on the medium of instruction in the schools particularly

YASER ILYAS

PAKISTAN has been a country governed by either the military or the corrupt politicians. These transfers of power have left Pakistan in a pile of debt. Chaos has ensued in all the departments and institutions of the country. Education suffered the most unfortunately. It is a known fact that if you want a country and its people to fail, ensures that their education system fails. We in Pakistan became a victim of three tier education system. Like all public sectors, the system started deteriorating once the standard of government institutions became losing their standards of ed-

ucation. Teachers in government institutions have been known to cash in their paychecks but rarely appear on their job.

The lack of proper standard in Pakistani government schools lead to the establishment of private schools; some elite and most of them small ones. Then there was a prudent matter on the medium of instruction in the schools particularly. The entire country had been segregated based on the languages. The elite schools spread their branches all across Pakistan and aimed to capture the elite as well as the educated Middle class families. The aim was to provide quality education by establishing state of the art buildings. The major problem the parents felt was the ever

increasing fee vouchers which kept increasing on a yearly basis.

The mushroom schools in Pakistan are situated in the streets and small neighborhoods which also promise quality education but do little else for the physical development of the children studying in it. Their fee though normal rarely hired qualified teachers so the void between the schools keeps on increasing. The Madrassahs are the other educational institution that has further polarized the system of education. The children in Madrassahs are sent by poor parents in hopes of a better roof. Unfortunately children especially boys in Pakistan have been a target of physical and sexual abuse. Many religious political parties also have had a history of ex-

plotting the vulnerable children and their families for their own agendas. Some even misuse their positions and use children to gain funds and crowds. The present PTI government wishes to modify the status quo by implementing the same syllabus for all strata of society. This daunting task was put on hold by the pandemic where the only debates revolving around the educational system were online classes or cancellation of exams. Though books are being published with the hopes of bridging the gap between the rich and the poor, it's a divide that would take years to overcome.

The government also proposes regulating the Madrassahs and equipping them with technical and skills education so that it's easier for the

children of Madrassahs to find employment opportunities. Prime Minister Imran Khan has ordered his ministers to ensure that all the public ceremonies, international or otherwise be conducted in Urdu. This is to highlight the importance of Urdu in a country where the language barrier between English and Urdu medium has resulted in a society with both superiority and inferiority complexes. What the government is aiming to do is no ordinary feat. If implemented these extraordinary changes will alter the lives of many individuals as well as the families. However the government should also focus on the betterment of its existing schools otherwise there can be no significant impact on education.

APO asks for innovation, inclusiveness

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Productivity Organization (APO) on Sunday asked for a paradigm shift to adopt innovations and inclusiveness in business enterprises as well as Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) enabling workforce more flexible to new work styles in Post COVID 19 scenarios.

The APO also stressed for promoting innovation, up gradation techniques and manpower skills. Inclusiveness and strengthening the National Productivity Insitutions for enhancing the productivity in country's economies for upcoming situation, said a statement issued by National Productivity Organization (Ministry of Industries and Production) here. Drawing upon its 60 years of engagement in Asia and the Pacific, the Asian Productivity Organization crystallizes the key lessons of its six decades of journey in a joint statement, "The Tokyo Statement on the Centrality of Productivity" issued at the conclusion of its 63rd Governing Body Meeting held.

The statement sketches the key priority targets of the Asian Productivity Organization for 2021-2025.

Those targets support the Asian Productivity Organization Vision 2025 in striving for "inclusive, innovation-led productivity growth in Asia and the Pacific." Productivity is the foundation of this survival, not only for becoming more competitive but also in the broader, philosophical sense of "making tomorrow better than today."

Facilities for special women demanded

ISLAMABAD: Special working women are facing problems due to the absence of differently-abled friendly buildings and facilities in the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Hasena Khan, an advocate and social activist said that the concerned authorities should ensure differently-abled friendly buildings and offices. She said that some offices have already established all the facilities but still there are many other officers and buildings not accessible for special working women. Another social activist Aswad Khan while talking to APP said many residential places are missing ramps and special stairs for easy access of disabled persons. She said the concerned department should survey various offices and residential apartments to check the facilities. Saima Ahad, a special working woman said most offices are missing ramps for easy access.

She said that all required facilities should be added to the buildings to make them differently-abled friendly. She said disabled workers are keen to work but they should be facilitated. - APP

6 held for possessing illegal weapons

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested six outlaws and recovered illegal weapons, arms, ammunition from their possession, informed police spokesman. Westridge police arrested three accused Hamza Iqbal, Yaseen Aslam and Hassan Iqbal and recovered 03 pistols 30 bore with ammunition from their possession. Similarly, Naseerabad police held Saddam Hussain and recovered 01 pistol 09 mm with ammunition from his possession. Civil Line police arrested the accused Abdullah and recovered 01 Kalashnikov with ammunition from his custody. Taxila police nabbed Huzaifa and recovered 01 pistol 30 bore with from his possession. Separate cases were registered against all the accused. City Police Officer CPO Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the police teams for arresting the illegal arms holders adding that arms race would not be tolerated and strict action should be taken against such anti-social elements.

Israel's Admissions

IN a brazenly revealing interview, the outgoing chief of Israel's Mossad intelligence service came the closest that any Israeli authority has come to admitting Israel's involvement behind the recent attacks targeting Iran's nuclear programme and a military scientist.

The details in the interview basically confirmed what was already widely speculated—that Israel had time and time again and is still attempting to sabotage Iran and its nuclear archive. For this mission, Israel has sent out Mossad agents on the ground, broken into warehouses, sparked fire at uranium enrichment sites, planned blasts at centrifuge assemblies and strongly hinted at the assassination of Iranian scientists.

The biggest takeaway from the interview is that two of the most damaging attacks on Iran, two explosions over the last year at its Natanz nuclear facility, had Israeli involvement. Last year in July, an explosion tore apart Natanz's advanced centrifuge assembly, which Iran later blamed on Israel. In April 2021, another blast tore apart one of its underground enrichment halls. The last explosion, detonating at the lowest point of the underground halls, has eliminated Natanz as the sole site for Iran's national uranium enrichment; a massive blow.

These attacks are illegal under international law—had Iran done the same, the US and Israel would have labelled it “terrorism.” The revelations in the interview will likely be brushed off by the international community which is a shame. It is important to ask why Mossad's outgoing chief is stirring trouble right when the Iran deal is back in talks and negotiations are on the table. These revelations should be added to strengthen the case against Israel's war crimes. There also needs to be more discussion in the UN on the dangers of espionage and the lack of a clear international legal verdict on espionage in times of peace. Pakistan too has borne the brunt of terrorism incited by espionage from nearby countries—the legal silence towards it is making the region unsafe.

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Women in Balochistan

THE Balochistan government seems to be taking steps to improve women's integration into society and the workforce in the province. In October 2020, the provincial cabinet approved the Balochistan Gender Equality and Women Empowerment Policy, 2020-2024. To implement this policy, the government has launched the Governance and Policy Project Balochistan that aims to improve gender integration into the public sector. The project has been launched with help from foreign donors to ensure the comprehensive application of the gender empowerment policy which would help pave the way for achieving SDG 5 that relates to gender equality. Women across the country are disenfranchised to a large degree because of patriarchal values that are ingrained in every sector and class. In the case of Balochistan, the tribal culture reinforces the barriers that already exist. The overall literacy rate for women in Pakistan is around 52pc while only 33.5pc of women in Balochistan are literate. Similarly, the number of women dying in childbirth is far higher in the province; 758 women out of 100,000 die during childbirth in Balochistan against a national average of 272. This gloomy picture is also a result of the overall underdevelopment in Balochistan that is far worse than in the other provinces. Against this backdrop, the provincial government has done well to involve international rights organisations for improving gender integration. The GPP project is expected to directly benefit the provincial Women Development Department and the ombudsperson on workplace harassment appointed under the Balochistan Protection Against Harassment of Women at Workplace Act, 2016, and would equip these departments to carry out the desired changes and build their capacity for actively working towards the protection of and mainstreaming women in the public sphere and the provincial workforce. A key aspect of the project involves carrying out a gender-based analysis of government departments and a baseline women empowerment survey. This will help fill in the gaps in efforts required for uplifting women as women's rights groups working in Balochistan often complain about the lack of official data. However, all said and done, foreign support will only set the framework for gender integration. It is the provincial government which will have to follow through with its plans. One hopes that this impetus to integrate disenfranchised women of the province does not dry up when there's no more funding.

