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Marina Bakanov's 'The Kyrgyz' launched at the Kyrgyz embassy

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Envoy lauds COMSTECH scholarships

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Sajid Sadpara announces K2 expedition

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Briefs

Skilled manpower crucial

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi says skilled manpower is of vital importance to achieve goals of the country's fast-paced development. He was addressing the cheques and certificates distribution ceremony under Kamyab Jawan Program in Islamabad on Thursday. The President said we will have to utilize the capabilities of our youth in the best interest of the country. He stressed the need for preparing the youth for fourth industrial revolution.

Pakistan to become polio-free

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PM Imran Khan conveyed the hope that Pakistan will become polio-free next year. Talking to Twitter, Prime Minister Khan said that only one case of the crippling disease has been reported this year so far. "Insha'Allah we will eradicate polio completely in the coming yr," he said. The PM stated that he had a telephonic conversation with Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, last night and thanked him for the help his Foundation has delivered for polio abolition in Pakistan. The premier said he also asked Bill if he could set up a Microsoft development lab in Pakistan.

WHO must take vaccine decisions

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar Thursday called for taking anti-COVID vaccine acceptability decision by a single global institution like WHO. "Each country, deciding which vaccine is acceptable for travel to that country, is creating chaos," he said in a tweet. Asad Umar said the health and well-being of world citizens could not become hostage to global geo-strategic rivalries.

Nawaz' pleas in corruption cases rejected

According to the IHC judgment, Nawaz is a proclaimed offender and so "there was no choice but to dismiss the pleas" owing to his disappearance from court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court on Thursday dismissed pleas by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif against the imprisonment sentences announced in the Al Azizia Steel Mills and Avenfield apartments references. IHC judges Justice Umar Farooq and Justice Mohsin Akhtar pronounced a nine-page judgment that was earlier reserved after listening of arguments from the National Accountability Bureau prosecutor and amicus curiae. The verdict means that the judgments pronounced by the accountability court for the two cases have been upheld. According to the IHC judgment, Nawaz is a proclaimed offender and so "there was no choice but to dismiss the pleas" owing to his continued disappearance from court. The judgment observed that if Nawaz returns or is caught by the authorities, an application for a renewal of appeals can be filed. The former prime minister had filed appeals with the IHC against the decisions of the accountability court. Accountability court judge Mohammad Bashir had on July 6, 2018, convicted Nawaz in the Avenfield reference and sentenced him to 10 years in prison. However, an IHC division bench comprising Chief Justice Minallah and Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb suspended the sentence in the reference and later granted him bail allowing him to travel abroad for medical treatment. Meanwhile, accountability judge Mohammad Arshad Malik had on Dec 24, 2018 convicted Sharif in the Al Azizia reference and sentenced him to seven years imprisonment.

Govt again reaches out to UK for Nawaz

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Interior and Accountability Shahzad Akbar said that the government has once more reached out to the British government for the deportation of Nawaz. He said that the PML-N suprema has applied for an extension in stay based on medical grounds, adding that if the UK does decide to deport him, he will have the right to appeal the ruling. Akbar said that the Pakistan government has informed Britain that Nawaz is a convicted felon. The accountability adviser said that Nawaz had gone to London on a visit visa and British law dictates that no one can stay on a visit visa beyond six months. He said that Nawaz Sharif "is not ill, he is healthy" and must appear before the court. "If the court acquits him, we will not object," he said. Akbar said that Nawaz must let the government know who poses a threat to his life, and he will be provided security. "Even if he needs a bullet proof vehicle, we will provide it. But he must return to Pakistan," the adviser said.

'IHC decision victory of people, PTI's stance'

The nation wanted justice done to the former rulers, who should be behind the bars, Fawad added



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Thursday described the dismissal of PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif's appeals by the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against his convictions in the Avenfield and Al-Azizia references as the victory of people and PTI's stance. "From the very beginning, it was our (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) stance that Nawaz Sharif's family should return the money they had looted from the people of Pakistan," he said in a video message re-

leased after the IHC's verdict. It was a victory of 'justice' as Nawaz Sharif, who was declared an absconder, had yet to pay the fine imposed on him by the Accountability Court of Islamabad, he added. The minister expressed the hope that justice would be ensured in case of the appeal of Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) leader Maryam Nawaz, who was in the country. The nation wanted justice done to the former rulers, who should be behind the bars, he added. Giving details of cases against the Sharif family, he said the accountability court had sentenced Nawaz Sharif to 10 years in prison, along with seven years and one year imprisonment to his daughter (Maryam) and son-in-law Captain (Retd) Safdar respectively in the case of four Avenfield Apartments (Mayfair, London). Nawaz with his two sons - Hassan and Hussain - were at large in the case, he added. Fawad said the PML-N leader was even today residing in the Avenfield Apartments, about which the nation came to know after the Panama Papers scandal had surfaced in 2016. He recalled the famous statement of Maryam, in which she had denied having any property in London, as well as, in Pakistan.



BERLIN: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army staff (COAS) in a meeting with Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany. Markus Potzel, Special Representative for the Federal Government for Afghanistan and Pakistan is also present. - DNA

Japanese ambassador grieved over Lahore blast

DNA

ISLAMABAD: MATSUDA Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan on Thursday expressed grief and sorrow over the loss of precious lives in the bomb blast which occurred at Johar Town in Lahore on June 23rd, leaving numbers of people dead and injured. In his condolence message, the Ambassador conveyed his heartfelt grief and sympathies to the bereaved families and wished for a speedy recovery of the injured.

