



Wednesday, June 23, 2021

**Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily**

Price Rs. 20

## Putin accuses US of organising "coup" in Ukraine in 2014

Detailed News On Page-07

## Envoy for new trade ventures with Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-07



## Younis Khan quits as batting coach for team

Detailed News On Page-06



### Briefs

#### FM Qureshi for Kashmir opinion poll

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has challenged India to hold an Opinion Poll of aspirations of Kashmiris around the world about its illegal and unilateral steps taken in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir on 5 August 2019. In a statement on Tuesday, he said if Kashmiris around the world reject these unilateral measures in this referendum, India will have to reconsider its decisions.

#### Dressing and rape has no connection

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto while reacting to the statement of PM Imran Khan said that dressing of women has no connection with rape. Talking to media in Parliament House, the PPP chairman said that Prime Minister Imran Khan's statement regarding women was regrettable. "We should support the oppressed not the oppressor by making excuses," he said. He said the prime minister should choose his words wisely. Such statements benefit the oppressor. His statement shows that the victims are being abused. "Dressing has nothing to do with rape. People including children and adults are being abused."

#### Reforms crucial for transparency

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib Tuesday said the introducing electoral reforms were essential to ensure more free, fair and transparency in the elections process. The next general elections would be held under Parliament Act to make them transparent, the minister said talking to a private news channel. He said the incumbent government intended to make legislation or introduce reforms in the Parliament to discourage rigging and horse-trading practices to streamline the electoral system to yield desirous results.

# Govt to give voting rights to expatriates

Chaudhary Fawad says it seems strange that both the PML-N and PPP are afraid of giving voting rights to overseas Pakistanis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain has said the government is determined to give voting rights to overseas Pakistanis and to take steps to hold next general elections through Electronic Voting Machines. He was briefing the media in Islamabad about the decisions taken at the Federal Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday. The Minister said EVM is the best way to ensure transparency in the election process and the machines Pakistan wants to adopt will have both paper and electronic trail of the ballot. He said the Election Commission of Pakistan should take practical steps in this regard. Chaudhary Fawad Hussain said overseas Pakistanis are a great asset for Pakistan as they contribute a lot to the national economy. He said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Government is determined to introduce I-voting for the overseas Pakistanis so that they can participate in electing the national leadership of the country.

Continued on Page 06

## Facilitating journalists govt top priority

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhary Fawad Hussain has said that Government is committed to provide facilities to the journalists. In a meeting with a delegation of Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists in Islamabad, the information minister said Sehat cards will be provided to the journalists on priority basis. The information minister said special packages will be introduced in Naya Pakistan Housing Scheme and Kamyab Jawwan Programme for journalists. Earlier in the day, Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry stressed the need for the government and opposition to discuss and reach a consensus on electoral reforms proposed by the former.

# US should return to JCPOA, says Raisi

The foreign policy of the new Iranian govt will neither begin with nor be limited to negotiations

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's President-elect Ebrahim Raisi has said the US should return to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and carry out all its commitments to the international nuclear deal. He made the remarks

Continued on Page 06

## Raisi win won't affect talks: US

WASHINGTON: Biden administration officials are insisting that the election of a hard-liner as Iran's president won't affect prospects for reviving the faltering 2015 nuclear deal with Tehran. But there are already signs that their goal of locking in a deal just got tougher. On Monday, Ebrahim Raisi rejected a key Biden goal of expanding on the nuclear deal if negotiators are able to salvage the old one. At the same time, Raisi is likely to raise Iran's demands for sanctions relief. — DNA



**BAKU:** Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Ali Alizada shakes hand with Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa, while the Azerbaijan Defence Attaché Col. Mehman (right) looks on. — DNA

# Pak ready to work with US for Afghan peace

PM Imran stressed upon a negotiated settlement of the conflict and inclusion of Afghan Taliban in any form of the government for its success

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan, in an opinion piece in the Washington Post, wrote that Pakistan is ready to be a US partner for peace in Afghanistan, but will not host US bases and avoid risking further conflict. The prime minister highlighted the risks of giving military bases to the US, which according to him, will bring more destruction to the country. Amid the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan, the US is looking for options to keep a close eye on the region and is talking to other countries for it. Pakistan, however, has told the US that it will not give its bases and reiterated

Islamabad's commitment to Afghan peace. "If Pakistan were to agree to host US bases, from which to bomb Afghanistan, and an Afghan civil war ensued, Pakistan would be targeted for revenge by terrorists again. We simply cannot afford this. We have already paid too heavy a price," he stated. He said that Pakistan and the US have the same interest in that long-suffering country: a political settlement, stability, economic development and the denial of any haven for terrorists. Making it clear that Pakistan has no favourites in Afghanistan, he stressed upon a negotiated settlement of the conflict and inclusion of the Afghan Taliban in any form of the government for its success.

Continued on Page 06



**ISLAMABAD:** Ambassador of Qatar, Saud bin Abdul Rahman Al-Thani called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House. — DNA

# Taliban takes control of key Afghan district

Dozens of districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when US and NATO troops began their final departure from Afghanistan

IP REPORT

KABUL: Taliban fighters have taken control of a key district in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province and encircled the provincial capital as the group added to its recent battlefield victories while peace talks have stalemated. The Taliban's gains came as the Pentagon reaffirmed the US troop withdrawal was still on pace to conclude by early September. Fighting around Imam Sahib district began late on Sunday and by midday Monday the Taliban had overrun the district headquarters and were in control of police

## US could slow down troop withdrawal

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: The US military has said it could slow down its withdrawal from Afghanistan in light of recent battlefield victories by the Taliban. Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said the deadline for a full withdrawal by 11 September was still in place, but the pace may change. Pentagon officials said last week that the withdrawal is about half-way done. Afghanistan has seen increasing violence as the US and Nato prepare to pull out their remaining troops. Over the last month, the Taliban have intensified their attacks and gained control of more than 30 districts. The hardline Islamist group has also seized large quantities of military equipment, according to local media, and killed, wounded or captured dozens of troops.

headquarters, said Inamuddin Rahmani, provincial police spokesman said. Taliban militants were within a kilometre (6 miles) of Kunduz, the provincial capital but had not entered into the city, he said, although there were reports of small bands of Taliban near the outskirts and residents trying to leave for Kabul. Dozens of districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when US and NATO troops began their final departure from Afghanistan. Like Imam Sahib district in northern Kunduz, their significance often lies in their proximity to roads and major cities.

Continued on Page 06

## Qatar to provide 1m vaccine doses

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Qatar will provide 1 million corona vaccine doses to Pakistan. It was assured by Ambassador of Qatar Abdul Rehman bin Faisal Al Thani during a meeting with Speaker of National Assembly Asad Qaiser. During the meeting, important issues of mutual interest, including bilateral relations, were discussed. The Ambassador said that Qatar values its friendly and fraternal relations with Pakistan and wants to further strengthen the bilateral relations with Pakistan. Pakistan has adopted a better strategy to control the virus. The Speaker of the National Assembly said that solidarity among the Muslim countries was necessary to address the challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah, adding that unity and solidarity among the Muslim Ummah was the need of the hour.

# Pakistan, Tajikistan vow to further deepen bilateral ties

Tajik Secretary of Security Council, said that bilateral ties between Pak, Tajikistan are flourishing

POST REPORT

DUSHANBE: Pakistan and Tajikistan have reiterated their resolve to further deepen and diversify bilateral ties for mutual benefit. An understanding to this effect came during the meeting of Pakistan's National Security Adviser Dr. Moeed Yusuf with Secretary of Security Council of



Continued on Page 06

## Pakistan slams censorship of PM's interview

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has decided to approach the management of United States TV HBO Axios for editing part of PM Imran Khan's interview in which he had talked about sexual

abuse, ARY News reported on Tuesday. According to details, HBO edited PM Imran's interview — especially a part of his interview in which he voiced his thoughts on the rising sexual violence in the country. The prime minister's statement about the situation in India caused by Hindutva was also censored by Axios on HBO. Prime Minister Office (PMO) released its own footage of PM Imran's full interview in which the prime minister gave a detailed narrative and solutions to tackle the rising sexual violence.

### Inside...

APNS slams govt intention to curtail media freedom  
— Page 02

ICCI calls for 10-year new industrial policy: Yasir  
— Page 03

PTI govt committed to empower women, says Kanwal Shozeb  
— Page 04

New Uzbekistan: On the verge of Third Renaissance  
— Page 05

Hamas-UN talks over Gaza's situation have 'failed'  
— Page 06

Belarusian envoy and FPCCI discuss new trade avenues  
— Page 07

Turkey set to end pandemic curfews from Thursday, Jul 01  
— Page 08

**JUNE 2021**

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

[www.centrelines.com.pk](http://www.centrelines.com.pk)[www.dnanews.com.pk](http://www.dnanews.com.pk)[www.islamabadpost.com.pk](http://www.islamabadpost.com.pk)

@PostIslamabad / @Editordnnews

A sister concern of

**Islamabad POST**

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza,  
G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN  
Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165





## Briefs

## KP food authority intensifies crackdown

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KP-FS&HFA) on Tuesday carried out various successful operation against food adulteration in various parts of the province. The food authority has sealed overall 4633 premises for charges on adulteration and violating standard hygienic condition across the province. The authority during a raid at counterfeit beverage factory in Shabqadar tehsil Charsadda seized 10,000 liters of unhealthy beverages. The food officials said they arrested four people and recovered fake 10000 liters beverages from the factory being manufactured on branded companies names. During the raid unhealthy hazardous chemicals used in the production of beverages were also seized. The food authority also seized more than 1000 kg fake packing material and empty bottles. In another raid, the food authority sealed a bakery and poor production unit on poor hygienic condition and using substandard food items in D. I Khan. Similarly, a restaurant was also sealed for not meeting health and cleanliness standard.

According to the authority, action was also taken against food adulteration in district in district Bannu and Dir Upper in which spices factory was sealed for producing banned China Salt.

## 450,955 people vaccinated

FAISALABAD: As many as 450,955 people have so far been vaccinated against the COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Tuesday that 342,740 citizens had been given the first dose while 69,675 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He said 24,751 health workers were also given the first dose while 13,789 received the second dose. He said that sufficient stock of anti-coronavirus vaccine was available in the district as 19,585 first doses and 13,057 second doses were in the stock in Faisalabad. He said 34 vaccination centers were operational where registered people were getting anti-coronavirus vaccine. – APP

## KP Govt working on public-private partnership

PESHAWAR: Peshawar, June 22 (APP) : Minister for Local Governments, Elections and Rural Development, Akbar Ayub Khan, on Tuesday said that unemployment issue in the province could only be addressed through bringing local and foreign investment in various sectors. Replying to various questions and criticism of the opposition MPA in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Akbar Ayub said that government was working on public-private partnership to attract investment for various development projects and building various industrial zones in the province. – APP

## DPO directs legal proceedings against POs

PESHAWAR: District Police Officer (DPO), Abbottabad, Zahoor Babar Afridi on Tuesday directed all SHO to start legal proceedings against proclaimed offenders (POs) across the district. He directed officers to confiscate the properties and block the national identity cards (NICs) of proclaimed offenders. Following the directive of the DPO, the district police has started practical steps for the confiscation of the properties of all those who are not participating in investigations into various cases and arrest of POs. In this connection, NICs of 61 proclaimed offenders have been blocked while proceeding for the confiscation of the movable and immovable properties of 21 POs has also been begun. – APP

Daily Islamabad POST given APNS membership  
APNS slams govt intention to curtail media freedom

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS) strongly lamented the perpetual efforts of the Federal Government to curtail the independence of the media, stated in a press release of the Society.

The Executive Committee of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society held its meeting on June 21, 2021 at Lahore chaired by Mr. Sarmad Ali, President, APNS. The Committee considered the recent decision of the Federal Government wherein a Coordination Committee has been formed under the PIO to take over the advertising of Punjab and KPK governments under its control.

The APNS rejected notification as the stipulated action is not only a gross contravention of 18th amendment and curbing the provincial autonomy but devastating attempt to curtail the quantum of advertisements for print media.

The formation of the Committee is aimed at to strangle the freedom of press and independence of media. It was apprehended that it would be used to silence the dissenting voices in the press through the use of advertisements of governments as well through the Central Federal Government Committee.

The Executive Committee urged upon the Federal Government to withdraw the notification immediately. The Executive Committee noted that earlier the Ministry of Information issued a Concept Paper for the establishment of Media Authority which was also an attempt to tighten the Federal Government control over the media from one platform despite the



LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab adviser on Information Firdous Ashiq Awan in a group photo with the Executive Committee of APNS.

fact that the electronic and print media are separate entities with their own defined features. The move was rejected by the APNS and other stakeholders as unconstitutional and a fetter on the freedom of press. The Concept Paper proposed a licensing system which is prior restraint on the freedom of press. The Concept Paper also envisages councils and media tribunals to replace Press Council of Pakistan, Wage Board for employees and the ITNE. The Executive Committee of the APNS unanimously rejected the proposal to establish the Pakistan Media Development Authority. The Executive Committee expressed its grave concern over the non-payment of dues of member publications against the ads released by the Punjab Government despite assurances by the provincial information department. The members observed that the APNS avoided legal recourse for recovery of dues as a

gesture of cooperation but the provincial government failed to reciprocate positively. The Executive Committee therefore, authorized the President and the Secretary General to file a suit for recovery against the Punjab Government if the dues are not cleared by June 30, 2021. The Executive Committee noted that the Balochistan based newspapers were consistently deprived of their due share in the Federal Government advertising. The members, in a resolution, urged upon the Ministry of Information to increase the quantum of ads for Balochistan based newspapers. The Executive Committee adopted a special resolution to condole the sad demise of veteran publisher and editor Mr. Zia Shahid and acknowledged his services for the promotion of the profession. The members also offered Fateha on the demise of the mother of Mr. Najamuddin Sheikh, Chief Editor, Daily Dey-

anat and Mr. Ghalib Mansoor, Deputy Managing Director, M/s. Adarts Karachi (Pvt.) Ltd. The Executive Committee adopted the report of the Advertising Committee on the applications of advertising agencies. The Executive Committee granted provisional accreditation to M/s. Sound and Vision (Pvt.) Ltd., Lahore and M/s. Exuberance Advertising (SMC) Pvt. Ltd., Karachi. The application for confirmation of accreditation of M/s. Adage Communications (Pvt.) Ltd., Islamabad was granted subject to provision of additional guarantee. The Executive Committee also granted associate membership to Daily Tehalka, Gujranwala, Daily Jurat, Muzaffarabad, Daily Islamabad Post, Islamabad, Daily Wahdat, Rawalpindi, Daily Karname, Vehari and Daily Sahafat, Muzaffarabad. Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister, Punjab joined the meeting of the Executive Committee and

elaborated the media policies of the Government of the Punjab. She stated that the DGPR is very much active to expedite the payment of dues of print media and has already paid Rs.18 crores to advertising agencies whereas a substantial amount will be paid by June 30, 2021. The remaining amount is also realized from clients departments.