Politics of the budget

Fahd Husain



Specialists within the opposition ranks will no doubt slice and dice the budget and its fanciful projections through smart financial logic weaved around technicalities, but if there is a visible easing of the burden on the citizens, the government will be in a comfortable position to fend off the opposition attack

THE PTI wants to buy its way out of trouble. Who will pay the price?

The federal budget 2021-22 presented by Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin on Friday is the documented evidence of this political strategy. He has rung the bell, and the floor is open for business. It is this business that the PTI wants to stimulate by aiming for growth touching five per cent next year and crossing this threshold on the eve of elections. The progression in the government's political narrative is already visible. This narrative is telling the voter — yes, the same voter ravaged by inflation and unemployment — that difficult times are almost over and good times, as promised by Prime Minister Imran Khan, are around the corner. This budget is Exhibit A for the new narrative. Government spokespersons will turbo-charge the narrative in the coming days and weeks, and fuel it with data that has nourished the budget document unveiled in parliament on Friday.

The budget tells a story steeped in ambition. The story says the government will now loosen its belt, spend its money, freeze hikes in utility charges, save citizens from further taxation and inject booster shots into programmes like Ehsaas and Naya Pakistan Housing. The growth underway is expected to finance this ambition. Large-scale manufacturing is clocking impressive numbers, agriculture is giving bumper yields, remittances are raining down like never before, tax collection is showing encouraging trends and the twin deficits have been tamed. Well, at least these are the fancy talking points that government spokespersons are carrying in their pockets as they troop out to wage data wars in the cushy confines of TV studios.

Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif and PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari spoke to journalists after the finance minister's speech and trashed the budget and its lofty ambition. However, once the budget sweeteners start to trickle down into the lives of citizens — regardless

of the harsh realities of macroeconomics — the opposition will have an uphill task tearing into the government's economic performance from the political angle. Specialists within the opposition ranks will no doubt slice and dice the budget and its fanciful projections through smart financial logic weaved around technicalities, but if there is a visible easing of the burden on the citizens, the government will be in a comfortable position to fend off the opposition attack.

The PTI government is essentially following the same trajectory: spend, spend, spend and worry about how to pay for it later.

This may even entail the government walking out of the IMF programme. No new taxes and no hike in utility rates etc. essentially show that the government has calculated it can manage without the IMF till the elections. The massive increase in remittances has stabilised the government's finances and it believes it will not slide back into the red if the IMF tranches dry up. Perhaps it may not need to walk out of the programme officially. Instead, it could just drag the negotiations for as long as needed and use this time to throw money at the electorate. Just like the PML-N did in its last years.

Yes, you heard that right. The PTI government is essentially following the same trajectory: spend, spend, spend and worry about how to pay for it later. Politics invariably overtakes economics. The cost is always a steep one.

But this is a delayed cost, whereas politics requires instant gratification. The government wants to provide its disillusioned, disappointed and dejected voters the gratification they have been denied since the PTI came to power. Fair enough. Is there a financial basis for this though? The theory that the government peddled in the early days — and pretends to believe in it till today — is that a certain linear logic has flowed through its economic policy via Asad Umar, Hafeez Sheikh, Hamid Azhar and Shaukat Tarin; that all these gentlemen

have essentially stayed on the original PTI message and plan and this 2021-22 budget is a continuation of this grand plan. ‘See we told you we were on the right track’, they are now saying with a triumphant smile.

Except, this is not entirely correct.

The fact is that the PTI's handling of the economy has lurched from one experiment to another, from one approach to another, and from one minister sent packing to another.

The government has blundered on projects and fumbled on reforms. For three years, it kept burdening citizens with pain without any major corresponding macro benefits to the economy. The FBR was not reformed, the power structure was not restructured and the state-owned enterprises were not privatised. Finally after three years, politics caught up with the PTI's economy. The government realised — or perhaps was made to realise — that if its economics continued down this path, the voters would take the government to the cleaners in the next elections. Just as they had in the recent by-elections. So a decision was made: enough of economics, let's do some politics.

Nothing does politics better than growth. It doesn't matter how that growth is coming, and where it is coming from, and who will ultimately pay the bills for the growth — none of this matters as long as it is coming fast and strong and flowing thick and lustily like the gravy train it is. It is a familiar path that requires little innovation. The only problem is that elections are still two more budgets away — unless the prime minister pulls a fast one on the opposition — and maintaining this spending spree in the hope that revenue will flow in without further taxation could be a stretch. Economics requires pain, and politics requires a feel-good factor. Feel-good factors win elections. The strategy seems obvious.

Shaukat Tarin may need to thank Ishaq Dar for showing him the way.

—Courtesy DAWN

Middle East: Please heed the signs

Hafed Al-Ghwell



Above-ground weather phenomena certainly explain prolonged reductions in precipitation and the region's worsening droughts, but lockdown restrictions, pandemic-induced slowdowns and shocks to global supply chains compound well-documented challenges eroding MENA food security

GLOBAL food prices have soared by the largest margin since 2011, leading to fears that the surge in costs for agricultural commodities, many of which are staples in Middle Eastern and North African diets, could spark inflation at a time when most states are still struggling to get vaccination campaigns off the ground.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic most Arab countries were already experiencing crisis levels of food insecurity and undernourishment, worsening the plight of those in the conflict zones of Syria, Libya and Yemen, and in areas plagued by instability, such as Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq. It does not stop there.

The cumulative and worsening effects of climate change have also sent temperatures soaring in the region, with five countries joining the “50-degree Celsius” club this year alone, a month before hitting their expected annual average peak.

Excessive heat can be deadly, with casualty statistics that can easily dwarf those of wildfires and floods. The combination of high temperatures and humidity in MENA coastal areas, compared with the more arid inland regions, can combine to produce choking heat indexes of 60 C and above. Above-ground weather phenomena certainly explain prolonged reductions in precipitation and the region's worsening droughts, but lockdown restrictions, pandemic-induced slowdowns and shocks to global supply chains compound well-documented challenges eroding MENA food security. As always, the bulk of this suffering falls squarely on the shoulders of the Arab world's impoverished, vulnerable communities such as refugees and, more recently, the swelling rank of low-skilled migrant workers unable to find new employment or return to their home countries.

Currently, food security in the Middle East and North Africa is threatened by conflict, instability, economic turmoil, rising poverty, dwindling arable lands due to desertification, and rapid urbanization. Since 2019, Arab governments have done their part to ensure a clash of crises, conflicts and instability will not sink economies or drown societies in civil discord during a raging pandemic.

Critics will decry some of their efforts or dismiss them as simply doing the bare minimum, and in Lebanon's case, not doing anything at all. However, it is important to avoid trivializing the enormity of existing challenges and the rocky road that lies ahead. Pausing efforts to improve food/water security, build resilience into domestic capacities, and the Arab world's ability to absorb external shocks is inadvisable, simply because current priorities are fixated on getting populations vaccinated.

Granted, national finances are severely constrained and unable to find the fiscal or monetary room to

maneuver by making critical investments in resilience-building infrastructure or even tackling the political land mine that is comprehensive public sector reform.

Meanwhile, increased borrowing to deal with pandemic-related challenges will likely result in even more of already limited public revenues going toward servicing debt, stifling opportunities for the Arab world to seize on the moment and build the economies of the future, as a sustainable way to emerge from the pandemic crisis.

Yet still, the public's needs keep growing as social safety nets must remain intact even as tax revenues are at record lows due to falling incomes and double-digit unemployment rates in economies yet to fully recover. In addition, at the rate at which the MENA population is growing, so, too, will the public's demands for accessibility and affordability of basic services.

However, most states appear unprepared for this population bump, severely lacking in the capacity to invest and capitalize on a growing population to enhance domestic consumption, improve regional competitiveness and ultimately build more robust economies resistant to external shocks.