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Lahore blast mastermind arrested

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: The man who was arrested from Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore earlier on Thursday by the law-enforcement agencies (LEAs) turned out to be the mastermind of the provincial capital's bomb blast that ripped through Johar Town locality on Wednesday. Sources told that the bomb blast mastermind who was identified as David belonged to Karachi. A while ago, David came back from Dubai and stayed in Gujranwala for some time. He was the one who packed the vehicle with explosives. The sources informed that investigating agencies claimed to have found evidence proving his link to a foreign country's organization. David was about to board a flight for Karachi from Lahore Airport but the LAEs captured him from the airport and moved him to an unknown location for questioning.

Germany lauds Pak efforts for peace

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army staff (COAS) who is on official visit to Germany called on His Excellency Heiko Maas, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany. Markus Potzel, Special Representative for the Federal Government for Afghanistan and Pakistan was also present. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, overall regional security situation including latest developments in Afghan Peace Process and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed. COAS said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Germany and expressed desire for enhanced mutually benefi-

"During the visit to Germany, the Army Chief Bajwa discussed Afghan peace with German FM"

cial bilateral relations. The German dignitaries also acknowledged Pakistan's continuous efforts for peace and stability in the region and pledged to further enhance bilateral relations between both countries. Later on, COAS also visited Command & Staff College of Germany, where he addressed students and faculty members and shared his views on "Pakistan's Regional and Internal Security Perspective". During the address, COAS apprised the audience on external and internal secu-

ity challenges faced by Pakistan and measures taken in the regard to mitigate the threats. COAS said that future of enduring peace and stability in world hinges on ability to resolve long pending issues within the region. This can only be complemented through meaningful international support to take on challenging regional issues. Focusing on COVID-19 pandemic, COAS said that Pakistan's Government along with other state institutions is doing its best to counter the challenges faced by Pakistan.



PESHAWARE: Ambassador of European Union Androuliah Kaminara visited a mosque during her recent visit to Peshawar. The ambassador visited various parts of the mosque and remained with the administrator for quite some time. She religiously observed complete Islamic dress code during the visit of the mosque. - DNA

Afghan peace: FM warns of spoilers

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi Thursday said that rising violence in Afghanistan could strengthen "spoilers". The statement from the top Pakistani diplomat came during a meeting with Iran's Special Envoy on Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian Fard. They discussed the Afghan peace process, besides the security situation in the region. Qureshi said Pakistan considered peace in Afghanistan essential for the region's peace and stressed that the country always supported the notion that there was no military solution to the Afghan problem.

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Talks with Pak ongoing, more work needed: IMF

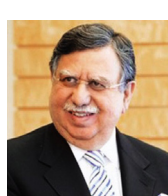
Spokesman declined to say if disbursements under that programme had been halted

DNA

WASHINGTON: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is holding open, constructive discussions with Pakistan as part of a sixth review of the country's 39-month, \$6 billion financing programme that began in 2019, IMF spokesman Gerry Rice said on Thursday. Rice declined to say if disbursements under that programme had been halted but said further discussions were needed about Pakistan's fiscal spending plans, structural reforms,

Ready to talk on charter of economy: Tarin

KHAYAM ABBASI



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin on Thursday said that he is ready to sit with the opposition parties for charter of economy. The finance minister said that the federation is bearing expenses of the security, health and deployment of Rangers in the provinces. He said the government plans to provide Rs 100 billion loan for SMEs in the next budget, adding that the sales tax on milk has been abolished while duty on import of plant machinery will be reduced. He said that there was no possibility of any change in the FBR term till June 2022, adding that the powers to arrest were withdrawn from the FBR Assistant Commissioner.

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Briefs

Ministers to solve masses' problems

PESHAWAR: President Traders Alliance Federation Peshawar, Ghulam Bilal Javed has said that ministers were peoples' representatives and they would solve their problems on priority. He expressed these views while speaking at a dinner hosted in honor of Provincial Finance Minister, Timur Jhagra, Minister for Labour and Culture, Shaukat Yousafzai and Commissioner Malakand, Zaheer-ul-Islam at Peshawar Club.

A number of traders, notables of Peshawar and politicians were present at the reception, said a press release issued here on Thursday. President Traders Alliance, Ghulam Bilal said that PTI Minister will move forward with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and will work day and night for improving the living standard of people. The team members of Prime Minister, Imran Khan will work selflessly to form the envisioned state of Madinah, he added. Ghulam Bilal, who is also a senior leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) said he considers it his duty to serve the people as well as the business community of the country. The dinner reception was attended by former President Sarhad Chamber Haji Muhammad Afzal, President Markezi Tanzeem-e-Tajran Malik MehrElahi, Chairman Traders Alliance Major Arshad Mahmood Babai, Tajran Amin Hussain Babar, Patron in Chief TAF Azizullah Khan, Chief Executive Traders Alliance Chaudhry Shahid Ghafoor, President Car Dealers Association Bakht Mir Durrani, Former Member Cant Board Ghulam Hussain Chand, Former MPA & Advisor to CM, Arief Yousuf, Former Nazim Zahid Nadeem, Chairman Coordination Traders Alliance Munawar Khurshid, Senior Vice Chairman Sarhad Chamber Herbal Committee Abdul Haseeb Chughtai and others. - APP

Joint efforts for peace in Afghanistan stressed

PESHAWAR: Maintenance of law and order in the neighboring country is vital for achieving the goal of maintaining peace and serenity in the whole region. This was argued by the participants of a discussion on Thursday by the experts in a discussion held in Area Study Centre University of Peshawar. The event among others was attended by Director Area Study Centre, Professor Shabir Ahmad, former ambassador, Asif Durrani, Lieutenant General (Retd), Assad Durrani, Defense Analyst, Brigadier (Retd), Saad Muhammad, Afghan Affairs Expert, Colonel (Retd) Ashfaq, Chairman International Department Peshawar varsity, Hussain-Suharwady and Secretary Information KP, Arshad Khan. Speakers stressed for developing a liaison and make collective efforts for establishment of peace in Afghanistan. They said that international community should work in cohesion for Afghan peace as prevalence of serenity in Afghanistan would directly affect regional nations including Pakistan.