## The following attended the meeting:

Sarmad Ali, President, Jamil Athar, Sr. Vice President, Shahab Zuberi, Vice President, Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani, Secretary General, Mohsin Bilal, Joint Secretary, Muhammad Awais Khushnood, Finance Secretary, Syed Sajjad Bokhari (Daily Abtak), Mumtaz A. Tahir (Daily Aftab), Waseem Ahmed (Daily Awam, Quetta), Hamayun Tariq (D/Business Report), Naveed Chaudhry (Daily City 42), Muhammad Waqaruddin (Daily Dunya), Syed Akbar Tahir (D/Jasarat), Faisal Shah-

jehan (Daily Jiddat, Karachi), Javed Mehr Shamsi (Daily Kaleem), Imtina Shahid (Daily Khabrain), Syed Ayaz Badshah (Daily Mashriq, Peshawar), Syed Mumtaz Ahmed Shah (Daily Mashriq, Quetta), Ms. Zahida Abbasi (Daily Nau Sijj), Dr. Farooq Rasheed (Monthly Naya Ruikh), S.M. Munir Jilani (Daily Paigham), Mujeeb-ur-Rehman Shami (D/Pakistan, Lahore), Faisal Zahid Malik (D/Pakistan Observer), Humayun Gulzar (Daily Sayadat) and Syed Haroon Shah (Daily Wahdat).

## The following attended the meeting on Zoom:

Ansar Mahmood Bhatti (Monthly Centre Line), Fauzia Shaheen (Monthly Dastak), Kazi Asad Abid (Fortnightly Ibrat), Aslam Leghari (Daily Kawish), Dr. Waqar Yousuf Azeemi (M/Roohani Digest), Khushnood Ali Khan (Daily Sahafat) and Malaika Ayaz (Daily Mashriq, Peshawar) attended as special observers.



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali chairs a meeting of the District Polio Eradication Committee. – DNA

## Meeting held to review recent anti-polio campaign

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The review meeting on implementation of targets at the end of the recent round of anti-polio campaign in the district was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali at DC Office. ADCG Khurram Pervaiz; CEO DHA Dr. Mushtaq Sipra; DHO Dr. Bilal Ahmad and other officers were also present. During the meeting DHO said that the campaign was closely monitored which resulted in encouraging while full cooperation was extended by the concerned departments. The Deputy Commissioner expressed satisfaction over the results of the recently concluded campaign and said that anti-polio each round is of great importance for the 100 per cent success of which the efforts of the Health Department should not be underestimated.

## DC visits Sahulat Bazaar

On the instructions of the Punjab govt, 19 Sahulat bazaars have been set up in the district to provide basic necessities to the consumers at government rates where stalls of flour, pulses, fruits and vegetables have been set up. DC Muhammad Ali inspected the Sahulat Bazar Faizan e Madina Susan road and checked the quality and prices of the items available for sale.

## Young businessmen are the backbone of economy: Bakhtawari

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: United Business Group (UBG) Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari has said that all UBG members and working committee members have intensified contacts with representatives of the business community across the country. The business community is facing water, electricity and gas problem, and the leadership of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) should work together to solve the problems through consultation with other industrial zones of the country. The country's young businessmen are the backbone



of Pakistan's economy and UBG leaders SM Muneer and Ifthikhar Ali Malik are leading the youth and guiding them for success. He expressed these views while addressing a luncheon hosted by President KATI Saleem-uz-Zaman and Patron-in-Chief SM Muneer in honor of Chief Coordinator

UBG Malik Sohail Hussain and former Vice President FPCCI Chaudhry Zahid Iqbal. Masood Naqi, Ikhtiar Baig, Zaki Sharif, Night Awan also spoke on the occasion while well known businessmen Rashid Ahmad Siddiqui, Farrukh Mazhar, Danish Khan, SM Yahya, Faraz-ur-Rehman, Ikram Ra-

jput, Junaid Naqi, Maheen Salman, Islam Baghpati, Ehteshamuddin and others were also present. On this occasion, SM Muneer said that if the members of KATI bring any problem in our association, we do our best to solve the problem without wasting any time.

## SCCI calls to implement conventions to boost exports

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: President, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI), Sherbaz Bilour has assured full cooperation to ensure implementation of all relevant EU conventions in order to reap benefits of generalised scheme of preferences, (GSP+) status in an efficient manner, granting Pakistani products a duty free access to the European market. Sherbaz Bilour expressed these views during visit of Mrs Androulla Kaminara, Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan to Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here Tuesday. SCCI president said that the GSP plus status which was granted by EU to ensure

duty free entry for Pakistani products to EU market, had been extended by European Commission till 2022.

He said the EU market was one of the priority exports' destination for Pakistan. However, he urged the government of Pakistan to ensure implementation of all conventions to further enhance Pakistan's exports to the EU market.

Speaking on the occasion, Mrs. Androulla Kaminara informed that after the granting of GSP plus status, the export of Pakistani products to the EU market has increased by 65 per cent, mostly in the textile sector. She said there was a huge potential to export of Pakistani fresh fruits and food items to the EU market. While giving reference of recent EU review report 2020, she

informed that Pakistan had signed almost 27 conventions out of which improvement was seen on some of them including transgender, human rights and journalists' protection bill.

However, she said the government spent two years making legislation for the protection of the journalists' community. She, however, emphasized

that there was a need to expedite reforms and steps regarding legislation on disappearance, torture, abuse, blasphemy and inspection on factories in order to meet with all EU obligations.

Ms Kaminara made it clear that after every two years, reviewed on progress on reforms and implementation on conventions, if the country was not fully

abiding with obligations in the light of the report, the special trade incentive like GSP status would be withdrawn immediately.

In the 2020 review report, she went on, Pakistan had gained significant improvement in certain areas but a lot of work needs to be done in other sectors as well. She hoped that Pakistan would accelerate reforms and legislation process by fully adhering with the EU commitments.

The EU envoy informed that the EU and Pakistan Business council would be formed to further cement bilateral trade and economic ties. She invited the KP business community to become an associate of this council. She noted that there is huge potential available in information technol-

ogy, especially in KP gems and jewelry, mining, tourism and handicraft sector, which need to be tapped in an efficient manner.

Talking about relief and rehabilitation activities, Ms Kaminara said the EU had visible intervention in refugees' relief, rehabilitation and development, saying that the steps were being taken for provision of facilitation and relief for Afghan refugees, which has been hosted by Pakistan for the last several decades.

Former FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, ex-president Zahidullah Shinwari and others mentioned huge potential to make investment in KP natural resources, including gems and jewelry, marble, hydel power generation, honey, olive and mining sectors.

## Food deptt surpasses wheat target

FAISALABAD: The regional food department has surpassed wheat procurement target in four districts of the division. Deputy Director Ahmed Raza Sipra said on Tuesday that the food department had fixed 53,2810 metric tons wheat target for the division but the department had procured 538,129.250 metric tons wheat which was 102.87 per cent.

He said that the food department had procured wheat from 18,015 farmers in the division at government rates, adding that in district Faisalabad 110,000 metric tons wheat was procured from 3,426 farmers against the target of 84,411.800 metric tons. – APP

## PESCO notifies power suspension

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) on Tuesday notified that due to maintenance work power supply would remain suspended from 220 KV Shahi Bagh Grid Station on 23rd, 26th and 30th June from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. Resultantly, consumers of 11 KV Old Naguman, New Naguman, Takht Abad, Haryana feeders would face inconvenience.

It said power supply would also remain suspended from 132 KV Dalazak Grid Station on 24th, 28th and 30th June from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. resultantly, consumers of 11 KV OPF, Pakha Gulam, Wadpaga 1,2, Gull Abad, Lucky Star, Jinnah College feeders would face inconvenience. The power supply would remain suspended from 132 KV Rehman Baba Grid Station on 24th and 28th June from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. resultantly, consumers of 11 KV Hazar Khani feeders would face inconvenience. – APP

## Spinning mill gutted

FAISALABAD: Precious material of a local spinning mill was reduced to ashes in the area of Khurarianwala police station. A spokesman said on Tuesday that a fire erupted in HA Spinning Mill, situated at Sheikhupura Road near Drammanwala Mor due to unknown reasons. The fire engulfed the entire surroundings and burnt precious material including cotton bales. The Rescue-1122 fire fighters rushed to the spot and brought the fire under control. No loss of life was reported in the incident. – APP





Briefs

CDA kicks off drive for planting 6 mln saplings

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Tuesday formally kicked off its massive floral plantation drive as its Environment Wing had prepared as many as six million saplings for the purpose.

According to a senior official of the CDA's Environment Wing, a comprehensive strategy was put in place for executing the initiative aimed at enhancing beauty of the Capital, in addition to its green cover.

He said multiple teams were in field to carry out flowering work along major avenues, roads, squares, streets, parks and intersections to bloom Islamabad with beautiful flowers.

The process of planting summer flowers on major highways across the city was underway, he said adding seasonal flowers would be planted in parks of the city.

Similarly, beds of various designs were prepared on Constitution Avenue, 7th Avenue, Zoo Chowk, Margalla Road and other major roads, he noted.

To a query, he said the initiative was taken in line with the directions of the CDA management which tasked the Environment Wing to plant six millions flower saplings in shortest possible time.

The official said the volunteers and students of universities, schools and colleges would be engaged in the plantation drive of upcoming rainy season.

AIOU to hold in person examinations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Final examinations of BS, MSc, MS, M.Phil and Ph.D. (Face to Face) programs offered by the Faculty of Science, Allama Iqbal Open University will commence from July 1.

According to the Examination Department of AIOU, the date sheet and roll number slips are available on AIOU's official website ([www.aiou.edu.pk](http://www.aiou.edu.pk)).

Roll Number Slips have also been dispatched to the students. Examination department is conducting these exams with the collaboration of concerned departments to ensure transparency.

The duties of the examiners will be performed by the faculty members and to declare the results timely, it has also been decided that the papers of face-to-face programs will also be checked by AIOU faculty members.

On the special instructions of VC, AIOU, Prof Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, invigilation staff has been directed to ensure the implementation of precautionary measures issued for Covid-19. Wearing masks in the examination hall is mandatory for both the students and examination staff.

Two fireworks dealers arrested

RAWALPINDI: The Police have arrested two fireworks dealers during a crackdown launched and recovered huge quantity of fireworks items from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, in line with special directive of City Police Officer (CPO) Muhammad Ahsan Younas, Gunjmandi Police team led by Station House Officer (SHO) launched a crackdown against firework dealers and managed to arrest Ifitikhar and Sajawal, two fireworks dealers and recovered an ample quantity of fireworks from them. Separate cases have been registered against the fireworks dealers, police confirmed.

Superintendent Police (SP) Rawal said no one would be allowed to violate the law and violators would be treated with iron hands. — APP

# ICCI calls for 10-year new industrial policy: Yasir

ICCI President stressed that the fresh industrial policy should be framed with a futuristic mind set to build stronger linkages between services and manufacturing sectors with the ultimate aim of transforming Pak into a knowledge-based economy

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government should focus on formulating a 10-year new industrial policy in consultation with all stakeholders in order to boost industrialization, create plenty of new jobs, increase exports of value added products, promote import substitution and improve tax revenue of the country. This was urged by Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) while delivering a lecture at Bahria University, Islamabad on the topic of an "Analysis of Pakistani Industry". He presented a comprehensive analysis of Pakistani industry to the students and informed them that Pakistan had inherited only 34 industries at the time of its independence, but now it has developed a fairly broad industrial base that accounted for 13-14 percent of the country's GDP.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan stressed that the fresh industrial policy should be framed with a futuristic mind set to build stronger linkages between services and manufacturing sectors with the ultimate aim



of transforming Pakistan into a knowledge-based economy. He said that the new industrial policy should incentivize the industrial sector to shift from producing low-value to more value-added products such as machinery and auto parts, which were in greater demand in the global mar-

ket. He said that the share of engineering goods in global exports was around 50 percent, but the share of Pakistan's engineering goods in global exports was quite negligible due to which our exports were struggling around USD 22 billion during the first eleven months of this fiscal year.

He emphasized that the new industry policy should be finalized in a way that it should be instrumental in increasing the share of engineering goods up to at least 25 percent in our total exports during the next 3 years. ICCI President said that the world was moving towards embracing more and more applications of artificial intelligence and the new industrial policy should focus on educating our existing and future industrial workforce in AI and increasing exports of IT products and services.

He said that many countries including China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia have emerged as leading exporters in Asia by focusing on industrialization and Pakistan should learn from their experience to promote its industrial sector.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that an export-driven and growth-oriented fresh industrial policy was the need of the hour to make Pakistan a hub of industrial activities and put the country on the path of sustainable economic growth that would ultimately lead Pakistan to emerge as a strong economy of the region.



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi visiting National Institute of Health. — DNA

Social media urged to halt blasphemous contents sharing

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Director General Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on Tuesday informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) that it had written to interior ministry to raise the matter at international forums to permanently stop the practice of uploading blasphemous contents on social media.

The DG PTA adopted the stance that social media platforms like Facebook, Youtube and twitter were not cooperating with the department in this regard. The practice of uploading of blasphemous contents couldn't be stopped until the offices of these platforms were opened in Pakistan.