Currently, food security in the Middle East and North Africa is threatened by conflict, instability, economic turmoil, rising poverty, dwindling arable lands due to desertification, and rapid urbanization.

In some particularly vulnerable countries, this can be already felt, for instance, in Lebanon, where food inflation soared to over 400 percent last year, worsened by a multitude of crises, including COVID-19 and the Beirut port explosion.

In Iraq, a combination of factors has resulted in nearly 10 percent of the population becoming food poor, resorting to negative coping strategies such as limiting food intake, relying on cheaper, less nutritious sources, borrowing, and relying on debt. Food security in Syria has more or less deteriorated, which is having a spillover effect in Lebanon — from the vulnerable refugee populations to the diversions of heavily subsidized foodstuffs to war-torn Syria.

Even in relatively stable states, the situation is in no way better, except in a few Gulf states where food security has become a national priority. After all, domestic food production is still vulnerable and will be the first casualty of the increasingly visible signs of climate change, such as record-breaking heatwaves,

less precipitation, more intense tropical cyclones and flooded coastal areas.

Meanwhile, freshwater sources are also depleting rapidly, even with alternative sources such as desalination, which will likely never reach sufficient scale, because of their enormous electricity consumption. This adds more pressure on national energy grids already operating at or above their advised capacity to electrify industries, businesses and households.

Without serious mitigation efforts locally, regionally and across the globe, MENA is quickly reaching a tipping point — further accelerated by a rise in global food prices as indicated by the Food and Agriculture Organization's monthly food price index (FPI). In the past six years, food insecurity has worsened and now affects nearly 10 percent of the world's population.

The global pandemic worsened these statistics, making an additional 80-130 million people food poor across the planet, with the urban poor feeling the most impact.

For MENA, the largest food-importing region in the world, this sharp increase in the FPI — the 12th consecutive monthly rise in a decade — should be the ultimate warning that urgent action is needed now more than ever.

Regardless of its contributing factors, growing hunger makes for a desperate populace, which will make states prone to collapse as people take matters into their own hands and try to secure their lives and livelihoods by any means necessary. Granted, in areas where man-made conflict is wreaking havoc on communities, infrastructure and domestic food production capacities, the only solution remains painstaking, often time-consuming conflict resolution processes. However, where there is relative stability and sufficient food production capacity despite prevailing socioeconomic challenges or even political gridlock, national priorities should center on long-term food security, ensuring adequate preparation not only for post-pandemic global food inflation but also other future shocks, both external and domestic.

If the region is firmly set on transforming out of its many dependencies, from hydrocarbons to foodstuffs, governments must act with the utmost urgency to not only shore up domestic capacities but also frame food, nutrition, and water crises as the existential threats they are before it is too late.

—Courtesy Arab News

Briefs

China names
14-man
squad for
FIBA Asia Cup

BEIJING: China's national men's basketball team announced a 14-player list before departing for the Philippines on Sunday for the upcoming 2021 FIBA Asia Cup qualifiers and Olympic qualifying tournaments. The 14 players are Zhou Peng, Zhou Qi, Liu Chuanxing, Shen Zijie, Ren Junfei, Zhang Zhenlin, Zhu Mingzhen, Zeng Fanbo, Zhao Jiwei, Hu Mingxuan, Lu Wenbo, Zhao Yanhao, Wu Qian and Xu Jie. After eight players have been taken out from the initial 27-player roster, Sun Minghui, Yu Dehao, Gao Shiyuan and Wang Quanze became the latest batch of absentees from the two qualifiers, with Liaoning Flying Leopards' center Han Dejun having not registered since the team called him up. The Chinese team has trained together for around 20 days since players gathered on May 23. As 12 players are allowed to participate in each tournament, the team will confirm its final roster based on real scenarios prior to the tournaments. The team also revealed that center Zhou Qi felt uncomfortable in his eye while doing shooting drills during Saturday's final training session before departing. It was later diagnosed as a left eye retinal break that impacts his eyesight. As advised by doctors, Zhou will undergo treatment before joining the team in the Philippines.

Finland shocks
Denmark in
Euro 2020
match

WEB DESK

TASHKENT: Finland sensationally defeated Denmark in their Euro 2020 Group B opener with the score 1-0. It should be noted that the match was overshadowed by the awful incident with Christian Eriksen, who collapsed and hospitalized. Christian Eriksen collapsed collapse just before half-time with no one around him. The doctors provided medical aid to the player. The Danish players formed a wall around Eriksen as the medical professionals worked to resuscitate him. Later he was taken to the hospital. After the restart, Denmark dominated the match. But it was Finland, who opened the score. On 60 minutes, Pohjanpalo pounced scored the only goal of the match. Denmark could equalized on 74 minutes, but Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg's penalty was saved by Lukas Hradecky.

Shakib
suspended
after umpire
outburst

SPORTS DESK

DHAKA: Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib al-Hasan has been suspended for three matches and fined for "showing aggressive behaviour towards the umpire" during a domestic match. Shakib, the world's top-ranked all-rounder in One-Day Internationals, kicked the stumps after an appeal was turned down by the umpire during a match between Abahani Limited and Mohammedan Sporting Club in Dhaka on Friday. He later pulled out all three stumps and flung them aside after the umpire halted the game because of rain. The Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) found Shakib, who captains Mohammedan, guilty of two counts of misconduct and suspended him for three upcoming matches in the Bangladesh Dhaka Premier Division T20 Cricket League. He was also fined 500,000 taka (US\$5,900). "Shakib was found guilty of conduct that is contrary to the spirit of the game after showing aggressive behaviour towards the umpire," the BCB said in a statement on Saturday. The 34-year-old also brought the game into disrepute through the use of offensive language and reckless conduct with the umpire, the BCB added. Shakib wrote on Facebook that he was "extremely sorry for losing my temper". "An experienced player like me should not have reacted that way but sometimes against all odds it happens, unfortunately."

Islamabad United stun Lahore Qalandars with 28 run victory

Chasing a tricky target of 153 runs, Lahore Qalandars' opener Fakhar Zaman and Sohail Akhtar got their side off to a steady start

SPORTS DESK

ABU DHABI: Islamabad United stunned Lahore Qalandars with an improbable 28-run victory in their Habib Bank Limited (HBL) Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six encounter in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. Chasing a tricky target of 153 runs, Lahore Qalandars' opener Fakhar Zaman and Sohail Akhtar got their side off to a steady start. The two batsmen combined for a solid 55-run stand off 36 balls which laid a solid platform for their side to chase down the target. Leg-spinner Fawad Ahmed finally got the better of Sohail Akhtar with a successful LBW after he had scored 34 runs off 19 balls. Batsman Zeeshan Ashraf soon followed, getting run-out after scoring just one run. As Lahore Qalandars seemed to be cruising along towards the target, pacer Musa Khan produced an inspired over halfway through the innings that led to a dramatic collapse. Veteran all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez fell first, caught by fielder Hussain Talat off the bowling of Musa Khan, after scoring just eight runs off eight balls. Batsman Ben Dunk was then caught behind by wicketkeeper Rohail Nazir in the same



over as Islamabad United got an important opening back into the match. Fakhar Zaman, who had been solid in the middle, stood between Islamabad United and their charge towards victory. Musa Khan was the man to step up once more for his side, removing Fakhar Zaman, caught by fielder Iftikhar Ahmed after the batsman had scored 44

runs off 37 balls. With the settled batsman back in the hut, Islamabad United bowlers went for the jugular and wickets started falling in heaps. Skipper Shadab Khan removed explosive batsman Tim David, caught by fielder Iftikhar Ahmed after scoring three runs off eight balls. The leg-spinner then bowled all-rounder Rashid Khan after he

had scored just four runs of seven balls. Lahore Qalandars misery continued as tailender Shaheen Shah was run-out for a duck. Leg-spinner Fawad Ahmed then broke through the defenses of all-rounder James Faulkner after he had scored just one run. Bowler Ali Khan then picked up the last wicket of tailender Haris Rauf (17 off 11), caught by fielder Iftikhar Ahmed, as Islamabad United wrapped up Lahore Qalandars batting for 124 runs in 18.2 overs to complete a surprising 28 run victory. Musa Khan was the stand-out bowler for his side, picking up three wickets in his allotted overs. After winning the toss and opting to bat first, Islamabad United were off to a horror start as the relentless Lahore Qalandars attack blew over half of the opposition batsmen in quick fashion. Opener Usman Khawaja was the first wicket to fall after being caught behind by wicketkeeper Ben Dunk off the bowling of pacer Shaheen Shah for a duck. Wicketkeeper-batsman Rohail Nazir (one off three) was next as he was adjudged LBW off the bowling of all-rounder James Faulkner. Faulkner then removed batsman Colin Munro (four off 11), adjudged LBW, and all-rounder Hussain Talat (eight off 13), caught by fielder Tim David, as Islamabad United found themselves in a lot of trouble early.