Jhagra congratulates KP Assembly

PESHAWAR: Finance Minister Taimur Khan Jhang on Thursday congratulated the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly for upholding democratic norms during the budget session and gave credit to both treasury and the opposition benches for avoiding any parliamentary incident. Giving explanation to criticism and various questions raised by the opposition leader Akram Khan Durrani and other opposition MPs on the budget 2021-22, the finance minister said that shortfall of budget is due to difference between budgetary receipts and actual receipts which existed in every previous budget. He said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was the first province which bring transparency in the budget and everything is reflected in the budget paper including due share of the province from the federal government on pretax of net hydro profit and NFC share. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Parliamentarians from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa called on Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad. - DNA

Indonesian CG for enhancing co-op with SMEs sector

President KCCI M. Shariq Vohra stated that Karachi, being the hub of trade and economic activities, offers profitable investment opportunities and added facilities for trade, investment and joint ventures to Indonesian business and industrial community

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Consul General of Indonesia Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat has assured to strive hard for further enhancing trade and economic relations between Indonesia and Pakistan by encouraging people-to-people contacts between the two brotherly countries and fully facilitating the business community of Karachi looking forward to improve trade and investment ties with Indonesia. The Indonesian CG, who was accompanied by Consul for Economic Affairs Djumara Supriyadi, gave the assurance at a meeting during his visit to the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI). President KCCI M. Shariq Vohra, Senior Vice President KCCI M. Saqib Goodluck, Vice President KCCI Shamsul Islam Khan and KCCI Managing Committee Members attended the meeting. Dr. June Kuncoro was of the



opinion that in addition to traditional items being traded between the two countries, lots of opportunities exist for enhancing exports through diversification tradeable goods whereas there was a need to discuss and establish cooperation between the Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs) of the two countries. Referring to the statistics of Indonesian Ministry of Trade, he informed that the trade volume between Indonesia and Pakistan

has reached to more than US\$2.5 billion and there were a lot of areas which can be explored for further enhancement of the existing trade volume. He said that Karachi city, being the hub of economic activities, and Karachi Chamber were very important to Indonesia as KCCI was an effective platform for further promotion of trade and investment ties between Indonesia and Pakistan. Indonesian CG also mentioned that a Indonesia-Pa-

kistan portal has also been established to facilitate trade and invited the business community of Karachi to get registered in this portal to find business opportunities in Indonesia. Speaking on the occasion, President KCCI M. Shariq Vohra stated that Karachi, being the hub of trade and economic activities, offers profitable investment opportunities and added facilities for trade, investment and joint ventures to Indonesian business and

industrial community. "Karachi city, which contributes more than 70 percent revenue to the national exchequer, is an attractive place for Indonesian businessmen, who can surely earn maximum profits by undertaking joint ventures with their counterparts here", he said, adding that KCCI was keen to strengthen trade ties and exploring new bilateral trade prospects with Indonesia. He also appreciated Indonesian government for an-

nouncing 1,000 scholarships at 23 top universities of Indonesia offering graduation, masters and PhD courses for Pakistani students which would further improve friendly and cordial ties between the two nations. President KCCI noted that the bilateral trade between the two countries was in favor of Indonesia as during 2020, Pakistan exported goods worth \$194.94 million to Indonesia whereas the imports from Indonesia stood at \$2.4 billion.

First Dahi Markaz Mall established in Jaranwala



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Bazar, first DahiMarkaz Mall has been established at the Qanungoi level in the tehsil Jaranwala and the issuance

of Farad land transfers and other revenue facilities will be available in few minutes from here. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali inaugurated the Markaz Mall chak 70 RB. Assistant Commissioners Muhammad Zubair and Umar Maqbool were also present.

Congratulating the people of Chak, the Deputy Commissioner said that the district government firmly believes in providing facilities to the people and the establishment of DahiMarkaz Mall is also the result of the efforts made for the people. He said that due to center people of

chak would not have to travel long distances but would be able to avail these services from near their homes at earlier. He said that the district govt was taking rapid steps to provide services to the people under the digitization system. He lauded the efforts of the Tehsil Jaranwala administration in setting up the center. Deputy Commissioner said that now first Center has started functioning while the other 7 Centers will also set up at Qanungoi in phases.

Training of medical staff starts

The district health authority conducted a training session for the medical staff at District Health Development Centre on Thursday. Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Ali said that medical staff was working at front-line in war against coronavirus. Therefore, the training was imperative to save them and other people from corona disease.

PB-32 Quetta needs attention by CM

QUETTA: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Central Vice President Fehmida Kausar Jamali has requested the Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Kamal to ensure sufficient funds for the constituency of PB 32 Quetta IX before the approval of the provincial budget for the year 2021-22. Talking to media, she said my constituency PB32 Quetta have suffered with the basic issues i.e. lack of clean water, insufficient schools and lacks of facilities of roads which needs to be addressed on priority. The incumbent MPA who belongs to BNP Mengal was least interested to facilitate the masses of PB32, only focusing his Saryab area. Jamali said Hanna Urak is an ideal place for the promotion of tourism under the vision of PM Imran Khan, but still no focus on tourism in this area, even spurbs of the Hanna Urak have been deprived of drinking water. Similarly Hanna Lake Development Authority (HLDA) and Balochistan government to take immediate measures to revive the lost beauty of Hanna Lake, once the most visited and easily accessible tourist attraction points of Balochistan. Only 17km away from Quetta city, the historic tourist point Hanna Lake has completely dried up, leaving visitors in dismay. She asked the Chief Minister that it's a first time that Federal Government have a close coordination with the provincial setup in order to uplift the people of Balochistan so that they may contribute effectively in the development of the country. I expect Jam Kamal being a Chief Minister may directed the local departments to provide basic facilities in the constituency of PB 32 Quetta IX. FehmidaJamali further said Strengthening local government system in Balochistan is perhaps the only viable solution by which government policies can be translated into inclusive development and prosperity. The provincial government in Balochistan should conduct local government elections as soon as possible with more administrative powers to Nazims. - DNA