The DG said that PTA had framed social media rules but these were challenged before IHC and the Prime Minister had formed a committee to review it. To this, Justice Farooq remarked that the rules were challenged but not suspended.

The court sought detailed report from Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and PTA regarding a comprehensive strategy to stop blasphemous contents on social media. The court said that the accused involved in this practice should be tried under the law.

Additional Director General FIA informed the court that his department had received 20 complaints against the uploading of sacrilegious material. The Cyber Crime Circle of FIA was conducting inquiries against the applications, he said.



## Malaysia gives export status to 'Fauji Meat Limited': Razak

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Commerce and investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Tuesday appreciated the 'Fauji Meat Limited,' the largest meat plant in Pakistan, on its approval by the government of Malaysia for exports. This showed that international acceptability and demand of Pakistani meat was gradually increasing, the adviser said this on his official twitter account. "I commend the efforts made by Ministry of Trade and

Investment Counsellor at Kuala Lumpur in this regard and urge him to provide maximum facilitation to our meat exporters to obtain similar approvals" he said. He has shared the curtain-raiser event of Pakistan Pavilion 'Expo 2020 Debai' held in Karachi. The event was attended by the Chief Investment Counsellor at Kuala Lumpur, Fawad Hussain Chaudhary, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Trade and Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), Arif Ahmad Khan, distinguished guest from the business community and media. The Adviser said the Pakistan Pavilion would attract investors and tourists to Pa-

PMC to take action on poor quality of education

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) has decided to take strict action on poor quality of education in medical and dental colleges to ensure standards in-line with global best practices. According to an official of PMC, the commission will work with existing medical and dental colleges across the country to proactively improve standards and deliver the quality of education. He said the PMC will continue its efforts to improve the educational standards of medical and dental programmes with the objective of educating and licensing competent and properly qualified doctors and dentists. — APP

## RDA's Rs 2,379m budget vetted

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Finance Sub-Committee comprised of Finance, P&D and HUD & PHE Departments met here on Tuesday under the chairmanship of DG RDA to scrutinize/vet the annual budget of the authority for fiscal year 2021-22. The meeting was informed that the outlay of the authority's budget for the fiscal year 2021-22 was Rs

2,379 million. The major portion of the budget amounting to Rs 1,984 million has been allocated for the ongoing and new development schemes. The ongoing development schemes including Construction/Widening and Improvement of Dry Port Road from Rahimabad Flyover at Airport Road to Welfare Complex via Chaklala Railway Station, Shell Depot, would be completed at an estimated cost of Rs 50 million while construction of three pe-

destrian bridges at Airport Road would cost Rs 69 million. Funds has been allocated for land acquisition for construction of Lai Expressway and flood channel projects under new development schemes of ADP 2021-22 and Rs 300 million allocated for remodeling project of Kutchery Chowk. Similarly, Rs 300 million allocated for Defense Chowk remodeling project and Rs 20 million for establishment of PMU for construction of Lai Expressway Project.

## RCCI VITF Chapter Asia-Pacific, Asia Oceania

Vice President Shahrazi A Malik said that exploring new markets are of great importance with respect to Pakistan Economic Development and the help of trade and commercial counselors in these countries we can tap new markets

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has organized the Virtual International Trade Forum (chapter Asia-Pacific and Oceania). Addressing the opening session of the Forum, Chamber President Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that the purpose of the trade forum was to explore trade and export business community in Asia-Pacific countries. Pakistan is the second largest economy in South Asia after India. With a growing middle class, and an affinity for the Asia Pacific and Oceania region, products and brands, there are good opportunities to increase our exports of



goods and services in this competitive region. He said that the Chamber was trying to strengthen these contacts through virtual platforms where contacts with other countries have been affected due to the COVID-19. Vice President Shahrazi A Malik said that exploring new markets

are of great importance with respect to Pakistan Economic Development and with the help of trade and commercial counselors in these countries we can tap new markets. Zeeshan Khanzada, Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Commerce also joined the session and lauded RCCI efforts for organ-

izing the trade forum and added that the Government is focusing on exploring new markets. Fahad Raza, Deputy Secretary, from Ministry of Commerce, Muhammad Ashraf, Consul General, Trade & Investment in Sydney, Australia, Ms. Fouzia Chaudhry, Trade and Investment Minister in Jakarta, Indonesia, Tahir Habib

Cheema, Trade and Investment Counsellor in Tokyo Japan, Muhammad Farukh Sharif, Trade and Investment Counsellor in Bangkok Thailand, Shafqat Ali Khan Niazi, Trade & Investment Counsellor in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, Ali Qayyum Raja, Trade and Investment Attaché in Hanoi, Vietnam, Imran Razzak, Trade and Investment Counsellor in South Korea attended the forum as guest speakers and shared their views regarding, bilateral trade, investment, challenges and opportunities in Asia Pacific and Oceania Region. Chairman VITF, Khurshid Berlas in his address informed that this the eighth edition of trade forum series aiming to provide a platform for improved networking and enhancing trade activities.

Admin retrieves land from encroachers

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi district administration has retrieved nearly 14-marla land near Jhanda Chichi from encroachment mafia. The anti-encroachment operation was conducted with the help of a heavy police force. The district administration also demolished concrete structures constructed at the encroached land. According to a district administration spokesman, a report was compiled by the revenue officers about the encroached state land near Jhanda Chichi for which the operation was launched. A case has also been lodged against the encroachers.

IRSA releases 274,900 cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Tuesday released 274,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 226,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1452.35 feet, which was 68.35 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 97,000 and 155,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1153.95 feet, which was 115.95 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 49,600 and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 187,800, 155,600 and 44,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 41,800 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 7,300 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

Fisheries Dept launches training program

RAWALPINDI: On the directives of Director General, Fisheries Department, Punjab Dr. Sikandar Hayat, a training programme has been launched here in educational institutions to highlight the importance of fisheries and the medical benefits of white meat. In this connection, Assistant Director Training Fisheries Miss Arooj apprised the students of the local educational institution here about the nutritional value of fish as a human food. She said that with increasing age, children need a diet rich in calcium and protein for which fish meat is an excellent food. Miss Sana urged the children to make fish a part of their diet to stay healthy and energetic as use of such food would increase immunity against diseases in the youth and make them strong and powerful. On the occasion, she also distributed gifts among the children. Asif Mahmood Janjua, Director Adman & Finance, RDA, Muhammad Junaid Taj Bhatti, Deputy Director Finance, RDA and the representative officers of Finance Department, HUD & PHE and P&D Departments attended the meeting. — APP

NA panel directs FBR to address business issues

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue Tuesday directed the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to address the anomalies of the general sales tax (GST) and regulatory duties (RD) being faced by the business community. The meeting, presided over by Faiz Ullah, discussed the anomalies being faced by the business community /exporters/ importers due to imposition of imbalance Sales Tax on raw materials, Tariff and Regulatory Duties, which caused grave concerns among the stakeholders. — APP



## Briefs

**Result of  
FPCCI must  
be announced  
by DGTO**

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Traders Action Committee Islamabad and former Senior Vice President ICCI Khalid Chaudhry has said that the elections of Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry FPCCI were held on December 30, 2021 in which Khalid Tawab won according to the count but next In the morning general body meeting, the votes were won by casting two votes of Lorlai Chamber. In this way, the mandate of the traders was stolen. In the same meeting, the votes were counted equal to the Federal Area and the decision had to be taken by toss. In the chaos, the toss could not take place. And Nasir Qureshi from the Federal Area was declared elected Vice President. Similarly, the complaint of the President's election was also heard. The lawyers of both the parties were about to give their arguments and the verdict was about to be announced. Thus, the decision was suspended but the Sindh High Court has removed the stay. Traders across Pakistan are deeply concerned about this. He appealed to Commerce Adviser Abdul Razzaq Dawood to remove the frustration in the business community and issue orders to deliver a reserved verdict. — APP

**ED notifies  
transfer of  
officers**

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division on Tuesday issued the notification directing transfers and postings of various high ranking officers. According to the notification, Syed Muhammad Ali, a BS-19 officer of the Interior Division, is transferred and posted as Deputy Secretary, Narcotics Control Division, for a period of three years, on deputation basis, on standard terms and conditions, with immediate effect and until further orders. Likewise, Tugser Ali Akbar (OMG/BS-18), Officer on Special Duty (OSD), Establishment Division, is transferred and posted as Section Officer, Economic Affairs Division, with immediate effect and until further orders.

**Looters  
gang busted;  
valuables  
recovered**

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Industrial Area police on Tuesday claimed to have arrested a notorious gang (Bila Gang) of looters and recovered cash Rs 7.6 million, jewellery, mobile phones, bike and weapons. According to police spokesman, a citizen lodged a complaint with Industrial-Area police station that he came to a snooker club situated at Stadium road Rawalpindi to receive cash from his partner. After collecting the cash, he was going back to DHA when he stopped on 9th avenue signal suddenly four unidentified armed men surrounded his van and snatched the cash. SSP (Operations) Dr Syed Mustafa Tanweer took notice of the incident and assigned task to SP Industrial-Area Fida Hussain Satti for the arrest of culprits. Following these directions, SP Industrial-Area constituted a police team under supervision of ASP Abdul Aleem headed by SHO Industrial Area Adeel Shoukat along with Muhammad Rasheed ASI and others. The team with the help of CCTV cameras and modern technology traced and arrested one main accused namely bilal alias Billa leader of the gang. The accused confessed about his co-accused. Police have successfully arrested the rest of accused later identified as Mir Vais son of Ziar Gul, Asif Khan of Matawal Khan, Sadam of Nasir Khan and Gul Sher of Sher Afzal. The accused have confessed three more incidents of dacoity. — APP

# PTI govt committed to empower women, says Kanwal Shozeb

Parliamentary Secretary firmly rejected the accusations raised by the purported critics accusing the Prime Minister for tainting the image of the victims bearing sexual violence

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Economic Affairs, Kanwal Shozeb on Tuesday said that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government is committed to empower women. Addressing a press conference along with Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir and Parliamentary Secretary Malaika Bukhari, she said the opposition members are misinterpreting the Prime Minister Imran Khan's interview to a international News channel. She said, PM differentiated the Western and Eastern cultures in the interview but the opponents are presenting out of context video clips of his interview. "We have posted the complete interview of the PM from which we can find that how comprehensively he has differentiated the Pakistani culture with the Western culture" she said. She said Imran Khan is the first prime minister in Islamic world who raised his voices against Islamophobia in the Western world. Minister of State for Climate Change Zartaj Gul Wazir said the liberally corrupt goons should not dare to be the leader and representative of our women. The Minister of State in a joint presser, flanked by Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Barister Maleeka Ali Bukhari and Par-



liamentary Secretary for Planning, Development and Reforms Kanwal Shauzab here rendered a clarification to the Opposition parties and so-called social media outcry against Prime Minister Imran Khan's interview to the foreign media journalist. Zartaj said there had been repeated efforts made by the liberal brigade to distort Prime Minister Imran Khan's strong efforts made to project a positive and progressing image of the country. The Minister of State firmly rejected the accusations raised by the purported critics accusing the Prime Minister for tainting the image of the victims bearing sexual violence.

"Prime Minister Imran Khan is the genuine symbol of women empowerment as for the first time five women parliamentarians have been made cabinet members along with them 12 parliamentary secretaries are women including Maleeka Bukhari, Kanwal Shauzab and Aliya Hamza Malik who represent their ministries in the Parliament," she said. Zartaj underlined that the women like her were proud to be a Pakistani women observing Islam as its faith, with one of the finest and unique cultural and traditional norms. "My religion and culture give me respect and we are believers of women rights

that are enshrined in the teaching of Islam. Islam gives me freedom and liberty and I am proud to have it," she added. The aim, she said of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government's governance that any legislation and its implementation without women empowerment was futile and should be ensured in true letter and spirit. Zartaj noted that our culture had numerous precedents of respecting women where men respectfully leave spaces vacant in long queues and crowded places. "Prime Minister Imran Khan is seriously concerned about women and girls and wanted to ensure all possible facili-

ties and protection from facing sexual violence," she said. PTI was the only party after the Pakistan Movement that mobilized women across the country where there was the only precedent of the towering figure of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah accompanied by the Father of the Nation Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. "I am a clear example in this regard where from a feudal tribal society I was elected as a parliamentarian and became the Cabinet member which has been possible only due to strong political support and backing of Prime Minister Imran Khan," she remarked.

**SC summons  
PPP worker  
for foul  
utterance**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued notice to Masood ur Rehman General Secretary of PPP in PS-114 over objectionable and inappropriate utterances against Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed. A four-member larger bench of the apex court headed by Justice Umar Ata Bandial heard the contempt of court case. During the course of proceedings, the bench observed that Masood ur Rehman Abbasi used sarcastic and rude remarks against the Chief Justice. Justice Bandial asked the Additional Attorney General whether he had heard Masood ur Rehman Abbasi's speech that went viral on social media? The Additional Attorney General said that he had heard about the video but he could not watch it. Justice Bandial said that apparently, Abbasi had committed contempt of court. Such remarks about the Chief Justice were a violation of Pakistan's constitution and law, he added. Justice Bandial asked the Sindh government to ensure compliance with the notice of reasons. He said that Masood ur Rehman used highly derogatory words against the chief justice Justice Ijaz, a member of the bench, said that the speech was made in a very angry tone against the chief justice. The Additional Attorney General said that hate speech fell under the jurisdiction of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), therefore a notice should also be issued to the agency.

**IESCO  
issues power  
suspension  
programme**

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM including Burhan, Shafa Chauhan, Fateh Jang Rural, Khanda, Laniwala, Shakral, KRL, Fazia, Jinnah Camp, Falcon, CDA, FHS, I-8/4, Shakrial, Noor Mohammad, Kurry Road, Khurram Colony, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Muslim Town, Dharnal, Kot Shera, Kot Gola, Katas, Dilwal Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM I-14/3, Burma, Wahidabad, Feeders From 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM Mandi Bhalwal, Smoot feeders From 06:00 AM to 10:00 AM, Dhudial City-2, Seikh, Khttar Express, Onah Town Feeders and surrounding areas.