Uzbekistan
donates 1,000
Oxygen Balloons
to Afghanistan

Mirwais Alizai said that Tehran would also provide 4,500 balloons of oxygen to Afghanistan

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Tashkent donated 1,000 oxygen balloons to Kabul as the numbers of infections are in a rapid rise with hospitals running out of medical equipments. The ventilators were handed over to the Afghan health officials in Hairatan port located in the northern province of Balkh. The ministry of foreign affairs welcomed the donations of oxygen balloons and the neighboring country's commitment to assist Afghanistan in countering the pandemic virus. This comes as the foreign ministry called on its political agencies in the region to attract assistance in the fight against the ongoing COVID-19 and the provision of oxygen. The foreign ministry said in a statement that it has accelerated efforts to recruit medical supplement from the regional and world countries. Earlier, the minister of Public Health said that government hospitals are running out of oxygen balloons and called on private health sectors to cooperate with the government health centers in regards. A spokesman for the health ministry, Mirwais Alizai said that Tehran would also provide 4,500 balloons of oxygen to Afghanistan. According to him, the donation of ventilators would solve the main challenges of Oxygen balloons in the country. Earlier, the Amnesty International called on the Afghan government to pay immediate and serious attention to the shortage of oxygen in hospital.

Azerbaijan returns 15
Armenian detainees

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan returned 15 detained Armenians to back Armenia with the participation of Georgian representatives on the Azerbaijani-Georgian border, in exchange for providing the Azerbaijani side with maps of 97,000 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan's Aghdam district, the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry has told Trend. "We appreciate the support of the Georgian government, led by the Prime Minister Ilham Aliyev, in conducting this humanitarian action," the ministry said.

"At the same time, we emphasize the role of the head of the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Philip Reeker, President of the European Council Charles Michel and the Swedish chairmanship of

President of European
Council praises Azerbaijan

DNA

BRUSSELS: President of the European Council Charles Michel praised the Azerbaijan's return of 15 Armenian detainees in exchange of mine maps of liberated Aghdam district by Armenia, Trend reports citing Michael's Twitter. "I applaud Azerbaijan's and Armenia's parallel humanitarian gestures - releases of detainees and maps of mined areas," he wrote. Michel noted that is a first step towards renewing confidence. "The EU has supported this process and will continue to offer assistance to enhance progress," Michel added. On June 12, Azerbaijan returned 15 detained Armenians back to Armenia with the participation of Georgian representatives on the Azerbaijani-Georgian border on June 12, 2021, in exchange for providing the Azerbaijani side with maps of 97,000 anti-tank and anti-personnel mines in Azerbaijan's Aghdam district, liberated from Armenian occupation.

the OSCE." "Receiving the minefield maps will save the lives and health of tens of thousands of our citizens, including demining specialists, and will accelerate the reconstruction projects initiated by Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Aghdam

and return of the IDPs," added the ministry. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. As a result of the ensuing war, Armenian armed forces

occupied 20 percent of Azerbaijan, including the Nagorno-Karabakh region and seven surrounding districts. The 1994 ceasefire agreement was followed by peace negotiations. Following over a month of military action to liberate its territories from Armenian occupation from late Sept. to early Nov. 2020, Azerbaijan has pushed Armenia to sign the surrender document. A joint statement on the matter was made by the Azerbaijani president, Armenia's PM, and the president of Russia. A complete ceasefire and a cessation of all hostilities in the zone of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were introduced on Nov. 10, 2020. Following the liberation of its lands, Azerbaijan from Nov. 2020 started carrying out operations on clearing its lands from mines, booby traps, and various weapons left behind by the Armenian troops.



LONDON: Calvin Phillips of England competes during a Group D match between England and Croatia at UEFA EURO 2020 in Wembley Stadium, London. – DNA

Djokovic wins 19th
Grand Slam title

SPORTS DESK

PARIS: Novak Djokovic claimed a 19th Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in the French Open final. The world number one triumphed 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 over the Greek 22-year-old who was playing in his first Slam final. Djokovic's second trophy at Roland Garros moves him one major championship away from tying the men's record of 20 shared by Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer. It also puts reigning Australian Open champion Djokovic halfway to a calendar-year Grand Slam, something no man has accomplished since Rod Laver in 1969.

The 34-year-old Djokovic eliminated 13-time French Open champion Nadal in a semi-final that lasted more than four hours Friday night. That might be why the 22-year-old Tsitsipas had the upper hand early, and Djokovic looked drained for two sets. Eventually, though, he started making fewer mistakes, got his best-in-the-game returning on track, served almost flawlessly down the stretch and was able to complete his sixth career comeback from two sets down – and second of the past week. Indeed, the International Tennis Federation said Djokovic – who trailed 19-year-old Lorenzo Musetti two sets to none in the fourth round – is the first man in the professional era to win a Grand Slam tournament after twice facing a 2-0 deficit in sets.

Biden
reaffirms
support for
Olympics

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: US President Joe Biden has reaffirmed his support for the Tokyo Olympics at a meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, highlighting the necessity of imposing public health measures ensuring the safety of those involved. At a meeting with Suga on Saturday on the sidelines of the Group of Seven summit in the British seaside resort of Carbis Bay, Biden also raised a range of other issues including COVID-19, North Korea, China and climate change, the White House said in a statement. The Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, which were postponed last year due to the global spread of the coronavirus, are scheduled to start on July 23, in the face of opposition from most of the public, many Japanese companies and medical staff.

US can
count on
Turkey...

FROM PAGE 01

asked the official, who wished to remain anonymous. The official also confirmed that Western powers were willing to let Turkey stay and protect the Kabul airport. But, the official added, "why should Turkey try hard if nobody is going to give support? These issues need to be clarified." On Saturday the Taliban said that foreign forces should hold "no hope" of keeping a military presence in Afghanistan after the US and NATO withdraw troops, warning the security of embassies and airports would be the responsibility of Afghans. "Without ifs and buts" Relations between the US and Turkey have been tense in recent years, and Erdogan said he wanted to turn a new page with the Biden administration. "There were rumours here and there. We need to leave them behind and discuss what we can do," he said. "We expect to see an approach from the US without ifs and buts." Relations have sharply deteriorated since Biden replaced Erdogan's ally Donald Trump in January. Biden most notably recognised the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman empire during World War I, a move that outraged Turkey which rejects that term. "This has seriously saddened us... Turkey is not an ordinary country. It's an ally of America," Erdogan said.

New taxes
injustice...

FROM PAGE 01

the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "I reject the government's PTIMF budget," he said. Two days ago, Bilawal had condemned the budget proposed by the federal government, calling it an "economic attack on Pakistanis". The PPP chairman, in a statement issued from Media Cell Bilawal House, had said PTI would not be permitted to "play with the nation's future", vowing his party would not allow Prime Minister Imran Khan "to conduct an economic massacre of the people." Reiterating PM Imran Khan was "deaf, dumb, and blind" to the plight of the average citizen, he said: "The year might have changed, but the conditions of the people remain the same. A poor man's house is still being deprived of necessities."

G7 leaders
agree on
global tax

AGENCIES

CARBIS BAY: The G7 on Sunday advanced a plan to impose a global minimum corporation tax and a collective crackdown on avoidance, arguing it would help tackle inequality. At a summit in southwest England, G7 leaders endorsed an agreement struck by their finance ministers last week to adopt a minimum floor for corporation tax of 15 percent. "With this, we have taken a significant step towards creating a fairer tax system fit for the 21st century, and reversing a 40-year race to the bottom," the G7 said in their concluding statement. "Our collaboration will create a stronger level playing field, and it will help raise more tax revenue to support investment and it will crack down on tax avoidance."