471,178 persons vaccinated

FAISALABAD: As many as 471,178 people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in Faisalabad district. District Health Officer DrAtaulMun'im said on Thursday that 361,130 citizens had been given the first dose while 71,193 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He said that 25,008 health workers had also been given the first dose while 13,847 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of anti-coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 32,124 first doses and 21,416 second doses were present in stock at Faisalabad.

He said that 34 vaccination centres were operational in Faisalabad where registered persons were also getting anti-coronavirus vaccine doses. To facilitate people, these centres had been established in various areas of the city including Allied Hospital, District Headquarters Hospital, Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, Sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandianwala, ChakJhumra, Sports Complex ChakJhumra, Sports Complex Jaranwala, Government General Hospital Chak 224-RB, New Building RHC Khurrianwala, New Building THQ Samundri, New Building THQ Tandianwala, Social Security Hospital Madina Town, Wapda Hospital, Rural Health Centers Mureed Wala, Chak 174-JB, Chak 134-JB, Chak 229-RB, Chak 65-GB, RHC Lundianwala/Jaranwala, RHC Khurrianwala/Jaranwala, Pindi Sheikh Musa, Kanjwani, Mamukanjan, RHC Chak 400-GB, RHC Chak 153-RB, RHC Chak 374-GB and Chak 469-GB, he added. - APP

PTA renews Telenor license in AJK & GB

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecom Authority (PTA) has renewed Telenor Pakistan's license to operate in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit/Baltistan (GB) to continue empowering the region through its connectivity services. The license renewal signing ceremony took place at PTA headquarter in Islamabad which was attended by Major General (R) Amir Azeem Bajwa, Chairman PTA, IrfanWahab Khan, CEO Telenor Pakistan and its management. Telenor Pakistan has been connecting people in AJK and GB through its state-of-the-art connectivity solutions since 2006 when it was first granted the license. As the first operator to provide its services in this region, Telenor Pakistan has established itself as a market leader over the years. The license, which would have expired on 25 June 2021 is being renewed for 15 years. Speaking at the occasion, IrfanWahab Khan, Chief Executive Officer Telenor Pakistan said, "In this digital age, smart connectivity has become a necessary utility and Telenor Pakistan is committed to continue serving the people of AJK and GB through provision of Next Generation Mobile Services. - APP

Chairman PAL visits KP

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) DrYousufKhusk, visited an under construction literary building project of the provincial office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar. Renowned writers of Pashto language and literature Dr Abasin Yousafzai, Engineer DrZakauallah, KhanumGulzab, Aziz Ijaz, Rifatullah-Rifat were also present on the occasion, said a press release issued here.

While in the technical team, Project Officer, Latif Khan, Assistant Director Khan BadshahNusrat, Civil and Electrical Engineering team of the Works Department briefed about the current pace and performance of the project. On this occasion, the writers of Pakhtunkhwa welcomed the equal interest of the Chairman PAL in literary and administrative matters. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Yousuf Khusk said that the project is in the final stages of completion. As soon as the auditorium and guest house are completed, a full range of provincial, national and international literary activities will begin in Peshawar. - APP

Armed Forces should keep abreast with new technology

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on Thursday emphasised that they must keep abreast with the emerging technology and should make endeavor to deal with the complex and dynamic security environment of the world. The Naval Chief visited National Defence University (NDU), Islamabad and addressed the course participants of National Security and War Course, said a Pakistan Navy news release here received. On his arrival, the Naval Chief was received by President National Defence University Lieutenant General Muhammad Saad. While addressing the course participants, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi reiterated that



jointness remained central concept to the modern concept of military operations as no military force could achieve success in today's warfare single handedly. While focusing on the threat milieu the Admiral dwelled on the various initiatives and developmental plans



of Pakistan Navy in line with his vision of projecting Pakistan Navy as a formidable regional maritime power with global outlook. The Naval Chief emphasised that Pakistan Navy has always been at the forefront in ensuring safety and security of international wa-

ters through collaborative maritime security and independent initiative of Regional Maritime Security Patrols. He further highlighted on the need to harness the potential of Pakistan's immense maritime resources to provide the much needed

stimulus to national economy, to which Pakistan Navy was effectively supporting the Government. Naval Chief also emphasised that Pakistan Navy with the active support of sister services is ready to tackle the maritime security challenges faced by the country. Chief of the Naval Staff paid rich tributes to the role and sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces for the defence and security of the country. The Admiral appreciated the efforts of National Defence University for providing the academic stimulus and honing the professional abilities of course participants. National Defence University is the apex military training institute of Pakistan inculcating advanced professional military training to officers of Pakistan Armed Forces and friendly countries for assuming future key Command and Staff appointments.