**603,047  
doses  
administered  
in Rawalpindi**

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: As many as 603,047 people including 29,978 health workers and 573,069 senior citizens have jabbed themselves so far against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) from 23 centres operating across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10. According to data shared by the district administration here Tuesday, 10 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 26,748 in the district. As per the latest data, 2 cases were reported from Rawal Town, 2 from Potohar town, 3 from Rawalpindi Cantt, and one each from Islamabad, Taxila, Gujjar Khan, and Murree. "Presently 34 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 9 in Holy Family Hospital, 4 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 11 in Institute of Urology and 10 in Fauji Foundation Hospital," the health authority report said. District Health Authority updated that so far 25,580 patients were discharged after recovery while 374 were quarantined including 231 at home and 143 in isolation.

**Agriculture  
development govt  
top priority**

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Food Security, Jamshed Iqbal Cheema on Tuesday said that the agriculture sector development was among the top priorities of the government and PM's Agriculture Transformation Plan was a revolutionary initiative to shift conventional agriculture to the next level, commercial agriculture. He stated this while addressing a seminar on Prime Minister's Agriculture Transformation Plan: Targets & the Way Forward, held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR), here. On the occasion, Prof. Dr. Qamar-uz-Zaman Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI, Dr. Muhammad Ashraf, Chairman PCRWR, PMAS-AAUR Deans/Directors and faculty members were also present. Jamshed Iqbal Cheema further said that the government policy of agricultural transformation is not only for the food security of the country but also addresses the physical nutritional needs of every citizen of Pakistan. He said there was a dire need to improve the nourishment of humans and animals in the country because each person across the world consumed 210 kg of fruits and vegetables almost every year while in Pakistan per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables was 63 kg. — APP

## Contribution of PAEC agri-scientists acknowledged

In recognition of major achievements in plant mutation breeding and related biotechnologies, NIAB Faisalabad has been selected for Outstanding Achievement Award

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has selected Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) scientists to confer three awards for achievements in the field of agriculture research. In recognition of major achievements in plant mutation breeding and related biotechnologies, PAEC's Agriculture research centre, Nuclear Institute for Ag-

riculture and Biotechnology (NIAB) Faisalabad has been selected for Outstanding Achievement Award. Similarly, for the achievements in the same fields, Muhammad Kashif Riaz Khan from PAEC has been selected for the Young Scientist Award, said a news release issued here. The final award, Outstanding Achievement Award goes to joint winners, Manzoor Hussain, Kashif Riaz Khan, Sajjad Haider, Hafiz Mumtaz Hussain and Allah

Ditta of NIAB Faisalabad. These awards will be presented in the form of certificates jointly signed by Director General IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi and Director General Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Mr. Qu Dongyu. These awards to PAEC are testament to the technical acumen, dedication and the quality research work being carried out by PAEC scientists. These awards will be officially announced during the upcoming annual

regular session of the IAEA General Conference to be held from 20-24th September 2021 at the IAEA HQs at Vienna, Austria. Chairman PAEC, Muhammad Naeem has congratulated the scientists for their commendable achievements in agriculture research and expressed hope that this spirit of achieving excellence shall persevere and that their hard work would continue to be recognized both at home and abroad.

## State Life Pakistan launched “Sehat Sahulat Beneficiary App”

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLICP) launched the “Sehat Sahulat Mobile Application” for digital access, information and facilitation of families covered by Federal and Provincial health insurance programs. SAPM Mr Abdul Razak Dawood inaugurates the initiatives at State Life Tower Islamabad. On this occasion, Chairman State Life has explained that the State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan has become the largest mi-

cro-health insurance organization in Pakistan, covering more than 100 million individuals in Pakistan. State Life has a pivotal role in implementing the flagship social health programs launched by the Federal Government, Governments of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. State Life offers health care services in more than 90 districts of Pakistan with its extensive network of more than five hundred hospitals. The social health programs are milestone towards social welfare reforms with an objective to improve access

to good quality medical services in a swift and dignified manner without any financial obligations. It is the first-ever initiative aimed to provide the free of cost indoor healthcare services in both private and public sector hospitals. State Life is keen to serve its valued clients with the vision to expand social health protection to each and every Pakistani family. State Life has launched the “Sehat Sahulat Mobile App” to assist the families covered under the flagship health insurance programs of the Government of Pakistan

and provincial governments. Sehat Sahulat mobile app provides the details of the health care plan, coverage and network of panel hospital. The App automatically detects whether the family is covered under the Federal, KP or Punjab health care program. Furthermore, the users of this App can find the coverage, limits of their health card and detailed features of their health care plan. In addition, the user can download awareness material and access animated videos reflecting the key benefits of the program.

## State of the art “Pak Anti-Corruption Academy” established

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Justice (R) Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review performance of Training and Research Division of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting, it was informed by DG Training and Research that on the directions of Honorable Justice Mr. Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB, NAB has established its own state of the art “Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA)” at NAB Headquarters as NAB always accords

high priority for capacity building of its Investigation Officers and Prosecutors on regular basis on modern lines as training is continuous process which is an effective tool for improvement and maintaining the quality of Investigation Officers and Prosecutors. Justice Javed Iqbal said that NAB is an apex anti-corruption organization of the country which has assigned a gigantic task of eradication of corruption from the country. He said that this requires an extremely dedicated and highly trained manpower to undertake this responsibility.

## Sania gets feedback on Ehsas Scholarships

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar Tuesday visited Quaid-e-Azam University (QAU) to hold a policy consultation on Ehsas Undergraduate Scholarships with the brilliant and deserving students. Dr. Sania sat with Ehsas Undergraduate Scholarship awards of 2020-21 in the grounds of the university. "I am delighted that for Fiscal Year 2020/21, a total of 90,000 scholarships worth Rs. 8.4 Billion are being awarded to deserving yet talented students including 51% scholarships for girls. The need cum merit based Ehsas scholarship covers 100% tuition fee and a monthly living stipend", said Dr. Sania. At the university, Dr. Sania was warmly received by the Vice Chancellor of the university, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali and other faculty members. More than 50 boys and girls participated in the policy dialogue, which enabled exchange of ideas on how young boys and girls from lagging areas can benefit from the Ehsas' merit and need based scholarship. Lauding the scale of the Ehsas scholarships, the students shared



that they were able to pursue their higher education only because of the support they received through Ehsas undergraduate scholarship programme. Otherwise, their families would have

to sell jewelry and livestock as they were unable to pay for their university fees and expenses. Girl recipients under Ehsas undergraduate scholarships appreciated that half of the scholarships are reserved for girls.

Students also shared their academic ambitions and problems that they had faced to pursue higher education. Students who came to the table with Dr. Sania were from diverse regional and

social backgrounds including Bahawalpur, Hyderabad, Khairpur, Zhob, Turbat, Gilgit, Ghizer, Chitral and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. They were studying in different undergraduate disciplines-Bioinformatics, Economics, Social Sciences, Archaeology, Botany and Pakistan Studies etc. Encouraging students to benefit from Ehsas undergraduate scholarship programme, Dr. Sania stated, "Ehsas Undergraduate Scholarship Policy has been designed to ensure that no student is deprived of higher education because he or she is unable to meet the financial requirements. Every student who is admitted to a 4-5-year undergraduate degree programme at any of 119 Public Sector University with a family income below the threshold of Rs. 45,000/month is eligible to apply, and scholarships are given out based on merit." Describing the process followed for the award of Ehsas scholarships, Dr. Ali said, "As many as 451 Ehsas scholarships have been granted to deserving students in the two years. These scholarships are being awarded on transparency and merit to help the deserving students get higher education."



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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

Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 44

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## Rights in Afghanistan

SOME positive noises were heard from the Afghan Taliban's Doha office. The political chapter of the fighting force, working under the banner of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan made some positive indications to come to the table and negotiate.

The biggest admission was that the Taliban were willing to safeguard the rights of women to work and get education. While this in itself might not seem like much to the casual observer, coming from the Taliban this is significant. The space for and provision of human rights in the country is likely to be hotly contested between the moderates and the hardliners. This is why a commitment must be sought to protect these important rights before moving on to other aspects of the negotiation.

Given that in the past, even getting this statement from the Taliban would have been considered impossible, this shows that the various competing factions in Afghanistan are willing to make compromises, provided the process to get there is internal.

Beyond the moniker of an 'Afghan-led' and 'Afghan-owned' peace process, there are practical considerations on the trajectory that the country will take going forward. For this, half of the population cannot be marginalised and it is positive to see that the Taliban has also indicated as much. It will be important to hold the group to its words.

But the biggest problem is the timeframe; with only a little over two months left till the US withdrawal, there must be some discussion on practical power sharing arrangements rather than just statements that vaguely allude to each factions' preferences. Promises must now be made and deals have to be struck. The Afghan people are still losing their lives daily due to the endless violence; all sides must come to the table to work out a safe and secure future for the people of Afghanistan.

## National Electricity Policy

THE new National Electricity Policy 2021 being introduced by the government is focused on expanding the country's generation capacity in a competitive, cost-effective and transparent manner. However, the policy has raised controversy in some quarters, particularly because of the exemption clause and how it deprives provinces from having a say on key decisions.

Those privy to the particulars of the draft claim that the policy violates Article 157(1) of the Constitution which obligates the federal government to consult the provincial governments prior to undertaking a hydropower project there. This would essentially deny the provinces from having a role in the power sector. It would also be a departure from the previous policy where provincial governments were deemed as significant stakeholders with the right to initiate power projects in line with their local needs and priorities.

There are also reports that under the new policy the centre would have the power to unilaterally choose strategic projects and exempt them from the policy's applicability as it sees fit. Some are of the view that the policy could impact KP in particular because it does not appear to be very hydropower friendly—in which the province has an edge. The power purchasing policy in the future is based on indicators which are primarily influenced by reducing costs, which could result in a number of in-progress hydropower projects in KP being sidelined.

Compounding this concern is another clause which includes the cost of transmission lines as an integral part of generation. This would allow federal power purchasers to overlook hydropower projects as they would require an initial investment on transmission lines, but are in the long term more viable economically and environmentally compared to other sources of energy.

It is commendable that the government is devising a national level policy and planning for the future on an issue that has held us back for too long. However, if these reports regarding the draft policy are true, the centre will have to ensure that concerns at the provincial level are factored in so that there is buy-in at the national level.

# New Uzbekistan: On the verge of Third Renaissance

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



**Uzbekistan moved up to 69th position on the World Bank Ease of Doing business from 166th place in 2012, lowering taxes and the abundance of youthful labour should allow the country to become a powerhouse in textiles**

WE live in the era of "Globalization 2" in which greater regional connectivity and socio-economic prosperity is the real essence of the humanity, prosperity, security and survival.

We are now passing through industrial "revolution 4" during which the Republic of Uzbekistan under the visionary leadership of H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev has successfully started its journey of immense socio-economic prosperity, economic sustainability, political stability, regional connectivity, reconciliation, innovation, qualitative education, human capital and last but not the least, "commercial diplomacy" towards its third renaissance.

From the time "immortal" Uzbekistan has been "mesmerizing" the world from its holistic human spirits, unmatched hospitality, rich traditions, immaculate civilization, valuable and befitting propositions of intellect, knowledge, spiritualism, trade & commerce and above all unblemished bravery and human survival which played an important role in its 1st & 2nd renaissance in

the past. It has been home of "rare" human combinations like Timur, one of the greatest warriors and conquer of all time and man of literature too (Zafar Nana), Babur the pioneer of Mughal dynasty in Sub Continent, the "inspirational" war strategist and man of books (Babur Nama), Ulugh Beg who ratified many "misconceptions" about universe, earth, planets its unlimited galaxies, Abu Rayhan al-Biruni the pioneer of "VLOG", al-Khwarizmi the pioneer of "mathematics" and many scientific disciplines, and many prominent dignified figures have been "enlightening" the world for centuries.

Thus Uzbekistan's 1st & 2nd renaissance was the total "sum" of superior human knowledge, wisdom, science & arts, spirits of survival, prosperity, infrastructural development, strategic expansion, statesmanship, good governance, logistic connectivity, trade & commerce, sharing & caring and last but not least, friendship, peace and harmony.

Uzbekistan's third renaissance "comprises" of immense structural reforms, Massive Drive of Diversification of Economy (MDDE)", "Pragmatic & Friendly Foreign Policy Module (PFPMP)" and last but not least, "Holistic Model of Connectivity (HMC)" based on "shared prosperity. Its third renaissance has now been getting "momentum" and new "heights" since the start of presidency of Shavkat Mirziyoyev 2017.

According to Uzbekistan official statistics (January 2021) due to constant structural reforms the average annual investment growth rate was 22 percent during the last four years. The total volume of foreign investment reached \$26.6 billion, including direct investments of \$17.5 billion.

Critical analysis indicates that the total volume of investments over the past 4 years has increased by more than 2.1 times, including foreign investments by 2.7 times. The share of investment of GDP in 2019 exceeded 38 percent for the first time, which created a solid foundation for ensuring economic growth in the coming years.

At the same time, the GDP of Uzbekistan in 2019 increased by 5.6 percent. Despite the complex and complicated economic conditions and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the World Bank has predicted the country's GDP growth in 2021 by 4.8 percent, which is one of the best indicators among developing countries.

Moreover, Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover is growing much faster than GDP and in 2019 increased by 26.2 percent, amounting to \$42.2 billion. While in just 9 months of 2020, despite the pandemic, the country's foreign trade reached \$27.5 billion.

Uzbekistan friendly foreign policy is achieving miracles. It has been instrumental to resolve the Afghan conflict. While addressing the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) he proposed a new body under the UN's auspices specifically to help Afghanistan recover from its many years in isolation and war. Tashkent has already signed a 10 year contract to supply power to Afghanistan and Uzbek Railways are helping to re-build the Afghan rail link from Termez to Hairaton, which is one of the few transport connections Afghanistan has to the outside world.