India: Fire rips through Rohingya camp

"When we saw the fire, I held my mother's hand and lifted my child in my arms and ran away to safety outside the camp," Khatoon said. "We lost everything. The fire destroyed even the little cash that we had kept for our daily needs. We don't have a single [Indian] rupee to buy water"

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: A massive fire has destroyed a Rohingya refugee camp in the Indian capital, New Delhi, leaving hundreds of people homeless. The blaze broke out at about 11:30pm on Saturday and quickly spread through the camp, reducing 55 ramshackle shelters to ashes in the MadanpurKhadar area in the capital city's south. No deaths or serious injuries have been reported in the fire – the second time the camp has been reduced to ashes since 2018. The fire service department of the national capital said that it put 15 fire tenders into service and brought the blaze under control in about six hours. "We rushed to the spot quickly and

started dousing the flames," Sandeep, an operator at the Delhi Fire Service, told Al Jazeera by telephone on Sunday. The fire tore through the camp, home to 55 families – filling the sky with plumes of smoke and flames as refugees scrambled to safety, crying for help. Sufia Khatoon, 32, was asleep inside her hut along with her physically challenged mother and her child when the fire broke out. It started in an abandoned hut, she said. "When we saw the fire, I held my mother's hand and lifted my child in my arms and ran away to safety outside the camp," Khatoon said. "We lost everything. The fire destroyed even the little cash that we had kept for our daily needs. We don't have a single [Indian] rupee to buy water." She appealed to the government and relief groups for

help with food and shelter. Asif Mujtaba, a Delhi-based activist, told Al Jazeera that his group was one of the first to provide relief as soon as the flames were doused. "We shifted those who needed medical attention to nearby hospitals, and arranged water and food for the refugees," Mujtaba said, adding that he was reaching out to officials to help set up an interim relief camp for them, in the scorching summer heat. "We are also mapping out details of the families who suffered losses in the fire," he said. Another volunteer, Ahmad Kamal, opened the doors of his nearby hostel and sheltered some Rohingya for the night, providing them with food and water. "We were hungry. Some people came here in the morning and gave us bananas and milk," said refugee

Tayyab Begum, 45. An estimated 40,000 Rohingya refugees, many believed to be undocumented, live in camps across Indian cities, including Jammu, Hyderabad and Nuh. The United Nations refugee agency has provided some of them with refugee cards, which helps them to access some basic services and is supposed to protect them from police action. More than 750,000 Rohingya took shelter in Bangladesh in 2017 after the Myanmar army launched a brutal crackdown on the Muslim minority, who have been persecuted by Myanmar authorities for decades. Bangladesh currently holds more than one million Rohingya in cramped and squalid camps along its border with Myanmar. Large numbers of Rohingya have also taken refuge in neighbouring

Asian countries, including India and Malaysia. The fire comes amid an Indian government crackdown on Rohingya refugees living in the country. In March, police in Jammu city and New Delhi jailed more than 200 refugees, saying they were living in the country "illegally". India's Hindu nationalist government has said it will deport the Rohingya refugees to Myanmar in contravention of the principle of non-refoulement, which forbids a country from returning refugees to a country where they would face torture. Rights groups have warned against deporting the Rohingya to Myanmar, which also experienced a military coup in February. For now, their deportation has been blocked by the Indian Supreme Court. But 300 refugees are still imprisoned.

Briefs

Tunisians rally against police brutality

FOREIGN DESK

TUNIS: Clashes have erupted in the Tunisian capital as hundreds of young people came out to protest against police brutality in working-class neighbourhoods following the latest death of a man in police custody. Protesters were seen throwing sticks, chairs and water bottles at security forces who were firing tear gas and roughly detained several people in the Sidi Hassine area on the outskirts of Tunis. Saturday's violence followed three consecutive nights of protests after a young man was killed "in suspicious circumstances" in the neighbourhood, according to the Tunisian League of Human Rights (LTDH).

The man died on Tuesday after being arrested by police on suspicion of dealing drugs, according to local media.

Earlier on Saturday, several dozen left-wing activists and residents of working-class districts demonstrated in front of the interior ministry in protest against the death for which the family blamed the police.

Employment in Azerbaijan up in Jan-Apr

DNA

BAKU: The number of people employed in Azerbaijan's economy increased by 0.1 percent or 2,300 people, amounting to over 1.6 million people, as of May 1, the State Statistics Committee has reported.

Of the total number of employed, 913,600 citizens work in the public sector and 764,800 in the private sector.

Some 19.7 percent are employed in education, 18.5 percent in trade and repair of transport means, 12.8 percent in industry, 8.3 percent in health care and social services for the population, 7.2 percent in construction, 6.7 percent in public administration and defence, social security, 4.5 percent in transport and warehousing, 3.4 percent in agriculture, forestry and fishing, 3.4 percent in professional, scientific and technical activities, 1.7 percent in financial and insurance activities and 13.8 percent in other economic sectors.

It should be noted that the average monthly salary of hired workers decreased by 1.9 percent in January-April this year, bringing the figure to AZN 722.3 (\$424.8). During the reported period, the average monthly nominal salary was higher in the mining industry, financial and insurance activity, professional, scientific and technical activity, information and communication, and in transport and storage facilities.

Kazakhstan confirms 1,058 new cases

DNA

NURSULTAN: Kazakhstan registered 1,058 new coronavirus cases for the past day. These new cases include 257 in Nur-Sultan, 177 in Karaganda region, 111 in Almaty, 87 in East Kazakhstan region, 82 in West Kazakhstan region, 48 in Atyrau region, 46 in Almaty region, 45 in Akmola region, 44 in Pavlodar region, 34 in Kostanai region, 30 in Shymkent, 25 in Mangistau region, 20 in Jambyl region, 17 in Aktobe region, 16 in North Kazakhstan region, 14 in Turkestan region, 11 in Kyzylorda region.

The total number of confirmed coronavirus cases reached 401,272. 70 coronavirus pneumonia cases were registered for the past day. 4 patients died from pneumonia. The total number of coronavirus pneumonia cases since August 1 reached 56,202. The death toll made 3,407.

Ten died from coronavirus infection for a day. The death toll reached 4,160. 6,964 remain in hospitals, 14,449 are treated at home. 528 patients are in serious condition. 72 patients were put up on ventilators.

Pakistani nation stands with victims of London tragedy

High Commissioner Raza Bashir also used the occasion to thank the Canadian leadership and the people for standing with the family of the victims in these difficult times, and also standing up to Islamophobia by condemning all forms and expressions of Muslim-hate in Canada and elsewhere in the world

DNA

LONDON: Pakistan High Commissioner to Canada Raza Bashir Tarar attended the funeral prayers for four members of the London Ontario-based Afzaal family killed last Sunday, saying all of Pakistan stood with the family "shoulder to shoulder" in its grief and suffering over the tragedy. "Our hearts are bleeding because of the atrocity that has befallen this wonderful, marvellous family," he said as he conveyed to the family the "deepest condolences and prayers" from Prime Minister Imran Khan, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and the entire Pakistani nation. The High Commissioner also used the occasion to thank the Canadian leadership and the people for standing with the family of the victims in these difficult times, and also standing up to Islamophobia by condemning all forms and expressions of Muslim-hate in Canada and elsewhere in the world.

Earlier, dead bodies of Salman Afzaal 46, wife Madiha Salman, their 15-year-old daughter Yumna Afzaal and Salman's 74-year-old mother Talat Afzaal were brought to the Islamic Centre prayer ground, draped in the Canadian flags, for the funeral prayers which were attended



ed by hundreds of people observing Corona related SOPs. "And the very fact their coffins are draped in the beautiful Canadian flag is an apt testimony of the fact that the entire Canadian nation stands with them," Raza Bashir Tarar said. Meanwhile, a series of prayer sessions and vigils were held in different cities of Canada by various Canadian Pakistani

associations and groups to express solidarity for the victims of the Sunday killings. Pakistan Canada Association of Edmonton arranged a talk on the cause of hate and racist incidents happening in Alberta, challenge of Islamophobia and how community leaders from diverse backgrounds could come together for an open conversation on these subjects.