Briefs

Education to tackle pandemic underway

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training is set to build a resilient education system under the COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Resilience in Education Project (COVID-19-RRREP) to address the challenges of pandemic and its lethal effects on education sector. According to the press release issued on Thursday by the Federal Education Ministry, Recovery phase of project is bound to procure hygiene supplies mentioned in sub component titled "Procurement and distribution of basic sanitization and hygiene supplies to public schools for safe school reopening". These supplies are included consumables (health kits for students of lagging districts) envisaged for 12000 schools in the first phase across the country. In this regard, the ministry has signed contract agreement (cost USD 9 million) with UNICEF to procure these Hygiene Kits and distribute these supplies in 12000 Schools across the country, in the first phase. For this purpose the Funds of 3.7 Million USD has been transferred to the UNICEF to procure & supply these Hygiene Kits till 30th November, 2021.

Police arrest nine outlaws

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Police have arrested nine accused from different areas of the district including a lady who killed a minor boy over a petty dispute. In the first case Injra police arrested Kosar Jabeen who was accused of killing a three years old boy Sajid Khan over a petty dispute with his parents. In another incident police arrested two car lifters Adnan and Sajjad who were accused of stealing a car almost two weeks ago from Hasanabdal. In another attempt police arrested three accused allegedly involved in drug peddling namely Shahid Mehmood, Asad Hussain, Sajjad Khan and Sameer Khan from different areas and recovered 7.8 kg charrs from their possession. In another attempt police arrested two proclaimed offenders Azhar Khan and Maarof Shah wanted by the police in different cases.

Chairman PAL visits literary project

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) Dr. Yousuf Khushk, visited an under construction literary building project of the provincial office Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar. Renowned writers of Pashto language and literature Dr. Abasin Yousafzai, Engineer Dr. Zakaullah, Khanum Gulzeb, Aziz Ijaz, Rifaatullah Rifaat were also present on the occasion, said a press release issued here. While in the technical team, Project Officer, Latif Khan, Assistant Director Khan Badshah Nusrat, Civil and Electrical Engineering team of the Works Department briefed about the current pace and performance of the project. On this occasion, the writers of Pakhtunkhwa welcomed the equal interest of the Chairman PAL in literary and administrative matters. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Yousuf Khushk said that the project is in the final stages of completion. As soon as the auditorium and guest house are completed, a full range of provincial, national and international literary activities will begin in Peshawar. - APP

Palestinian envoy lauds COMSTECH scholarships

Mr. Rabaei appreciated COMSTECH announcement of scholarships and fellowships for Palestinian students and assured full participation of Govt of Palestine and Embassy of Palestine in scholarship program

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Palestine, Mr. Ahmed Jawad A. Rabaei visited COMSTECH on the invitation of the Coordinator General COMSTECH, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary to discuss the mechanism for execution of 500 scholarships for Palestinian students recently and explore avenues of mutual cooperation in the area of science and technology. Prof. Choudhary informed that the programme management unit has been established at COMSTECH to execute this programme. He said, that Palestinian students would be fully facilitated for enrollment in Pakistani universities. Prof. Choudhary also mentioned that online education facilities would also be provided to Palestinian students by Pakistani universities. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, COMSTECH said that Palestinian people



are under aggression and siege by occupied forces. They have limited access to higher education and research facilities. Over seven decades of occupation has systematically destroyed

educational and socio-economic infra-structures of Palestinian state. In order to support them, COMSTECH launched a special program offering research fellowships, technicians training &

workshop participation grants for Palestinian students. Mr. Rabaei appreciated COMSTECH announcement of scholarships and fellowships for Palestinian students and assured full

participation of Government of Palestine and Embassy of Palestine in scholarship program and its further facilitation for implementation of this programme. The Ambassador, on the behalf of government and Palestinian people, thanked COMSTECH, AFSUP and member institutions of COMSTECH-MOFA Consortium of Excellence for offering 500 scholarships for Palestinian students. He appreciated the efforts and support extended by the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan to Palestinian people. The Ambassador offered one million Olive trees to COMSTECH for plantation in universities and institutions that have offered these scholarships. COMSTECH and the embassy of Palestine agreed to work together expeditionary to chalk out the modalities of the work program. Both the dignitaries exchanged souvenirs of memorandum. The senior officials of COMSTECH were also present in the meeting.



ISLAMABAD: Sheikh Saud bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, held a farewell party for Mr. Masoud Talib Al-Athbi, second Secretary at the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Islamabad, on the occasion of the end of his tenure at the Qatari Embassy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. - DNA

16,729 drivers' fined, special squads constituted

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD, Jun 24 (AP)-As per directions of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Qazi Jamil Ul Rehman, Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) constituted special squads to take action against vehicles with fancy and non-pattern number plates in the capital city. The action has also been ordered against those preparing such number plates and vendors, according to the officials. According to the details, Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) have challaned 16,729 vehicle during the ongoing campaign against

traffic rules violations. Senior superintendent of Traffic Police Syed Karrar Hussain said that efforts of the officers and Jawans have helped significantly reduce the number of fatal accidents. He said similar initiatives need to be taken to ensure safety of lives of the citizen and make Islamabad an accident-free city. He said that in future, the ITP aim to enforce a zero tolerance policy as it is moral responsibility to spread awareness regarding road safety while enforcing laws. Similarly, the behavior of citizens on the road reflects the social norms of the society, he added.