To achieve the direct connectivity and further enhancing of trust between the state and the people, the "President's Receptions Doctrine (PRDs)" was initiated in which common people

could voice their concerns, raise issues and describe their problems directly to the government which was consequently, converted into a Ministry of Civil Services, which further led to the opening of "Single Window Operation (SWO)" that "diminished" all "bureaucratic hurdles" and provided all possible necessities of life at door steps. Even financial utilities were completely overhauled and transformed. Rights of ownership, transfer of property, SMEs registrations, facilities of micro financing were revolutionized which created unlimited miracles. Furthermore, flexible visa regime was patronized and 2 year exit visa regime was abolished and converted into 10 year international passports, simplifying travel for Uzbek citizens. In this context, the visa regime with 100 countries was further softened and introduced 5 day visa free transit rules as well as a 30 day no visa regime to encourage tourism.

On education front, 43 universities or branches of foreign universities have opened in Uzbekistan during the last three years. The South Korean Inha University has been focusing on the IT sector and other universities are moving in. The budgetary allocations to education, housing, drinking water and strategic development goals have been further increased.

The banking sector has now been further structured and developed. A comprehensive Banking Sector Reform Road Map (BSRRM) was adopted with a concrete road map, containing definite steps that are the distinct responsibility of named individuals. Uzbekistan has 31 banks, 13 of which have state participation. According to the Road Map, the state will only retain four major banks and all the others will be fully privatized. A massive transformation process has already been started with the assistance of International Financial Corporation (IFC), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Big Four international consultancies and others.

Banking system assets to GDP currently stand at 52.1 percent and domestic loans to GDP at 40.4 percent. Formation of Credit Bureaus (CBs) is the need of the hour. A Domestic Debt Market (DDM) should be established. A corporate governance institute should be created to certify independent directors.

Presence and participation of foreign banks is on the rise in Uzbekistan. Two foreign banks TBC bank of Georgia and Halyk Bank of Kazakhstan have already operationalized in the domestic banking industry of Uzbekistan. Bank Anor the icon of digitalization has also received a license. Other banks, such as OTP Bank of Hungary, are also reportedly planning to open branches in Uzbekistan.

Financial market has already been transformed. Full convertibility for of national currency, the SOM has been allowed and in 2019 all profit repatriation restrictions have been removed. Tashkent Stock Exchange (TSE) has been further financial consolidated. New IPOs have brightened the chances of privatization in Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan has obtained an international credit rating of BB and successfully issued \$1bn Eurobonds with tenors of 5 and 10 years, which were followed up by a \$300mn bond issue by a leading Uzbek bank SQB last year. Even Navoi Mining the largest gold and uranium producer and Uzbek Hydro Power have

also announced their plans to issue international bonds.

Uzbekistan has already started its journey towards further economic liberalization, privatization, service orientation, digitalization and investments. In Uzbekistan there are approximately 3,000 state owned companies which hold more than 55 percent of the macro-economy. The government plans to decrease its stakes massively in companies by 81 percent by encouraging private sector in the country. Banks, telecoms companies, transport, insurance companies and beverages companies will be privatized very soon. The state agency "UzAssets" Company has been set up to manage the process of privatization.

Uzbekistan has introduced progressive tax regime, which has further reduced the number of taxes from 13 to 9, as well as introducing deferment and tax payments in installments. A new VAT excess return process has been introduced. The corporate tax rate has been reduced up to 15 percent.

Agriculture has been the cornerstone of the Uzbek economy since ancient times. New befitting propositions, policies and plans have been announced and implemented which has revolutionized its overall contribution to GDP. Shifting from raw commodities to export of finished goods is a "paradigm shift" in Uzbekistan. Moreover new cashable corps have further enhanced its "yield production" and of course "profitability". Uzbekistan has been following business friendly policies since 2016 which has now drastically changed its status. Uzbekistan moved up to 69th position on the World Bank Ease of Doing business from 166th place in 2012, lowering taxes and the abundance of youthful labour should allow the country to become a powerhouse in textiles.

Energy sector is the "cornerstone" of Uzbekistan massive drive of green industrialization. Investments in energy sector have been on the rise. A new petrochemical project has been started in the Jizzakh Oil complex in 2020. The Surhan Gas complex project has also been started.

Being prominent regional expert of Uzbekistan & CIS I predict a politically stable, economically sustainable, socially articulated, regionally connected, geopolitically secured and geo-strategically powered-house Uzbekistan in the days to come. Various reports of IMF, WB, ADB and many other international regulatory bodies have already labeled Uzbekistan, the emerging economy which is now progressing at a fast pace.

Uzbekistan's President H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev has rightly noted that Uzbekistan is on the "threshold" of a new era the "Third Renaissance". He termed independence a decisive factor in the socio-economic prosperity of the country. Economic independence, self-reliance, optimal utilization of domestic human capital, resources, provision of basic human rights, protection of constitution, civil liberties, further politicization and democratization, women empowerment, nurturing of qualitative human capital, business & investment friendly policies, conflict resolution through diplomacy, dialogue and development has further "brightened" future of Uzbekistan which is the "jewel" of Central Asia. To conclude, NEW UZBEKISTAN has now been internationally recognized, projected and patronized. Thus Uzbekistan is now on the threshold of its third renaissance.

# Apartheid by stealth

Andrew Mitrovica



MEET the new occupier, same as the old occupier. Palestinians understand that the swap of one evangelical extremist as Israeli prime minister for another evangelical extremist will not change by an iota how Israel methodically goes about, day after grinding day, committing apartheid in occupied Palestine.

If there was any doubt on this predictable score, the renewed bombardment of Gaza this past week produced further proof. The new guy is as quick as the former guy to remind the world that he will use the same lethal apparatus to traumatise, maim and kill as many Palestinians as Israel wants to, whenever Israel wants to, for whatever reason Israel wants to, for as long as Israel wants to and, save for tiny Ireland, no prime minister or president is going to do or say much about it.

Still, Israel is obliged – as an inane, perfunctory public relations exercise – to trot out one of a familiar litany of "provocations" to justify traumatising, maiming and killing as many Palestinians as it wants to, whenever it wants to, by whatever means it wants to and for as long as it wants to.

This time, Israel's \$110-million-a-piece attack jets obliterated more of Gaza in sorties over several days after patches of parched, barren fields were set briefly on fire by so-called "incendiary" balloons filled with helium and tied together by Palestinian "militants" with string.

The "provocations" are a tired, exculpatory pantomime. Whether it is balloons, slingshots, burning tyres, kites, rocks or glorified, metallic firecrackers, Israel knows it enjoys a stay-out-of-The-Hague-free permit to traumatise, maim and kill as many Palestinians as it wants to, whenever it wants to, by whatever means it wants to, for whatever reason it wants to, for as long as it wants to, and no prime minister or president outside Ireland is going to do or say much about it.

So, it does not matter a jot what the name of the latest Israeli prime minister is, which racist, boorish party he leads, or how he and his co-conspirators were able, with supposed Machiavellian-like skill, to cobble together a precarious coalition finally to get rid of the former guy. One indecipherable constant remains: the machinery of apartheid goes on, day after grinding day, in occupied Palestine as it has since the middle of the last century.

Here is another constant: just like the old, fanatical Israeli prime minister, the new, fanatical Israeli prime minister also knows that most Western establishment TV and newspaper editors pay fleeting attention to what Israel has done and is doing to Palestinians in occupied Palestine only when Israel decides to bomb Palestinians in occupied Palestine.

That means that every few years or so, after the "bang-bang" flares – that is reporter lingo for when the instruments of war go "boom" – usually invisible Palestinians pop up on Western cable news networks and on the opinion pages of Western newspapers to talk or write about how Palestinians have and continue to be stripped of their homes and land, jailed, tortured, traumatised, maimed and killed by a long succession of preening thugs in suits and uniforms.

This is another, by now, trite pantomime.

Offering Palestinians a little time and space to chronicle or condemn Israel's crimes affords Israel-fawning Western TV and newspaper editors convenient cover to congratulate themselves for their equanimity and boast: "You see, Palestinians are having their say, too." All the while, these same TV and newspaper editors refuse to acknowledge that Israel has been found guilty by human rights groups of practising apartheid – as defined by international law and not as a hyperbolic cudgel – and has, since its engineered inception, wielded carte blanche licence not only to steal Palestinian homes and land, but to jail, torture, traumatise, maim and kill Palestinians with impunity. Whatever discomfort they may privately harbour with the violent, illegal means Israel employs to systematically steal

Palestinian homes and land or how many Palestinians Israel jails, tortures, traumatises, maims and kills, most Western TV and newspaper editors have always publicly defended Israel's "right" to do all of the above – yesterday, today and tomorrow. To challenge Israel's "right" to defend itself against the existential threat allegedly posed by balloons, slingshots, burning tyres, kites, rocks or glorified, metallic firecrackers would be a sacrilegious act of geopolitical heresy. This canonical editorial support for Israel is a near-verbatim reflection of the equally supplicant attitude towards Israel shared by most Western prime ministers and presidents whenever their ally and friend opts to unleash more "bang-bang" on imprisoned Palestinians in already grievously wounded occupied Palestine.

"The position of the Liberal government is extremely clear on the question of the apartheid label," Garneau said recently. "We reject it categorically... and we, of course, are completely against any anti-Semitism." When he is inevitably replaced as foreign minister by another pedestrian, cue card-reading mannequin, Garneau could well become an editorial writer at any of Canada's newspapers that pen their standard apology each time Israel traumatises, maims and kills Palestinians with its unlimited arsenal of "bang-bang" furnished by agreeable arms dealers in Ottawa and beyond.

Invariably, this translates into a lot fewer "live hits" by TV reporters – largely from the safety and welcoming bosom of Tel Aviv – describing the most recent "spasm" of the decades-old, "tit-for-tat conflict" that has caused death and suffering on "both sides" in almost equal measure. And the lucky "voices" who got a rare snippet of time and space on cable news networks and in newspaper columns to air the Palestinian "perspective" during Israel's 11-day deadly turkey shoot in Gaza vanish because their token presence is no longer required to provide audiences with the patina of balance and fairness.

Indeed, that Israel has resumed bombing Gaza no longer even registers as "news" for a lot of ho-hum Western TV and newspaper editors, most of whom – when the "plight" of Palestinians is concerned – possess the attention span of a frightened squirrel. Anyway, "war" has not broken out again – yet. When it does, they will return to take a momentary peek. Until then, it is promptly back to rhetorical business as usual: Israel has the "right" to defend itself blah, blah, and those "militant" Palestinians just keep asking for a bloodied nose.

Meanwhile, Palestinians are left to endure, alone, and mostly

out of sight, the trauma, indignities and provocations that long ago became a routine aspect of day-to-day life under Israel's suffocating military occupation.

This is apartheid by stealth. Militant, flag-waving Israeli religious zealots can descend on Palestinians in occupied East Jerusalem, shouting "Death to Arabs" and "may your village burn" and the TV and newspaper editors shrug. A brother and sister who took to social media to expose the likely expulsion of Palestinians from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood by rabid force are arrested and the TV and newspaper editors shrug.

More than 2,000 Palestinians are corralled like cattle and jailed shortly after a "ceasefire" is announced for resisting the inexorable destruction of occupied Palestine and its peoples, and the TV and newspaper editors shrug. Heavily-armed Israeli hoods – euphemistically called "security forces" – storm the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound and fire rubber-coated steel bullets, tear gas and stun grenades, injuring scores of worshippers, and the TV and newspaper editors shrug.

An 11-year-old Palestinian boy, Mazen Bessam, is arrested and "detained" by the aforementioned hoods – presumably to keep Israel safe – while his younger sister wept and pleaded for his release, and the TV and newspaper editors shrug.

As Human Rights Watch and others have documented in precise, persuasive detail, Israel's execution of apartheid never ceases. It is committed against Palestinians before, during and after the audible sounds and sights of "bang-bang" that temporarily attract the preoccupied eye of TV and newspaper editors who would much prefer, I suspect, to talk and write about the lunatic musings of Donald Trump.

The "bang-bang" is part of the ruthless continuum of Israel's state-sanctioned and systemic persecution of Palestinians throughout occupied Palestine.

The wilful reluctance and failure of Western TV and newspaper editors to admit this demonstrable fact and fundamentally recalibrate their coverage of what is happening to Palestinians "on the ground" in occupied Palestine makes them complicit in the explicit, inhumane and disfiguring consequences of Israel's persistent and unapologetic practice of apartheid.

The occasional appearance by a Palestinian on TV or in print whenever Israel reprises its explosive show of "bang-bang" is hardly redress for this pervasive, shameful blindness.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera



## Briefs

Batting coach  
Younis Khan  
parts ways  
with team

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and Pakistan men's national cricket team batting coach Younis Khan today mutually agreed to part ways, a statement released by the PCB said Tuesday.

Younis was appointed last year in November on a two-year contract until the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022. Commenting on Younis's departure, PCB Chief Executive Wasim Khan: "It is sad to lose an expert of the stature and experience of Younis Khan. Following a series of discussions, we both have reluctantly but mutually and amicably agreed that it was time to move in different directions. "I want to thank Younis Khan for his contributions during his short stint as the Pakistan men's national cricket team's batting coach and hope he will remain available to assist the PCB by sharing his vast knowledge with the emerging cricketers."

Pakistan,  
Tajikistan  
vow to...

FROM PAGE 01

Tajikistan Nasrullo Mahmudzoda in Dushanbe. He highlighted that Pakistani seaports including Gwadar offered the most economic and efficient route to Tajikistan for its connectivity with the outer world through sea. In the meeting, Tajik Secretary of Security Council, Mahmudzoda said that bilateral ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan are flourishing day by day and the recent visit of Tajik President to Pakistan has added yet another impetus to these ties. Both the sides resolved to maintain the regular contacts for further boosting the bilateral ties.

Taliban  
takes  
control...

FROM PAGE 01

Imam Sahib is strategically located near Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan, a key supply route from Central Asia.