The discussion was also attended and addressed by Consul General of Pakistan Vancouver Janbaz Khan. A number of federal and provincial parliament's members, government functionaries, and political parties' representatives attended a gathering in Montreal to express solidarity with the brutally murdered Muslim family in London-Ontario.

Speaking at the occasion, Ishtiaq Ahmed Akil, Acting Consul General of Pakistan Montreal, highlighted the statements and speeches of Prime Minister Imran Khan made at various international forums including the UN General Assembly and called for the international community's attention towards taking concrete actions against a rising ten-

dency of Islamophobia all over the world.

A prayers meeting was arranged in a local mosque in Toronto and attended by Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed among others. A similar prayer session and vigil was also held in Ottawa and represented from The Pakistan High Commission by Counsellor Press Hamid Raza Khan.

Some facts about Pakistan's defence budget 2021-22

DNA

Myth number 1: Pakistan's defence budget takes away a major chunk of the total budgetary resources. *Not true*. In Budget 2021-22, 'Defence Services' has been allocated Rs1,370 billion out of total budgetary resources of Rs8,487 billion – and that is a mere *16 percent of the total budgetary resources*. In effect, *16 percent for defence and 84 percent for non-defence related expenses*. For the record, in Budget 2020-21, defence-related expenses comprised 17.67 percent of the total expenses. In effect, the defence budget as a percentage of the total outlay has gone down from 17.67 percent last year to 16 percent.

*Myth number 2: Over the years,

our defence budget has been rising at an accelerated pace. *Not true*. Here's the fact: in the 1970s the allocation for defence amounted to 6.50 percent of our GDP. In 2001-02, the allocation for defence stood at 4.6 percent of GDP. In Budget 2021-22, an allocation of Rs1,370 for defence is 2.8 percent of GDP. Last year, we spent 2.86 percent of GDP on defence. In effect, over the past fifty years, the defence budget as a percentage of GDP has gone down – rather drastically – from 6.50 percent of GDP in the 1970s to 2.8 percent this year. The US, for instance, spends 3.4 percent of GDP on defence while India is at 2.4 percent. Here are some of the countries that spend more of their GDP on defence than does Pakistan: Oman spends 12 percent of its GDP on defence, Afghanistan 10.6 percent, Lebanon

10.5 percent, Saudi Arabia 8 percent, Kuwait 7.1 percent, Algeria 6.7 percent, Iraq 5.8 percent, UAE 5.6 percent, Azerbaijan 4 percent, Morocco 5.3 percent, Israel 5.2 percent, Jordan 4.9 percent, Armenia 4.8 percent, Mali 4.5 percent, Qatar 4.4 percent, Russia 3.9 percent, US 3.4 percent and South Sudan 3.4 percent (source: SIPRI Military Expenditure Database and 'The Military Balance' from the International Institute for Strategic Studies).

Myth number 3: Pakistan Army takes away a major chunk of the entire defence budget. *Not true*. Of the Rs1,370 allocation for defence, Pakistan Army gets Rs594 billion or 44 percent. In effect, *Pakistan Army gets a paltry 7 percent of the total budgetary resources*.

Fact: The world spends \$1.98 trillion on defence. Of the total global de-

fence spending, the US constitutes 39 percent, China 13 percent, India 3.7 percent, Russia 3 percent and Pakistan 0.44 percent (along with others). Yes, India at \$73 billion is now ahead of Russia. Pakistan spends around \$8.7 billion.

Fact: *Pakistan's defence budget on a per capita basis is one of the lowest in the world*. Pakistan spends \$40 on a per capita basis while Israel spends \$2,200 on a per capita basis. According to Global Firepower, Pakistan's armed forces are "ranked as the 10th most powerful military in the world."

Fact: *On the basis of 'expenses per soldier', Pakistan's armed forces come out as the most efficient on the face of the planet*. The US spends \$392,000 on a per soldier basis, Saudi Arabia \$371,000, India \$42,000, Iran \$23,000.



BAKU: Pakistan Ambassador to Azerbaijan visiting Aghdam with diplomatic corps. He felt safer after Azerbaijan's diplomatic victory to secure maps of mines in Aghdam. Hope Armenia will handover remaining mine maps of Azerbaijani territories. – DNA

Rug, harassment allegations plunge Bejart into turmoil

GENEVA: Switzerland's prestigious Bejart Ballet Lausanne company faces a probe as allegations of drug use, harassment and abuse of power raise the question why nothing apparently changed after an earlier investigation raised similar issues. The company, founded by the late legendary French choreographer Maurice Bejart, was placed under audit on June 4 over allegations touching on its "working environment and inappropriate behaviour". The Maurice Bejart Foundation announced the audit just a week after revealing that the affiliated Rudra Bejart ballet school had fired its director and stage manager and suspended all classes for a year due to "serious shortcomings" in management. While the foundation has revealed few details of the allegations facing the two

institutions, anonymous testimonies gathered by trade union representatives and the media paint a bleak picture. Swiss public broadcaster RTS reported that a number of unidentified former members of the Bejart Ballet Lausanne (BBL) company had written to the foundation, describing the "omnipresence of drugs, nepotism, as well as psychological and sexual harassment". Many of the accusations allegedly focus on Gil Roman, who took the helm of BBL when its founder died in 2007. did not respond to AFP requests to the foundation or BBL seeking comment. The French choreographer faced similar allegations during a secret audit a year later, but was permitted to stay on and continue as before, according to RTS and the union representing the dancers. – APP

Switzerland votes on pesticides ban

GENEVA: Switzerland votes Sunday on proposals to ban synthetic pesticides following a campaign that has shattered the idyllic image of peaceful Swiss Alpine pastures by sharply dividing opinion.

The Swiss are also voting on a series of hot topics, including anti-terror measures and Covid-19 laws.

Polling stations close at 1000 GMT, with most people having voted by post. Results will be known before the end of the day.

Voters must decide whether they approve a Covid-19 law that extends government powers to fight the pandemic and mitigate its consequences on society and the economy. But the two anti-pesticide proposals have triggered the most noise, in an electoral campaign marked by fiery debates between farmers.

The campaign boiled over in the western Vaud region when arsonists torched a trailer in a field displaying banners calling for a "No" vote, infuriating farmers.

Meanwhile farmers in the "Yes" campaign say they have been the victims of insults, threats and intimidation. The first popular initiative, entitled "For a Switzerland free from synthetic pesticides", calls for a domestic ban within 10 years, while imported foodstuffs produced using such pesticides would also be outlawed. Under the second, "For clean drinking water and healthy food", only farms that do not use pesticides and use antibiotics only to treat sick animals would be eligible for government subsidies.

The amount of liquid manure being used on fields, and thereby potentially entering the water system, would also be limited. Environmentalists and the political left back both initiatives.

Argentina's COVID-19 cases top 4.11 million

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina reported 18,057 new COVID-19 infections and 447 more deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the accumulated total caseload and deaths to 4,111,147 and 85,075, respectively, on Saturday.

Meanwhile, 16.23 million vaccine doses against COVID-19 have been administered in the South American country to date.

Health Minister Carla Vizzotti visited the province of Santiago del Estero on Saturday and highlighted the progress of the national immunization campaign "not only in people over 60 years old and people at risk, but also reaching 70 percent in those over 50 years old." – APP

Greece: Four Afghan migrants jailed

WEB DESK

ATHENS: Four Afghan asylum-seekers have been sentenced to 10 years in prison for their part in a fire that destroyed the Moria migrant camp in Greece last year.

The court in Chios found the defendants guilty of arson on Saturday while their lawyers denounced a "lack of sense of fairness", telling AFP news agency they had immediately filed for an appeal after the sentence was handed down.

The young Afghans were taken to the court handcuffed and were expected to return to the Avlona jail outside Athens, where they were held before the trial. In March, two other Afghan youths were sentenced to five years in prison in connection with the case.