5m micro-entrepreneurs to benefit from Ecommerce

Extreme Commerce and Dukan.pk collaborate to empower people to achieve self-sufficiency through e-commerce and digital skills

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: 82.20% enterprises in Pakistan are facing a cash flow shortage in the COVID-19 period. This puts a serious challenge for starting a business in Pakistan. Although Pakistan ranks at 72 among 190 countries on starting a business on the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report 2020, the new dynamics demand a new approach for the micro, small and medium enterprises. This gap has been filled by

the two leading enterprises in Pakistan by joining hands, with a common goal of empowering the people of Pakistan to achieve self-sufficiency through e-commerce and digital skills. Dukan.pk has partnered with Extreme Commerce to help local businesses sell online. Extreme Commerce is the largest online selling community of Pakistan with approximately 700,000 members. It has trained and helped thousands of people to sell online in the e-commerce platform and generate over \$100 million in sales through Amazon, eBay,

and other platforms. The partnership will look into the possibilities to capacitate businesses for online payments as well. 72.29% enterprises in Pakistan reported cash as the major payment method. 59.74% Micro Small and Medium Enterprises in Pakistan reported bank transfer method, 24.24% used personal cheque to make payments, 22.08% online payment method, 13.85% debit or credit cards, 6.49% money orders, and 4.33% used mobile payment methods. The government plans to digitize

cash on delivery (CoD) payments above PKR 10000 by the year 2022, and all CoD payments will be replaced with online payments by the year 2029. Extreme Commerce's Founder and CEO, Sunny Ali said, "It is heartening to see the emergence of local platforms like Dukan.pk to help sellers reach their customers. We are proud to partner with the leader in this space." He further said, "this partnership will allow anyone with a smartphone to gain e-commerce selling skills and equip them with easy-to-use technology."

Modernization of Capital is top priority: Awan

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Capital Development Authority Ali Nawaz Awan on Thursday said that his government's top priority is to modernize the federal capital to bring it at par with the capitals of developed countries. He said that the government has to uplift rural areas of Islamabad for which all available resources are being utilized. The federal government has allocated sufficient funds in the budget to ensure completion of the development schemes in the capital. During his visit at the market H-9, he said "Islamabad is changing whether it is rural or urban area as development projects were underway in both the areas without discrimination". He said criticism of budget by opposition parties without reading the budget book was an irresponsible behavior, adding that federal government presented public-friendly budget. He said parking problems in Sunday Bazaar would be resolved as soon as a large number of lower and middle class people visited here for shopping. Awan lauded the role of National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) for effectively curbing coronavirus in the country. He urged the citizens not to believe in rumors and get vaccinated against the deadly virus. - DNA



7 criminals held, snatched car recovered

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police have held seven criminals and recovered snatched car and weapons from their possession, a police spokesman said. SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer had assigned the task to Zonal SPs to accelerate efforts against criminals in the city. Following his directions, Shams Colony police apprehended two members of street criminals' gang later identified as Aamir Sohail and Manzoor. The police also recovered two 30 bore pistols along with ammunition from their possession. During the preliminary investigation, they confessed having their involvement in snatching incidents in the areas of Shams Colony. Further investigation is underway from him. Furthermore Industrial-Area police apprehended accused Kamran and recovered a snatched car from him Karachi Company police arrested two accused Waqar and Tariq involved in a theft case. Sihala police arrested two accused including a proclaimed offender Anees Idress and Anwer-Ullah and recovered 30 bore pistol from their possession.

SC announces vacancies of technical interns

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) has announced vacancies of Technical Interns (Software Developers and Network Technicians) for a period of one year commencing in July/August 2021. The technical interns application form and required qualifications/terms and conditions are mentioned in the advertisement available on the SC's website www.supremecourt.gov.pk/careers. Interested candidates can apply online after going through the advertisement. The deadline for submitting applications is June 27.

Court adjourns reference against ex-sec interior

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Thursday adjourned hearing till July 8, on reference against former interior secretary Shahid Khan pertaining to illegal plot allotment. AC-II Judge Muhammad Azam Khan heard the reference filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) regarding illegal plot allotment of National Police Foundation (NPF). NAB Prosecutor Usman Masood appeared before the court. The court adjourned the case due to absence of defense counsel Tania Kamal till next date. Meanwhile, the same court adjourned Grand Hyatt Lease cancellation case till July 26. The hearing was adjourned without proceeding as the review petition was already pending with the top court.

Samples from mobile phone screens can detect Covid

ISLAMABAD: A team of researchers has developed an accurate, non-invasive, and low-cost method of testing for Covid-19 using samples taken from the screens of mobile phones. The team led by University College London researchers analysed swabs from smartphone screens rather than directly from people and found that people who tested positive by the regular nasal swabbing PCR tests were also positive when samples were taken from phone screens. The new method - known as Phone Screen Testing (PoST) - detected the Covid-19 virus on the phones of 81 to 100 per cent of contagious people with a high viral load, suggesting it is as accurate as antigen lateral flow tests, Medical Daily reported. - APP

Transforming food systems vital to achieve SDGs

Dr. Nishtar presented Pakistan's perspective on nutrition centered social protection operations and said, "Nutrition is embedded in the Ehsaas strategy post-COVID-19"

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar on Thursday emphasized that transforming our food systems should be central to our efforts for achieving Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Dr. Nishtar was keynoting the two high-level international events hosted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and World Food Programme (WFP). Dr. Nishtar presented Pakistan's perspective on nutrition centered social protection operations and said, "Nutrition is embedded in the Ehsaas strategy post-COVID. The pandemic has shown that it is possible to place nutrition at the heart of poverty alleviation objectives". She further accentuated that Ehsaas aims to promote equalities, which amongst other things centers on human capital de-

velopment, of which healthy diet is a core component. Nutrition, therefore, is very important part of Ehsaas framework and the programme looks at it holistically. The theme of IPU's high-level parliamentary meeting was "Transforming food systems for health, equity, and sustainability". Alongside Dr. Nishtar, other eminent speakers were Gerda Verburg, UN Assistant Secretary-General and SUN Movement Coordinator; Agnes Kalibata, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit; QUDONGYU, DirectorGen-



eral, FAO. The meeting identified entry points for parliamentary action to ensure the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food responds to health, equity and sustainability imperatives. The outcomes of the meeting informed the preparatory process of the UN Food Systems Summit. The IPU is the global organization of national parliaments, with 179 Member Parliaments out of the 193 countries in the world. Earlier, World Food Programme (WFP) hosted a side event for Executive Board members and partners that talked about WFP's support to national social protection, as a way of reaching Zero Hunger.