Rahmani said police and Afghan National Army soldiers had jointly tried to defend the district. He said it still wasn't clear how many casualties the Afghan National Security and Defense Forces suffered in the protracted battle or how many Taliban were killed or wounded. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed confirmed Imam Sahib district was in Taliban hands.

Several other districts in Kunduz have also fallen to the insurgent group in the latest round of fighting, including Dasht e Archi, which neighbors Imam Sahib, said Rahmani, further consolidating local transportation links in the area.

Syed Mohammad Mousavi drove with his family to the relative safety of Kabul from northern Mazar e Sharif, about 120 kilometers (75 miles) west of Kunduz on Sunday.

US should  
return to  
JCPOA...

FROM PAGE 01

during his first press conference on Monday following his victory in the election. Answering the question "what do you have to say to the US and Europe?", the President-elect said he frankly advised the US to return to the JCPOA and fulfill its commitment because this is the demand of the Iranian nation. He also said that the Iranian nation conveyed a message of unity and solidarity via their participation in the June 18 presidential elections. "We emphasize that the US government should be sincere towards its commitments while noting that the regional and missile issues are not negotiable," Raisi added.

During the remarks, Raisi also said the massive turnout of the elections happened despite the heavy psychological warfare by the enemies who tried to discourage people.



**TASHKENT:** Pakistan ambassador to Uzbekistan Syed Ali Asad Gillani met members of the Pakistan Mas-Wrestling team in Tashkent. They bagged a number of Medals in International Tournament in Khiva. – DNA

# Hamas-UN talks over Gaza's situation have 'failed'

The Israeli attacks also destroyed 1,148 housing and commercial units in Gaza and partially damaged 15,000 others, leaving more than 100,000 civilians displaced in UN-run schools and other hosting communities

## FOREIGN DESK

GAZA CITY: Hamas's talks with the United Nations over the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip have failed, the group's leader in the enclave said. "This was a bad meeting and it was completely negative," Yahya-Sinwar said on Monday. "The meeting with the UN delegation was thorough and they listened to us. But unfortunately, there are no indications of intentions to solve the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip."

Sinwar made the remarks during a news briefing following the meeting in Gaza City with a senior UN delegation, including the UN special coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process,

Tor Wennesland. Sinwar also accused Israel of "blackmailing the Palestinian factions, including Hamas" with regards to solving the humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip. The latest developments come less than a month after Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire that ended an 11-day Israel assault on the Gaza Strip on May 21. The Israeli onslaught killed at least 257 Palestinians, including 66 children. Thirteen people were killed in Israel, including two children. The Israeli attacks also destroyed 1,148 housing and commercial units in Gaza and partially damaged 15,000 others, leaving more than 100,000 civilians displaced in UN-run schools and other hosting communities. Israeli media

## Israel forces target Palestinian protesters

## MONITORING DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Israeli police used stun grenades and sprayed skunk water on Palestinians overnight in the flash-point occupied East Jerusalem neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah. There were clashes between Jewish settlers and Palestinians earlier Monday evening with Israeli media reporting stones and chairs were thrown between the opposing sides. The Palestine Red Crescent said 20 Palestinians were wounded in the fighting and reports said several were arrested. Those hurt included 16 who suffered from pepper spray and tear gas-related injuries, and an elderly person who was hit in the head. The medic service also said several of its ambulances were targeted by Jewish settlers who hurled stones at its vehicles. Meanwhile, dozens of Israeli settlers on Tuesday forced their way into the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex in occupied East Jerusalem, according to the Islamic Endowment Department. About 44 settlers broke into the compound under the protection of Israeli police, and more settlers are expected to enter the site later in the day, it said in a statement.

reported that Sinwar threatened an escalation of tensions with Israel if it did not allow Qatar to transfer \$30m of funds to the Gaza Strip to help pay salaries. Qatar has, in recent years, distributed hundreds of millions of dollars in cash to enable Hamas, which governs Gaza, to pay for fuel for the Strip's power plant, civil servants' salaries, and provide aid to tens of thousands of impoverished families. Earlier this month, Qatari Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani said at a financial conference in St Petersburg that the oil-rich Gulf country had invested about \$1.4bn in Gaza since 2012. Meanwhile, Gaza's Pepsi bottling company was forced

to halt operations – leaving hundreds without work – this week due to Israeli import restrictions that were tightened during the 11-day Israeli assault on Gaza, the company's owners say. With a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza's Hamas largely holding, Israel on Monday allowed a limited resumption of exports from the enclave. But it has kept in place tightened measures on raw material imports, including carbon dioxide gas and syrup that the bottling company's factory needs to produce the soft drinks, said Pepsi Gaza's Hamam al-Yazeji. "Yesterday, we completely ran out of raw materials, and unfortunately we had to shut down the factory, sending home 250 workers," Yazeji said.



**KUWAIT:** Pakistan ambassador to Kuwait Syed Sajjad Haider received PNS Saif at Shuwaikh Port. Commanding Officer of Pak Navy Capt Atif Sultan TI(M) PN welcomed the Ambassador & Col. Saleh, Kuwaiti Minister of Defence. PNS Saif is on its 4-day friendship visit (22-26 Jun 2021) in Kuwait. – DNA

## COVID: India sees a surge in underage marriages

NEW DELHI: Many people in India have lost their jobs and life savings during the pandemic. This has forced parents to marry off their daughters at an early age to reduce the financial burden. Neelam, a 15-year-old girl in Murshidabad, got married in May just days before Cyclone Yaas hit the West Bengal state in eastern India. Already under pressure because of the pandemic, her family decided to marry her off knowing that the cyclone would further damage their livelihood.

West Bengal is one of the five states in India that have a high prevalence of early marriages. Though 12% of girls between 15 and 19 years of age are married off nationally, in West Bengal the figure stands at 25.6%. "Many families in the state depend on daily wage work, but COVID

has deprived them of that. Food insecurity is prevalent, and the financial situation is dire," Baitali Ganguly, who works at the Jabala Action Research Organization in Kolkata, told media. The child rights organization says there has been an alarming increase in child marriages in the state, especially in rural areas. "We have tried to stop several such marriages during the pandemic. In some cases, we have succeeded, but a lot more needs to be done apart from the NGO interventions," Biplob Mandal, a rights activist, told media.

In southern Telangana state, distress calls to child safety helplines have increased manifold, with many girls seeking help from state authorities. They say their parents are forcing them

to get married. From February 2019 through March 2020, the government-run Women's Development and Child Welfare Department averted 977 child marriages in the state. Since the start of the pandemic, the number has increased to 1,355. "It is the official figure; imagine how many cases have gone unreported," Srivyal-Vuyyuri, director of Sphoorti Foundation, a non-governmental organization, told media. India was recording more than 400,000 new coronavirus infections per day at the height of the second wave in April and May. Despite a decrease in the number of new COVID-19 cases and the easing of restrictions, experts are warning that the country still has a long way to go to effectively prevent the spread of the virus. – Agencies

## EU launches probe into Google

## FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU's competition watchdog has said it would probe Google's advertisement technology business. The bloc is concerned the US tech giant "has made it harder for rival online advertisement services to compete." The European Commission on Tuesday opened a formal antitrust investigation into Google, alleging the US tech company could be violating EU competition rules in online advertising technology. Brussels said it would probe whether Google stifles competition by restricting access to third parties to user data for advertising purposes on websites and apps, while reserving such data for its own use. "Online advertising services are at the heart of how Google and publishers monetize their online services," EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said in a statement.

## NESPAK delegation visits Azerbaijan

LAHORE: A two-member delegation from the National Engineering Services Pakistan (Pvt) Limited (NESPAK) led by Managing Director Dr Tahir Masood visited Baku, Azerbaijan, for business appraisal.

It was a visit in the wake of rehabilitation of recently liberated areas of Karabakh region in Azerbaijan as there was an opportunity for the top Pakistani engineering consultant to work there and share development efforts of the brotherly nation of Azerbaijan, according to the NESPAK spokesman here Tuesday.

During the visit, he added, the delegation held separate meetings with Mr Mikayil-Jabbarov, the Minister of Economy, Mr Inam Karimov, the Minister of Agriculture and Mr Ilgar Isbatov, the Chairman of State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture of the Republic of Azerbaijan, as well as senior officials of the Ministry of Energy and Ministry of Ecology. – APP

## Pak ready to work with US...

FORM PAGE 01

"Our country has suffered so much from the wars in Afghanistan. More than 70,000 Pakistanis have been killed. While the United States provided \$20 billion in aid, losses to the Pakistani economy have exceeded \$150 billion," he wrote.

Recalling his opposition to Pakistan joining the US-led war, the prime minister said the country was "targeted as a collaborator, leading to terrorism against our country from the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and other groups". "US drone attacks, which I warned against, didn't win the war, but they did create hatred for Americans, swelling the ranks of terrorist groups against both our countries."

PM Khan warned of the dangers of another civil war breaking out in the war-torn country in case a political settlement was not achieved. "There are more than 3 million Afghan refugees in our country – if there is further civil war, instead of a political settlement, there will be many more refugees, destabilizing and further impoverishing the frontier areas on our border. Most of the Taliban are from the Pashtun ethnic group – and more than half the Pashtuns live on our side of the border. We are even now fencing this historically open border almost completely."

## Govt to give voting rights to...

FROM PAGE 01

He said it seems strange that both the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and the Pakistan People's Party are afraid of giving voting rights to the overseas Pakistanis as these parties know that Prime Minister Imran Khan is the most popular leader amongst the expatriate Pakistanis.

Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said the cabinet also approved the Public Property Encroachment Bill to recover state lands from illegal occupants across Pakistan. He said it was also approved to have dual nationality with Luxembourg and now Pakistani citizens can adopt the nationality of Luxembourg as well.

To a question, the Minister said around 400,000 people are being vaccinated on a daily basis while we aim to vaccinate 70 million people till the end of this year. He said after achieving the desired target of vaccination drive, Covid situation will be much better in the country. He said our vaccination drive is being appreciated at various forums in the world. Regarding issues faced by vaccinated Pakistanis going abroad, he said discussions are underway between various countries and the World Health Organization to accord approval of different vaccines.

Responding to another question, Fawad Hussain urged the opposition parties to utilize Parliament for making their suggestions for electoral reforms instead of constituting other political forums. He said in this regard we welcome the suggestions of all stakeholders. He said Aslam Khan has been appointed as new Chairman of Pakistan International Airlines.

# NATO sees Azerbaijan as reliable partner

## DNA

BAKU: Chief of Staff of NATO Allied Land Command Metin Tokel has said that NATO considers Azerbaijan as a reliable partner, the Defence Ministry reported on June 22. Tokel made the remarks at a meeting with Azerbaijani Defence Minister Col-Gen Zakir Hasanov in Baku on June 22.

The NATO official highly appreciated Azerbaijan's participation in the fight against terrorism, its significant contribution to cargo transportation for peacekeeping operations, and the Azerbaijani peacekeepers' high professionalism in Afghanistan.

Hasanov stressed the successful development of Azerbaijan-NATO relations, the activity of the Azerbaijani troops in various programs, and the contribution made by Azerbaijani servicemen to the NATO-led Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan. He said that the main goal of Azerbaijan-NATO cooperation carried out in various fields is to eliminate instability, conflicts, and threats in the sphere of establishing an indivisible security system in the Euro-Atlantic



area and the world. Hasanov added that this cooperation will continue.

During the meeting, the sides also exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest. Earlier, Hasanov discussed the state of bilateral cooperation within NATO with member of the Latvian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly Raimonds Bergmanis. Bergmanis noted that Latvia is Azerbaijan's important partner in the European security organizations, especially NATO.

Speaking at the Baku-based international conference "Azerbaijan's Contribution to the Euro-Atlantic Peace and Security" on June 16, Bergmanis said that Azerbaijan has been supporting peacekeeping operations in Afghanistan since 2002 and NATO is grateful to it for that. At the same conference, Azerbaijani presidential aide Hikmat Hajiyev said that Azerbaijan welcomes NATO's active role in ensuring and maintaining international peace and security, adding that Baku "is committed to the fundamental principles of partnership within the existing agreements". He also expressed Azerbaijan's interest in cooperation with NATO.