The Moria camp – on the Aegean island of Lesbos – housed more than 10,000 people before it was destroyed by two fires in September 2020. No one died in the fires.

Greek authorities believe the fires were deliberately lit by camp occupants after quarantine measures were imposed following the discovery of COVID-19 cases among people living on the site.

Approximately 20 people, mainly members of foreign solidarity groups, gathered outside the court to call for the defendants to be freed.

APBF worried as FDI keeps declining

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The All Pakistan Business Forum has raised its serious concern over the falling trend of foreign direct investment into the country, which has plunged by over 33 percent during the first 10 months of the current fiscal year despite some positive developments on the economic front, placing a big question mark over the investment climate in the country. APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood, in a statement issued here on Sunday, said that despite significant improvements in the energy infrastructure and security condition, the government has failed to attract investment in the country. He said the drastic steps

and political will can speed up the economic growth, which should be grown significantly and constantly for visible impact.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi expressed the hope that FDI would grow over the next one year in the wake of stability in the rupee-dollar parity and improvement in balance of payments position in this fiscal year, as Special Economic Zones, which were under the development phase, would also attract investment among export sectors in the country. During 2014-2018, foreign investors mostly poured money into the sectors which did not pose a risk to their profit margins due to rupee depreciation such as the power sector. It is appreciable that Pakistan's economy is now gradually

gaining growth momentum, which should encourage foreign investors to invest in new projects, he added.

Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that it is good that the government is anticipating the GDP growth of 4% for the current fiscal year compared to projection of 3%, which is also possible, considering the low base effect of last year, achievement of comparatively higher growth in manufacturing and export sectors, bumper wheat crop in agriculture sector and current account balance in surplus, he said. He urged the government to take practical and concrete steps for the implementation of business-friendly policies, saying the rising prices of electricity, gas and petroleum products were halting

the wheel of economy. APBF President added there was a need to freeze the prices of all inputs for at least two years so that the economy could get required start. He also suggested that the sales tax slab should be curtailed in order to cut cost of production.

Quoting the latest data released by the State Bank, he said that FDI has declined by \$748 million to stand at \$1.55 billion during July-April FY21 compared to the corresponding period of the last fiscal year. During the period under review, FDI inflows were amounted to \$2.505 billion as against \$952 million outflow.

Although, net Chinese' foreign direct investment in Pakistan is on decline, however, still China ranked one in the list of invest-

ing countries. The country-wise details showed that net inflow of FDI from China was \$708 million during the first ten months of this fiscal year as against \$865 million in the same period of last fiscal year. He advocated the need for raising the country's tax base so that tax-to-GDP ratio improves from current poor level. He urged the trade officers to explore opportunities to diversify exports of goods and services in their respective areas, asking them to meet the challenges faced by Pakistan in European markets. He also suggested the ministry to devise strategies for promotion of Pakistani products, calling upon trade officers to take advantage of opportunities offered by China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Briefs

Govt
fudging
numbers:
Abbasi

ATHAR SURI

KARACHI: Former prime minister and PML-N stalwart Shahid Khaqan Abbasi on Sunday said that the government is fudging numbers and "befooling the people", warned that the budget for 2021-22 has new taxes worth Rs343 billion. Addressing a media briefing in Karachi, Abbasi said that when Imran Khan's government came, new taxes worth Rs1,200 billion were imposed in the country but despite that, only an additional Rs800bn could be raised. "The budget is based on lies. It is a fake budget and the government will gut the people to complete its targets," he said. "This is the country's first government which is lying so brazenly and has no shame in doing so," he added. The PML-N leader said that the government claims revenues of Rs1,150bn, but has not specified the source of this income.

Abbasi, providing his own figures, claimed that the government which was touting a 24% increase in income, could not increase income by 20% even in the last three years. Speaking of LNG plants, he said that the government claims they have contributed to losses but the State Bank report states that they were fruitful. "And now they have taxed LNG as well."

Gas blast in
China kills
12: officials

BEIJING: At least 12 people were killed and more than 100 others injured when a gas line explosion ripped through a residential compound in central China's Hubei province on Sunday, local officials said.

Rescue efforts were continuing, according to a statement from the disaster management bureau in the city of Shiyan.

Videos shot by witnesses and verified by Beijing News show several buildings reduced to rubble and rescue workers carrying shocked survivors on stretchers.

The explosion took place at about 6:30 am local time (22:30 GMT) and an investigation was under way to determine the cause of the blast, the statement said.

The blast comes a day after eight people were killed and three others injured when toxic methyl formate leaked from a chemical handling facility in the southwestern city of Guiyang. — APP

India reports
80,834 new
Covid cases

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally rose to 29,439,989 on Sunday, with as many as 80,834 new cases recorded in the past 24 hours, said the health ministry. Besides, 3,303 COVID-19 patients died since Saturday morning taking the death toll to 370,384. This was the sixth consecutive day when less than 100,000 cases were registered across the country, after peaking to over 400,000 for several days in April-May which was dubbed as the pandemic's second wave. Still there are 1,026,159 active cases, after a decrease of 54,531 active cases during the past 24 hours.

A total of 28,043,446 people have been successfully cured and discharged from hospitals across the country, with 132,062 of them discharged since Saturday morning. India's test positivity rate (positive cases identified for every 100 tests) continues to decline. For the fifth straight day it is below the 5 per cent mark at 4.25 per cent. Active cases have decreased by 54,531 in the last 24 hours to take the tally to 10,26,159. Recoveries have been outnumbering the daily new cases for the 31st consecutive day now. The country witnessed 3,303 virus-related deaths during the period, taking the total number of fatalities to 3.70 lakh. — APP

UNICEF supports polio eradication in Pakistan

It is inspiring to see the commitment of frontline workers and communities towards our joint vision of a polio-free Pakistan: Laryea-Adjei

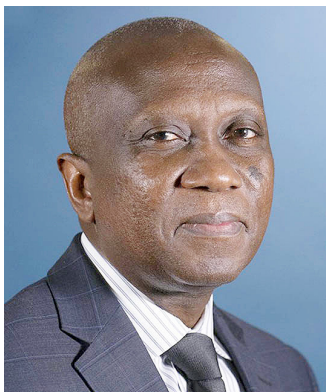
STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: George Laryea-Adjei on Sunday concluded his first official visit to Pakistan as UNICEF Regional Director for South Asia by stressing the importance of ensuring continuity of essential services for women and children. "We know that COVID-19-related disruptions have had a devastating impact on the most vulnerable children and families over the past year," George Laryea-Adjei said, according to UNICEF. "It is critical to ensure that lifesaving, essential services for children and mothers, including routine immunization, keep running even as the pandemic continues. UNICEF will continue to support the Government to respond to the pandemic and to build more resilient health and education systems that can reach every child."

The UNICEF Regional Director began his visit by meeting Prime Minister Imran Khan with members of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative Board in Islamabad. Together with Dr Ahmed Al-Mandhari, WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, and representatives of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Laryea-Adjei attended the launch of the June polio campaign.

"It is inspiring to see the commitment of frontline workers and communities towards our joint vision of a polio-free Pakistan. I applaud the efforts to deepen the link between the polio eradication programme and routine immunization, which is a significant step in the right direction," Laryea-Adjei said.

Laryea-Adjei visited Peshawar's Shaheen Muslim Town and Karachi's Gujro, two super high-risk districts in the north-western Khy-



ber Pakhtunkhwa province and in the south-eastern Sindh province where polio is endemic.

UNICEF works with provincial authorities to run Integrated Services Delivery programmes that seek to provide a package of essential services in high-risk communities. Through the integrated approach, children are not only given polio

drops but also immunized against other diseases and provided with a package which includes screening and treatment for malnutrition; birth registration; access to safe drinking water and sanitation services; advice on hygiene, child health care and early childhood development. The Regional Director also stressed the need to overcome the devastating impact of the new surge of COVID-19.

"We may be exhausted, but the virus is not. As I speak, the virus continues to spread in South Asia, health workers are putting themselves at risk, and health systems are struggling," Laryea-Adjei said. "Over one billion people are still waiting for their vaccine in the region. This includes over seven million frontline health workers who still are not fully vaccinated. The longer this virus continues to spread unchecked, the higher the

risk of more deadly or contagious variants emerging. World leaders must step up to share excess doses and ensure health systems in South Asia are prepared for future waves of COVID-19."