A number of partners were invited to speak about their perspectives on WFP's work including Germany's BMZ, Sweden's Sida, and the World Bank. From Pakistan, Dr. Sania Nishtar highlighted the central role of Ehsaas in tackling nutrition. Outlining Ehsaas' social protection role in post-COVID context, Dr. Nishtar shared that Ehsaas Nashonuma is a conditional cash transfer program aimed at tackling stunting among children under two years of age, along with pregnant and lactating mothers. In the first phase, 50 Ehsaas Nashonuma Centers have been opened across 14 most stunted districts of Pakistan. Also, predicated on the improved nutrition outcomes of poor families, National poverty graduation initiative of Ehsaas has an emphasis on asset transfers of goats and chicken and a kitchen gardening initiative to help low-income families to supplement vegetables and fruits intake.

Briefs

Oil tankers associations split over strike call

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The oil tanker associations have been divided over the issue of country-wide strike as the Oil Tanker Owners Association has announced its non-participation in the strike.

The All Pakistan Oil Tankers Contractors Association (APOTCA) gave a call to halt oil supply across the country from today (Thursday). The call was given to stop illegal and commercial loading. Reportedly, the strike call has divided the oil tankers association into two bodies. The Oil Tanker Owners Association has detached itself from the strike and continued its streaming of oil whereas the APOTCA froze oil supply all over the country. The strike call by APOTCA might lead to scarcity of petroleum products in the country as the filling stations would obtain their petrol supply only from oil marketing companies' (OMCs) tankers.

The APOTCA wants a 50% quota in White Oil Pipeline seeking an even division in the supply of petroleum products, 50% by roads and 50% through the pipeline. The OMCs were supplying 60% diesel supply using pipeline and 40% via roads. The other demand of the APOTCA includes a cut in the tax rate on oil transportation and fixation of queue structure from the current 3% to 2%.

QAU organizes seminar on report writing

ISLAMABAD: Quality Enhancement Cell, Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU) Islamabad organized a seminar to highlight various parameters of self-assessment, evaluation of different degree programs, and writing report of institutional assessment.

The objective of the seminar was to understand the overall performance of the academic institutes. The seminar convened by Chairman QAU self-assessment committee Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ishtiaq Ali, Prof. Dr. Jamil Aslam, Director QEC, Muhammad Fayyaz Khan, and In-Charge QEC of affiliated colleges Dr. Asif Jamal. Some thirty nominated program team members from QAU faculty and Chairman Liaison committee Prof. Naeem Dar along with nineteen QEC members from the affiliated colleges participated in the seminar. While addressing the audience, Dr. Muhammad Ishtiaq Ali provided a brief introduction of the self-assessment process and its role in the progress of academic institutes both in terms of national and international perspectives. — APP

AIOU starts online exam of PG

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is holding online examinations of post graduate programs offered in autumn 2020 semester including PGD, MA, M Sc, MLIS, M Com, MBA, MPA and M Ed from July 4-11, 2021.

The examination will be held through Learning Management System (LMS) and all preparations have been finalized in this regard. The department of ICT has created and activated LMS accounts of all students enrolled in these programs. Date sheet and instructions for these examinations have also been uploaded on the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). The students will access these accounts through their usernames and passwords. By default, usernames are the registration numbers of the students and passwords are their roll numbers. All those students who lack computer and internet facilities are instructed to utilize computer laboratories established at the regional centers for this purpose. All regional centers have been given instructions to facilitate students in this regard.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani exchanging views with Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa, Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority (CPECA) at Parliament House Islamabad. —DNA

ICCI for promoting Pakistan-Niger bilateral trade tries

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that Africa was a big market and Pakistani entrepreneurs should get better penetration into Niger's markets that would enable them to fully tap African region for trade and investment

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) stressed that the business class of Pakistan and Niger should focus on exploring business matchmakings and partnerships as both countries have good potential to enhance business relations in many fields including agriculture, textile, food products, pharmaceuticals, auto industry and mining. He said that by developing close cooperation with Niger, Pakistan could get better access to the huge African market for trade and exports. He said this while addressing a dinner reception hosted in honor of a business delegation of Niger Republic that visited Pakistan led by their Commerce and Trade Minister Gabo Sabo Mocrar.

Niger's Minister for Investment Zakaria Wergo, Secretary Industry Abdoulaye Boubacar, prominent



businessman Saleem Gado Sabo and others were in the delegation. Abdul Razak Dawood Advisor on Commerce and Investment, Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri Federal Minister for Religious Affairs, Ahmed Ali Sirohey, Pakistan's Ambassador to Niger and members of local business community were present at the occasion.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that Africa was a big market and Pakistani entrepreneurs should get better penetration into Niger's markets that would enable them to fully tap African region for trade and investment.

He said that Pakistan was producing many quality products including textiles, rice, pharmaceuticals,

surgical instruments, IT products, light engineering goods, sports & leather products and emphasized that Niger's business community should focus on importing these products from Pakistan that would also help in further improving bilateral trade between our two countries. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate in connect-

ing the entrepreneurs of Niger with right partners in Pakistan. Speaking at the occasion, Niger's Minister for Commerce and Trade Gabo Sabo Mocrar said that his country was eager to attract foreign investment and has taken steps to improve business climate, therefore, Pakistani investors should focus on Niger for JVs and investment. He said that his government was planning to establish special economic zones (SEZs) for Pakistan to invest in various sectors. He said that the Pakistani investors could invest in Niger in infrastructure development, agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other industries.