## Briefs

## Merkel urges better EU coordination

BERLIN: German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Tuesday ahead of this week's EU summit that she hoped for better coordination on pandemic travel rules among the bloc's 27 member states. In light of the rapid spread of the highly contagious Delta variant of the coronavirus, Merkel said it was problematic to have a patchwork of regulations. "I regret that we haven't managed yet to have completely uniform action among the member states on travel guidelines - that is coming back to haunt us," she told reporters after a meeting with European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen. She cited the example of Portugal, where the government this month was forced to slow the process of post-lockdown reopening in Lisbon and three other municipalities after a hike in new Covid-19 cases. "That perhaps could have been avoided which is why we need to work harder," she said. "We have made some good progress in recent months but aren't where I'd like the European Union to be." Von der Leyen acknowledged she was "worried" about the spread of the Delta variant, saying it was "only a matter of time" before it became dominant in Europe. But von der Leyen, who had faced sharp criticism early on for a sluggish vaccine rollout in the bloc, said she was pleased that the jobs approved in the EU appeared to be effective against the variant. — APP

## Philippines logs 3,666 new Covid cases

PHILIPPINES: The Philippines' Department of Health (DOH) reported on Tuesday 3,666 new COVID-19 infections, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in the Southeast Asian country to 1,367,894. The death toll climbed to 23,809 after 60 more patients died from the viral disease, the DOH said. The lowest daily case-load since May 23 is due to 12 testing laboratories which were not able to submit data, said the DOH. The Philippines, with a population of 110 million, has tested more than 13 million people since the outbreak of the virus in January 2020. The government urged Filipinos to remain cautious amid the emergence of the more contagious Delta variant in the country. A total of 17 cases of Delta, first found in India, were sequenced in the Philippines. The DOH said one is active, while one died. The Philippines has tightened border control to detect Delta and other corona-virus variants and prevent them from spreading. It barred travelers from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates until June 30. — APP

## EU court revives Venezuela sanctions

LUXEMBOURG: The EU's top court on Tuesday resurrected a challenge by Venezuela against sanctions from the bloc over repression of the opposition, overturning an earlier decision to dismiss the case. Caracas launched its legal bid in 2018 looking to annul the measures - including an arms embargo - imposed against the government of leader Nicolas Maduro. The EU's General Court dismissed the lawsuit, arguing that Venezuela did not have the legal basis to challenge the sanctions. But in a fresh ruling issued on Tuesday, the European Court of Justice backed an appeal from Caracas and sent the case back for a new "judgement on the merits of that action". "Venezuela has standing to bring proceedings against a regulation which introduces restrictive measures against it," the court said in a statement. The latest decision in the protracted legal battle gives no indication of whether Maduro's government will eventually succeed in forcing the EU to scrap its sanctions. — APP

## Belarusian envoy and FPCCI discuss new trade avenues

Andrei Metelitsa said that Belarusian economy is primarily based on industrial and engineering production - and, quality of its machinery is world-class. For example, tractors, trucks, cranes, metal-cutting machinery has very high standards

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo, President FPCCI, has expressed his deep desire to broaden bilateral trade, promote joint ventures, exchange technological expertise, and enhance trade tourism with the Republic of Belarus. He was speaking on the occasion of H.E. Andrei Metelitsa's - Ambassador of the Republic of Belarus - visit to FPCCI Head Office. H.E. Andrei Metelitsa said that Belarusian economy is primarily based on industrial and engineering production - and, quality of its machinery is world-class. For example, tractors, trucks, cranes, metal-cutting machinery, and other construction-related machinery has very high standards. Additionally, he mentioned that home appliances produced in Belarus are of superior quality, e.g. Washing Machines, Dishwashers, Refrigerators, and other small and large home appliances. Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo said that Pakistan and Belarus must plan and



KARACHI: Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo, President FPCCI presenting official crest to Andrei Metelitsa. Qurban Ali, M. A. Jabbar, Shahzad Sabir, Chairman FPCCI's Pak-Belarus Business Council and others are also seen in the picture. — DNA

organize a virtual trade exhibition and not wait for the COVID-related restrictions to be fully over. Afterwards, FPCCI and business chambers of Belarus

can organize trade exhibitions and fairs in both the countries every year. Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo also stressed the need to enhance the export vol-

umes of Pakistani fruits, vegetables, rice, textiles, and other conventional exports to Belarus from Pakistan as the trade volume between the two countries

is too low. He requested the ambassador to open-up more opportunities for Pakistani exporters and facilitate swift visa processing. FPCCI is looking forward

to host Belarusian businessmen and traders and send trade delegations to Belarus for productive and mutually-beneficial business relationships.

## Pak, excellent place of doing business

KARACHI: West African country Niger's Minister for Commerce, Industries and Entrepreneurship of Young Gado Sabo Mactar on Tuesday observed that Pakistan's favorable environment for business and trade activities had attracted a lot of businessmen of his country to do business with Pakistan. He said this in his meeting with President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo and other prominent businessmen during a visit to the Federation House here. Niger's delegation headed by Gado Sabo Mactar met the President FPCCI and also held detailed deliberations on the matters pertaining to boost trade between Pakistan and Niger as well as discover potential areas of mutual

cooperation between the two countries. Ambassador of Pakistan in Niger, Ahmed Ali Sirohey, Cabinet Minister, Ministry of Investment Niger Zakari Wargo Boubacar, Director General Development Industries Niger, Abdoulaye Boubacar, 2nd Vice President National Chamber of Commerce & Industries Niger, Bana Bouraime, Businessman of Niger, Salim Sabo Mactar and other notables were also present on the occasion. Talking to the President FPCCI, Gado Sabo Mactar sought cooperation from business community of Pakistan in different sectors including Food and Agriculture. He said that this is high time to further integrate the ideas to improve cooperation between the two countries, especially in commerce and trade. — APP

## Spain pardons Catalan leaders over independence bid

The pardons have sparked controversy in Spain and tens of thousands protested against the decision this month

## FOREIGN DESK

MADRID: The Spanish government has formally pardoned nine Catalan separatists who were convicted over a failed independence bid in 2017. The leaders were imprisoned after being found guilty of sedition in 2019. Three others were convicted of disobedience but not jailed at the same time. The pardons have sparked controversy in Spain and tens of thousands protested against the decision this month. But the government argues the move will help calm tensions over Catalonia. The semi-autonomous region's drive for independence almost four years ago plunged Spain into its biggest political crisis in 40 years.

"With this act, we want to open a new era of dialogue and reconciliation, and end once and for all the division and confrontation," said Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez in a televised address on Tuesday. The prisoners' release may take up to several days, as the pardons must first be signed by the king and published in the country's official gazette. The decision did not overturn the prisoners' ban on holding office and was conditional on them not committing any other crimes within a certain period of time, Mr Sánchez explained. He said the government did not require those pardoned to abandon their political ideas, underlining that they had been convicted for their actions and not their beliefs. One of the nine who were im-

prisoned, Catalonia's former foreign minister Raül Romeva, remained defiant. "By pardoning nine people, they will not hide the repression they continue exercising against hundreds of separatists," he said in a tweet. "We won't give up the fight: amnesty and self-determination!" A number of opposition parties have said they intend to appeal against the pardons. The centre-right leader of the Madrid region, Isabel Díaz Ayuso, said that the government's decision was a humiliation for Spain: "far from bringing harmony, [it] strengthens separatism and social division". The ruling separatists in the Catalan parliament declared independence in October 2017, after a referendum which the Spanish Constitutional Court declared illegal.

The Spanish government maintains that Catalonia had no constitutional right to break away, and temporarily imposed direct rule on the region after the government in Barcelona declared independence. A number of Catalan officials, including the region's leader Carles Puigdemont, fled abroad. But others who remained in Spain were put on trial and nine separatists were given prison sentences over their role in the independence attempt in 2019. Oriol Junqueras, the former vice-president of Catalonia, was the highest-ranking pro-independence leader after Carles Puigdemont fled the country. He was sentenced to 13 years in prison for sedition and misuse of public funds over the referendum.



ISLAMABAD: Afghan ambassador to Pakistan Najibullah Alikhil met Irena Gancheva, Ambassador of Bulgaria to Pakistan. Both sides discussed traditional friendly relations, Afghan peace process, regional security, common values and engagement with the international community. — DNA

## Italy to lift outdoor masks

## DNA

ROME: Italy will lift a requirement that people wear face masks outdoors from June 28, the government said late on Monday, as COVID-19 cases and hospitalisations decline. Mandatory masks were imposed in October last year, when the country was entering a second wave of the epidemic and authorities were struggling to curb surging infections. Mario Draghi's government has been steadily lifting restrictions since April, opening activities such as restaurants, bars, cinemas and gyms and allowing freedom of movement around the country. The wearing of masks was one of the last rules to remain in place, and it will still be required

in indoor public areas. The decision will be effective from next Monday when the whole nation is expected to be a COVID-19 white zone, the lowest risk level in Italy's four-tier colour-coded system to calibrate curbs in its 20 regions. Nineteen of the regions are already white, the exception being the tiny northern area of Valle d'Aosta which is yellow, denoting the second-lowest risk level. "From June 28 we will leave behind the need to wear masks outside in white zones," Health Minister Roberto Speranza posted on Facebook after receiving advice from the government's board of experts. Italians should still carry a mask with them when they leave home and be ready to wear it outdoors if there is a crowd.

## Putin accuses US of organising 'coup' in Ukraine

## FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin says the 2014 popular uprising that saw former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich forced from office was the result of a "coup" orchestrated by the United States and supported by Washington's European allies as he appealed for greater cooperation on the continent. Writing an op-ed in German newspaper Die Zeit to mark the 80th anniversary of Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union during World War II, Putin described on Tuesday the toppling of Yanukovich as an "anti-constitutional armed coup". Moscow has long accused the US of fomenting turmoil in Ukraine, where tensions with neighbouring

Russia have grown since Yanukovich, a pro-Kremlin leader, was removed. After his February 2014 exit, Russia annexed the Black Sea region of Crimea and gave its backing to separatist fighters as an armed conflict erupted in Ukraine's east. Post-Cold War dynamics, which left countries faced with an "artificial choice" between siding with the West or Russia, had shaped the "Ukrainian tragedy", Putin wrote. "Why did the United States organise a coup, and why did the countries of Europe weakly support it, provoking a split in Ukraine itself and the withdrawal of Crimea?" he said. "Now the entire system of European security has seriously degraded. Tensions are growing, and the risks of a new arms race are becoming real."

Putin's comments follow his highly-anticipated Geneva summit with US counterpart Joe Biden last week, during which the pair committed to try and lay the groundwork for future arms control agreements and return their respective ambassadors to their posts.



Before the talks, both sides had said big breakthroughs were unlikely with relations between Russia and the West at post-Cold War lows. The Russian leader was quick to praise Biden after the meeting, commending the US president's professionalism. But the Kremlin cautioned there were still significant points of disagreement between Moscow and Washington, notably over Ukraine and the role played by NATO - the transatlantic security alliance that Biden has strongly recommitted the US to - in European affairs. In his op-ed, Putin said Russia and European powers were "missing out on the enormous opportunities that cooperation gives us" due to their icy relations. "It [cooperation] is so important now, when we are all faced with

common challenges - the pandemic and its dire socio-economic consequences," he wrote in the piece, which was also published on the Kremlin website. "The entire post-war history of Greater Europe confirms that the prosperity and security of our common continent is possible only through the joint efforts of all countries, including Russia," Putin added, citing his nation's "inseparable cultural and historical connection with Europe." "I repeat again: Russia stands for the restoration of a comprehensive partnership with Europe." The Russian leader said Moscow and other European capitals could work together on a number of issues of mutual interest, including security, energy, technology and the environment.

## Indonesia reports 13,668 new Covid cases

JAKARTA: The COVID-19 cases in Indonesia rose by 13,668 within one day to 2,018,113, with the death toll adding by 335 to 55,291, the Health Ministry said on Tuesday. According to the ministry, 8,375 more people were discharged from hospitals, bringing the total number of recovered patients to 1,810,136. The virus has spread to all the country's 34 provinces. Specifically, within the past 24 hours, West Java recorded 3,432 new cases, Jakarta 3,221, Central Java 2,439, East Java 746 and Yogyakarta 675. — APP

## Armenia opposition vows to fight PM

YEREVAN: The Armenian leader's main rival on Tuesday did not rule out mobilising street protests after an election reaffirmed Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan's mandate despite a devastating war. The alliance led by Pashinyan's main rival Robert Kocharyan, who led Armenia between 1998 and 2008 and is seen as close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, came a distant second in early parliamentary polls on Sunday. "We intend to continue our fight and it will be very strong," Kocharyan told a news conference in the capital Yerevan. "Apart from our fight in parliament, there will also be a fight on the streets where we have a lot of supporters." Pashinyan's Civil Contract party secured nearly 54 per cent of Sunday's vote, just enough to form a government. Kocharyan's Armenia alliance received 21 per cent of the vote. A record 21 parties and four blocs ran for election but the vote was seen as a two-horse race between Pashinyan, 46, and Kocharyan, 66. Both drew massive crowds in the final days of the campaign. Pashinyan claimed victory in the early hours of Monday, after first preliminary results were announced, and Kocharyan's bloc immediately alleged fraud. Kocharyan on Tuesday reiterated that he would take his complaint to the Constitutional Court in the near future. — APP

## Bitcoin sinks below \$30,000

LONDON: Bitcoin fell below \$30,000 Tuesday for the first time in more than five months, hit by China's crackdown on the world's most popular cryptocurrency. Just before 1400 GMT, Bitcoin sold for around \$28,890, a level last seen at the beginning of the year, with analysts citing Chinese efforts to curb trading and mining operations. It later rebounded slightly to around \$30,133 for a daily decline of 7.5 per cent. It has lost about 50 percent of its value since hitting an all-time high of \$64,870 in mid April. "Concerns mount over China's ongoing clampdown and fears that widespread acceptance of bitcoin and other digital currencies will be delayed because of concerns about their environmental impact," noted analyst Fawad Razaqzada at trading site ThinkMarkets. Bitcoin faces a green backlash because so-called mining often uses electricity produced from fossil fuels, especially coal, he noted. Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies are mined by solving puzzles using powerful computers that consume enormous amounts of electricity. China has now extended a crackdown on its massive cryptocurrency mining industry with a ban on mines in a key southwestern province. The science journal Nature recently published a study showing that Chinese bitcoin mines represented a risk to the country's climate goals. Chinese mines power nearly 80 percent of global trade in cryptocurrencies despite a domestic trading ban since 2017, but several provinces have recently ordered mines to close as Beijing considers the industry with a critical eye. Authorities in the province of Sichuan ordered the closure of 26 mines last week, according to a notice widely circulated on Chinese social media and confirmed by a former bitcoin miner. — APP



## Briefs

## Shahbaz Sharif appears before FIA

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PML-N President and Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Shahbaz Sharif



on Tuesday appeared before the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) in a money laundering probe that involves a sugar mill owned by the Sharif family. The notice sent to Shahbaz had asked for a response to Rs25 billion allegedly having been sent to accounts of low-grade employees of the Ramzan Sugar Mill. A questionnaire of 20 items was sent via his advisor and Shahbaz was asked to send responses along with his signature.

In a parallel inquiry, Hamza Shahbaz has been summoned on June 24.

The FIA had summoned Shahbaz at 11am, however, the Opposition leader arrived at the office at 11:47am.

Shahbaz and Hamza had earlier obtained pre-arrest bail, till July 10, from a banking court. The court, in its written verdict directed both to submit bail bonds of Rs1 million each. In the event the amount is not submitted, FIA reserves the right to arrest Shahbaz and Hamza. It is also incumbent upon both to appear before the FIA whenever summoned.

## Zardari, Elahi to meet in Lahore

DNA

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly Speaker and PML-Q Punjab President Chaudhry Pervez Elahi called on former president and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari at the latter's Bilawal House residence in Lahore on Tuesday. According to statements issued by the two parties, both leaders agreed that independent judiciary and democracy were inseparable while discussing in detail the overall political situation in the country, especially in Punjab.