Laryea-Adjei also visited the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad. A center of excellence, PIMS implements low cost, high impact interventions supported by UNICEF to save newborn lives. During his visit, the Regional Director met with mothers who are taught how to use 'skin-to-skin' contact to help care for their premature newborns in the Kangaroo-Mother Care unit.

He discussed with front-line workers who work in the 24-hour immunization service room to make sure that no baby is discharged without receiving their first immunization dose of polio, tuberculosis, and hepatitis B vaccines.

10 killed
due to
heavy rains
in Pakistan

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Ten people have lost their lives in different accidents owing to heavy rains and winds in different parts of the country. According to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), five people were killed and six others were left injured due to torrential rains in the upper areas of the provinces. Among those killed, four hailed from Mansehra while one belonged to Torghar District. Due to river erosion, Gilgit Road leading to Chitral and Upper Chitral has been closed for traffic to avoid any untoward incidents, while authorities say that steps are being taken to create an alternative route after the closure of the road connecting Chitral and Buni.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has expressed regret over the loss of life due to rains. Speaking to journalists in Peshawar, he prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased as well as the speedy recovery of the wounded.

"Rescue and concerned district administration should ensure timely relief to the victims," the CM directed. Meanwhile, three people, including a woman, were killed due to electrocution as lightning strike different parts of Balochistan's Kohlu district.

Jordan mily
court tries
fmr Royal
court chief

DNA

AMMAN: Jordan's military court will start the trial next week of a former royal court chief and a minor royal on charges of agitating to destabilise the monarchy, state media said on Sunday.

Prosecutors last week referred to court the case of Bassem Awadallah, an ex-royal court chief and finance minister who played a big role in the drive to liberalise Jordan's economy, and Sherif Hassan Zaid, a distant relative of King Abdullah.

They were arrested in early April when former heir to the throne Prince Hamza was placed under house arrest over allegations that he had liaised with foreign parties over a plot to destabilise Jordan, a close US ally in the Middle East.

Democracies
in a race with
autocracies

FOREIGN DESK

CARBIS BAY: Western democracies are in a race to compete with autocratic governments, U.S. President Joe Biden said on Sunday.

"We're in a contest, not with China per se, ... with autocrats, autocratic governments around the world, as to whether or not democracies can compete with them in a rapidly changing 21st century," Biden told a news conference at the conclusion of a Group of Seven leaders' summit in Britain. On China specifically, Biden said: "I think you're gonna see just straightforward dealing with China."

"As I've told Xi Jinping myself, I'm not looking for conflict. Where we cooperate, we'll cooperate; where we disagree I'm going to state this frankly, and we are going to respond to actions that are inconsistent." U.S. President Joe Biden on Sunday also said that Russian President Vladimir Putin was correct to say that relations between their two nations were at their lowest point in years.

"Let me make it clear I think he's right it's a low point, and it depends on how he responds to acting consist-



ent with international norms, which in many cases he has not," Biden told reporters at the conclusion of a Group of Seven leaders' summit in Britain. Biden said he had told Putin before being elected he would look at whether the Russian leader had been involved in trying to interfere with the U.S. election.

"I checked it out, so I had access to all the intelligence, he was engaged in those activities, I did respond and made it clear that I'd respond again."

The U.S. president, who will meet Putin in Geneva this week, said they were not looking for conflict but to resolve "actions which we think are inconsistent with international norms."

"The bottom line is that I think the best way to deal with this for he and I to meet, for he and I to have our discussion - I know you don't doubt that I'll be very straightforward with him about our concerns," Biden said.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Mr. Asad Umar visiting development projects of Federal Government in Gulshan-e-Iqbal.

Pakistan
to continue
efforts
against HIV

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulation, and Coordination, Dr. Faisal Sultan on Sunday said that Pakistan would continue to make vigorous efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and has already made significant progress in this regard.

In a video statement during the 2021 High-Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS at New York, Dr. Faisal said that the COVID-19 pandemic posed a significant challenge to these efforts and the government was cognizant of the fact that any delay in the provision of testing and treatment services would leave many vulnerable populations at a greater risk. He said that the Government of Pakistan undertook rapid steps to modify our strategy, including staffing and smart outreach, provision of PPE for all field staff, and multi-month dispensing of ARV treatments. — DNA

EU and UK's 'sausage war' sizzles at G7

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Tensions between Britain and the European Union over their Brexit trade deal exploded into an open war of words on Sunday, with both sides accusing the other of sowing disharmony at the Group of Seven summit. Ever since the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union in 2016, the two sides have been trying to solve the riddle of what to do about the British province of Northern Ireland which has a land border with EU member Ireland. Over years of discussions, they have made little headway, agreeing multiple texts and deals only to find that their solutions fall well short of expectations, and then bickering over what to do.

Ultimately, the talks keeps coming back to the delicate patchwork of history, nationalism, religion and geography that intertwine in Northern Ireland, but the latest spat is centred on sausages.

In a move that some worry could provoke a full scale

trade war, Prime Minister Boris Johnson has threatened to unilaterally suspend parts of the Northern Ireland protocol of the Brexit divorce deal. That protocol essentially kept the province in the EU's customs union and adhering to many of the single market rules, creating a regulatory border in the Irish Sea between the British province and the rest of the United Kingdom. But Johnson has unilaterally delayed the implementation of some provisions of the protocol, including checks on chilled meats such as sausages moving from the mainland to Northern Ireland, saying it was causing disruption to some supplies to the province. During talks with Emmanuel Macron at the G7 summit in southwestern England, Johnson had queried how the French President would react if Toulouse sausages could not be sold in Paris markets.

Britain's Telegraph newspaper reported that Macron responded by inaccurately saying Northern Ireland was not

part of the United Kingdom. "Various EU figures here in Carbis Bay, but frankly for months now and years, have characterised Northern Ireland as somehow a separate country and that is wrong," British foreign minister Dominic Raab fumed. read more

"It is a failure to understand the facts. We wouldn't talk about Catalonia and Barcelona, or Corsica in France in those ways," he told the BBC's Andrew Marr programme. A French diplomatic source said Macron had been taken aback by Johnson bringing up sausages - which the British leader had said was a crucial issue but the French regarded as a distraction from the main G7 business.

The French president had merely been pointing out the sausage comparison was invalid due to the geographic differences, the source said.

"It took four years to negotiate this deal," the source said. "It cannot be said the United Kingdom didn't know what it was signing for. It's either not very professional or a distraction from the real issues."

COVID-19 claims 56 lives,
infects 1,239 more people

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 42,290 with 1,239 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,610 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours.

Fifty-six corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 52 of whom were under treatment in the hospitals and four out of the hospitals had perished 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 56 deaths occurred in the last 24 hours 22 of them had died who were under treatment on ventilators. There were 2,661 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical care in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities in past 24 hours.

The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 3.4 percent. It may be mentioned here that the Covid positivity ratio was the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals.

The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Peshawar 20 percent, Lahore 24 percent, Bahawalpur 24 percent and Multan 45 percent. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major areas of Gilgit 30 percent, Abbottabad 30 percent, Karachi 26 percent and Multan 26 percent.

Around 329 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan (GB). Some 36,368 tests were conducted across the country on Friday, including

12,376 in Sindh, 9,246 in Punjab, 9,678 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 3,226 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 1,030 in Balochistan, 382 in GB, and 430 in AJK. Around 877,191 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 941,170 cases were detected that also included the perished, recovered and under treatment COVID-19 patients so far, including AJK 19,756, Balochistan 26,201, GB 5,707, ICT 82,099, KP 135,877, Punjab 343,926 and Sindh 327,604. About 21,689 deaths were recorded in country since the eruption of the contagion. Around 5,236 have perished in Sindh among 15 of them died in hospitals and one out of the hospitals on Saturday.

10,501 in Punjab had died with 22 deaths occurred in past 24 hours. 19 of them died in the hospitals and three out of the hospitals.

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