Zardari and Elahi also agreed that the respect for judiciary was one of the key components of democracy. The former president also inquired after the health of PML-Q chief Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and also left him a "special message".

Elahi thanked Zardari for his support during Senate elections. "I wanted to go to Karachi to meet Zardari Sahib, but he said that he would meet me when he arrives at his Lahore residence," he was quoted as saying in a statement issued by his party.

## Journalists stage walkout from NA gallery

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Journalists on Tuesday staged a walkout from Press Gallery during budget session of the National Assembly, as a protest against non-payment of salaries for the last 16 months.

Minister for Railways Azam Khan Swati and Minister for Aviation Ghulam Sarwar Khan visited the protesting journalists outside the Parliament House and assured that the government would take all possible steps to resolve their issues. On the assurance, the journalists called off their protest and returned to the Press Gallery.

Later speaking in the House, Azam Khan Swati said the government had already paid all the outstanding dues to private media outlets and it would initiate specific steps to protect the rights of journalists. He said he would take up the issue with Prime Minister Imran Khan.

## Turkey set to end pandemic curfews from Thursday, Jul 01

That same day Turkey will also lift intercity travel restrictions and restrictions on urban public transport

## NEWS DESK

ANKARA / ISTANBUL: Amid a nationwide fall in COVID-19 cases, Turkey is set to end pandemic curfews as of next Thursday, July 1, the country's president announced on Monday. That same day Turkey will also lift intercity travel restrictions and restrictions on urban public transport, said Recep Tayyip Erdogan after a three-hour-plus Cabinet meeting at the presidential complex in the capital Ankara. Thanks to the drop in virus cases, Turkey will return to normal working order in public institutions and organizations as of July 1, he told reporters. The country on Monday reported 5,294 new coronavirus cases, including 429 symptomatic patients, as well as 51 new fatalities and 5,093 recoveries over the past 24 hours. On June 1, Turkey eased some

measures to fight the virus as the number of virus cases in the country dropped following a 17-day lockdown.

Erdogan also stressed how "vital" it is for everyone to get jabs when their turn comes in the country's vaccination drive.

Urging the public to pay no heed to "manipulations," he said they should instead listen to scientists and doctors about the need for vaccinations.

"Our goal is to make everybody in our nation over age 18 eligible for vaccination within a few weeks," he said.

Erdogan stressed that Turkey is the country that has administered vaccine doses to the largest share of its population over the last week.

"As of today, the number of vaccine doses that we administered approached 43 million," he said, adding that he wants to ensure that Turkey is one of the first countries to overcome the pandemic crisis with the least harm.



"Although the problems in the world will continue for a while due to new variants of the virus, Turkey will successfully leave this process behind," he vowed. The Turkish leader also urged the public to continue to follow hygiene, mask, and social distancing rules and thanked healthcare workers and security forces for their efforts since the beginning of the pandemic.

On relations between Turkey and the US, Erdogan said the two countries are ushering in a new era on a "positive and constructive basis" following last week's meeting with US President Joe Biden during a NATO summit in Brussels. Turkey is determined to transform the "beautiful climate" achieved with Biden into maximum benefit for both countries, he added.

"Turkey's only demand is respect for its sovereign rights in all political and economic areas and support for its fight against terrorist groups," said Erdogan. Following the meeting, Biden said he had a "very good meeting" with his Turkish counterpart.

The one-on-one meeting at NATO headquarters lasted for 45 minutes – the first time the leaders met since Biden took office this January.

Reviewing his visit last week to Azerbaijan, Erdogan said the meaning of that country's victory

in Nagorno-Karabakh both for Azerbaijan and the region will become clearer in the years to come. Azerbaijan's victory last fall foiled "the games of those who make the world a tool for their political and economic ambitions," he said, adding that its neighbor Armenia will be one of those who benefit the most from regional peace and stability if they seize the opportunity that comes their way.

"The sincere affection of our Azerbaijani brothers and sisters during the two days we spent there also made us happy. Hopefully, all of us together will make this process the beginning of a new era in the Caucasus."

During a 44-day conflict last fall, which ended in a Moscow-brokered truce on Nov. 10, Azerbaijan liberated several cities and nearly 300 settlements and villages in Nagorno-Karabakh (Upper Karabakh) from Armenia's nearly three-decade occupation.

## 3 PAF officers promoted to the rank of AVM

ISLAMABAD: The government has promoted 03 PAF officers to the rank of Air Vice Marshal. The promoted Air officers include Air Vice Marshal Imran Saif, Air Vice Marshal Hussain Ahmed Siddiqui and Air Vice Marshal Zaeem Afzal. Air Vice Marshal Imran Saif was commissioned in Air Defence Branch of Pakistan Air Force in June, 1990. During his career, he has commanded an air defence squadron and an operational wing. He has also served as Sector Commander, South Sector and Assistant Chief of the Air Staff (Air Defence) at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. He is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military). Air Vice Marshal Hussain Ahmed Siddiqui was commissioned in GD (P) Branch of Pakistan Air Force in December, 1991. During his career, he has commanded a fighter squadron, a flying wing and an air base. He has also served as Deputy Commandant Air War College Institute, Faisal. He is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Air Vice Marshal Zaeem Afzal was commissioned in GD (P) Branch of Pakistan Air Force in December, 1991. During his career, he has commanded a fighter squadron, Combat Commanders' School and an operational air base. He has also served as Deputy Chief Project Director (Ops) of JF-17 Project at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. He is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military). – APP

## Pak revises guidelines for two-dose vaccines

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has revised the guidelines for two-dose Chinese vaccines, increasing the gap between the doses to six weeks.

The two-dose SinoVac and Sinopharm vaccines were initially administered with a four-week gap which has now been increased to six weeks.

Commenting on the development, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan told media that plenty of Sinovac doses were available in the country, while more were coming.

When asked whether the change is to overcome the shortage, the SAPM said, "It would provide some flexibility in timing. Will help in some situations." Meanwhile, a senior official of the health ministry confided to the publication that shortage of vaccines was the main reason behind enhancing the gap between the two doses and claimed: "that instead of decreasing efficacy, a delayed second dose could provide immunity."

"The delayed second dose gives better immune response in general. China has successfully experienced that," the official claimed.

## Trump considered sending Covid positives to Gitmo Bay

WASHINGTON: Former US president Donald Trump had seriously considered sending covid-positive American tourists to Guantanamo Bay island, a report by the Washington Post has revealed. According to the report, before the coronavirus crisis blew up in the US, a meeting was held, in February 2020, at the Situation Room of the White House to debate whether to allow US citizens that had travelled to coronavirus-hit countries to return and receive care. "Don't we have an island that we own?" the president reportedly asked White House officials.

"We import goods," Trump said. "We are not going to import a virus."

Stunned, his advisors quickly brushed aside the suggestion when it was brought up a second time, afraid of the backlash that would erupt over isolating Americans on the same base where terrorism suspects are held. – Monitoring Desk



RAWALPINDI: General Robert Kariuki Kibochi, Chief of Defence Forces, Kenya called on General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at Joint Staff Headquarters, Rawalpindi. – DNA

## UK Minister Lord Ahmad arrives in Pakistan; meets CM

## STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of State for South Asia and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, has arrived in Pakistan for a two day visit. His visit, covering two cities, will further enhance the friendship between the UK and Pakistan.

During his stay in Pakistan, Lord Ahmad is expected to meet a number of government Ministers and Provincial leaders, including the Human Rights Minister Shireen Mazari, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar and Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar.

Lord Ahmad will discuss the importance of maximising our unique bilateral partnerships to tackle global challenges including climate change (with the UK hosting COP26 later this year) and the response to COVID-19; and how we can boost the trading potential between the UK and Pakistan. The Minister will also promote the UK's role as a force for good by meeting faith leaders (including from minority groups).



Lord Ahmad's visit is the first in-person visit by a UK Minister to Pakistan since the start of the pandemic, and follows the recent video message from Prime Minister Boris Johnson for World Environment Day and the recent phone call between Prime Minister Imran Khan and Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Lord Ahmad said: "The world has changed a great deal since I last visited Pakistan, a country close to my heart and roots. Loss and separation due to COVID-19 has impacted us all. But the pandemic has brought us closer too.

More than ever before must stand shoulder to shoulder as we tackle global challenges. Which is why during my visit I look forward to discussing how we can work together using the best of our international dotti to build back greener to protect our world against climate change, build back better with more prosperity for both our great nations, build back safer to protect all our people from COVID-19, and build back for all ensuring that girls get the education they deserve and by making a stand against hate and prejudice."

Later, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon met Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and discussed matters of mutual interests.

High Commissioner of UK to Pakistan Christian Turner was also present.

Lord Tariq Ahmad appreciated the steps taken by the Punjab government to overcome environmental degradation and the adoption of zigzag technology at brick kilns. He also appreciated its steps for overcoming the corona pandemic and said the provincial government had adopted environment-friendly policies, adding that the government's anti-corona steps were praise-worthy.

democratic has brought us closer too.

More than ever before must stand shoulder to shoulder as we tackle global challenges. Which is why during my visit I look forward to discussing how we can work together using the best of our international dotti to build back greener to protect our world against climate change, build back better with more prosperity for both our great nations, build back safer to protect all our people from COVID-19, and build back for all ensuring that girls get the education they deserve and by making a stand against hate and prejudice."

Later, Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon met Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar at his office and discussed matters of mutual interests.

High Commissioner of UK to Pakistan Christian Turner was also present.

Lord Tariq Ahmad appreciated the steps taken by the Punjab government to overcome environmental degradation and the adoption of zigzag technology at brick kilns. He also appreciated its steps for overcoming the corona pandemic and said the provincial government had adopted environment-friendly policies, adding that the government's anti-corona steps were praise-worthy.

## Pakistan, FB partner to fight misinformation

## NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Government of Pakistan has partnered with Facebook in their fight against COVID-19.

In Pakistan, over 32 million people received authoritative information regarding COVID prevention and vaccination through social media messaging campaigns conducted by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Information's Digital Media Wing (DMW) in partnership with Facebook.

Facebook provided Marketing Partner Support and Ad Credits for these campaigns and helped the government increase its engagement rates with the public on these posts between March 16 and April 6, 2021.

As part of these campaigns, Facebook and the Ministries focused on creating videos and messages on

boosting greater Vaccine Confidence amongst the nation. The messaging campaigns helped the Ministry of Health increase its total number of page likes to 470,000 – increasing the government's ability to connect with and provide information to its stakeholders.

As COVID-19 vaccines are becoming more readily available to larger groups, Facebook launched new Facebook profile frames in partnership with the Ministry of Health that allow users to share their support for getting vaccinated with their family and friends. Research shows, when people see others who they know and trust getting the vaccine, they will be encouraged to do the same. This can be particularly effective when it comes to encouraging those who were otherwise unsure about getting themselves vaccinated.

## Pakistan acknowledges 100 glorious years of CPC

Over the past 100 years, CPC has made remarkable efforts with patience and continues hard work coupled with the wisdom of leaders, and made achievements

## DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan fully acknowledges the 100 glorious years of Communist Party of China (CPC) and wishes to participate in its celebrations.

On July 1 this year, the CPC will celebrate its 100 years of glorious presence ever since its founding in 1921. Born out of a meeting of a few young revolutionary leaders on a small boat, CPC has led the nation towards a road for peace, prosperity, independence, liberation and a strong stable country, says an article carried by China Economic Net (CEN).

Muhammad Asif Noor, Director of Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies, Pakistan in his article stated that this year is also important for Pakistan and China. This year marks the 70th anniversary of the

establishment of diplomatic ties between both Iron brother countries. Prime Minister Imran Khan has praised China's fight against poverty and recalled the need to learn from the experience of China.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as an important active pillar of BRI is focusing on building industries, revamping the agricultural outlook and helping Pakistan to gradually come out of its socio-economic challenges.

The article added: "History has shown that CPC is truly deserved to be called the glorious political party representing the true wishes and aspiration of the Chinese people. Over the past 100 years, CPC has made remarkable efforts with patience and continues hard work coupled with the wisdom of leaders, and made achievements in reforms, development and revolution. CPC has contributed towards strengthening China's political

stability, health, education, socio-economic development and in all diverse sectors. This day while CPC and Chinese people will celebrate the founding day, more than 1.4 billion people are moving ahead with full strength, wisdom and confidence towards a new beginning of the rejuvenation of the Chinese people. CPC has remained at the front, from poverty alleviation to national rejuvenation and modernization. Since the opium war in 1840, Chinese people have passed through tremendous challenges and devastation. However, Chinese people stood firm against all odds. There were threats from foreign powers and internal turbulence at that time but with revolutionary mindset and perseverance, they took destiny into their own hands to change the course of their history. In those challenges and difficult times, a few young and strong men of wisdom pursued their dreams

for their nation and followed their heart for the destiny of freedom. To achieve the goal, these brave hearts led many change movements till the time of the great revolution of 1911 that further later led to the founding of CPC. This was a time when communism was rising with Chinese characteristics. The founding of CPC in 1921 made the change in Chinese destiny in the right direction. Since then CPC has created an epic story of the modern history of mankind where millions of people have been lifted out of poverty, and global outreach has been achieved through the Belt and Road Initiative. Over the 100 Years, CPC has united the Chinese people into one whole and help them to stand together and enter a progressive era of progress and development. CPC has also immensely contributed to providing visionary leadership to the country, where we have

seen towering figures like Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, Deng Xiaoping, Liu Shaoqi, Zhu De, and currently President Xi Jinping who have led and steered the nation to the new heights. We remember that as where Mao established the basics, the second generation led by Deng Xiaoping established the reform and opening-up process resulting in what China is today.

While we remember these towering figures, we also remember the martyrs of revolutions and long struggles who have sacrificed their lives for helping build, new, modern and great China. Today's generation of leadership led by President Xi Jinping has brilliantly built on further what the great leaders of the past have transferred to the new generation. With eyes on the future, having strong political and personal, President Xi Jinping is a confident leader building a strong space for China on the global stage.