He said that promoting trade with Pakistan in multiple sectors was the priority of his government and hoped that their current visit to Pakistan would be helpful in setting up some sustainable business partnerships between the two countries.

SECP specifies framework for Debt, Hybrid ETFs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In line with its objectives of creating a competitive and conducive playing field and to diversify the range of Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) available to investors, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has specified the framework for issuance of Debt and Hybrid ETFs through Circular No 20 of 2021. The circular

also updates the existing framework for Equity ETFs, said a press release issued here. Just like equity ETFs, the debt ETFs are also passively managed and trade on a regular exchange. Debt ETFs allow ordinary investors to gain passive exposure to fixed income securities such as corporate bonds or Treasuries in an inexpensive way, while Hybrid ETFs allow investment in an index which has both debt and equity securities.

Government plans exchange of Agri research with China

SHAHEEN HANFI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam Thursday said the government had planned to exchange research and technology with China to improve agriculture production. "We will send our agriculture scientists and researchers to China and invite the Chinese researchers to our country to share knowledge and technology related to the agriculture

sector with each other," he said addressing a cheques distribution ceremony to Pakistan Agriculture and Research Council (PARC) pensioners. National Assembly's Standing committee for National Food Security and Research Chairman Rao Ajmal, Federal Secretary Food Security Ghufuran Memon and PARC Chairman Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan were also present on the occasion. Fakhar Imam said the government had given priority to the agriculture sector in



the budget keeping in view its huge share (19.2 percent) in the gross domestic product. The incumbent government

had taken steps to facilitate the farmers, and that was why three bumper crops were witnessed in the outgoing fiscal year, he added. The minister said they had empowered youth and women through technical skill development programmes. He said it was great achievement that today the PARC pensioners were getting their pensions and arrears of last five years. They had made joint efforts to get Rs 800 million allocated for 275 families of pensioners, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Barrister Zafarullah hosted lunch for the outgoing ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada. Also seen in the picture are former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Ahsan Iqbal, Tariq Fatemi, Sartaj Aziz and others. — DNA

HR ministry to raise PWDs problems

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Dr. Shireen Mazari has said that Ministry of Human Rights would raise the problems of people with disabilities in federal cabinet especially ensuring them 2% quota in federal departments/divisions. Chairing the second meeting of the Council on Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Mazari said that Federal Secretary for Human Rights will also approach its counterparts to take necessary actions for ensuring 2% quota for persons with disabilities in jobs as well as secretar-

ies of ministries would also be called in the next council meeting. The second meeting of the Council on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was held to discuss making Islamabad friendly city for persons with disabilities and ensuring 2% quota of job for persons with disabilities in federal ministries/divisions.

The council comprises members of National Assembly, Senate, members from the Ministry of Information, Finance, Education, and PASS; Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA); Executive Director National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (NIRM); and three Persons with Disability.

FB launches financial education initiative for women

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Facebook is expanding its women-empowerment focused initiative, 'SheMeansBusiness' to bolster financial inclusion and resiliency of women-led businesses in Pakistan. Implemented in partnership with State Bank and the USAID Small and Medium Enterprise Activity (SMEA), the program's new component, 'Business Resilience through Financial Education (BRFE)' aims at improving financial management skills to enhance the resilience and sustainability of women-led small and medium businesses (SMBs) in the country. The US Embassy Islamabad Chargé d'affaires Lesslie Viguier and Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, Ms. Sima Kamil virtually inaugurated BRFE at an official event, with a number of senior government officials and

representatives of Facebook, Chambers of Commerce, USAID, Ministry of Commerce and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) in attendance.

Director of Policy Programs and Government Outreach for Asia Pacific at Facebook and Global Head of SheMeansBusiness, Beth Ann Lim delivered the keynote speech, shedding a detailed light on Facebook's objectives of 'SheMeansBusiness' and the newly launched Business Resilience through Financial Education (BRFE) component in Pakistan along with other Asia Pacific countries. She said 'SheMeansBusiness' is operating in 21 countries around the world, including Pakistan and more than 1 million women have been trained in digital

skills worldwide by Facebook and its partners. Facebook piloted BRFE with USAID SMEA, targeting the alumni of SheMeansBusiness digital marketing training program. The two partners have implemented the SheMeansBusiness program in Pakistan since May 2020, to enhance the digital marketing and financial literacy skills of diverse groups of female entrepreneurs from across the country.

In a video message, Chargé d'affaires Lesslie Viguier highlighted that the US Government holds the economic empowerment of women as a key pillar of its development efforts in Pakistan and across the world and firmly believes that investing in women's empowerment can help eradicate

extreme poverty and build vibrant economies.

In her video message, the Deputy Governor State Bank Ms. Sima Kamil appreciated the efforts of Facebook and other partners for socio-economic uplift of women in Pakistan. She said it is crucial for women led small and medium businesses to achieve a degree of sustainability and resiliency through skill enhancement and access to finance. She said initiatives like BRFE will enable and empower Pakistani women to enhance their impact in the process of nation building. Sharing her thoughts, Beth Ann Lim said: "Financial education is crucial for sustainability of women-led businesses in Pakistan and elsewhere. SheMeansBusiness mirrors Facebook's long-term commitment to supporting the economic development of women in the APAC region, with a strong focus on sustainability of women-led businesses."

Two-day Int'l seminar concludes at PMAS-AAUR

RAWALPINDI: The experts on Thursday recommended to make-shift trend of horticultural fresh crops to value addition and minimize the post-harvest losses. They suggested developing hybrid seeds and promoting research to make horticultural products in value added foods and discourage import from neighbouring countries and promoting deficient horticultural crops through 'Indigenous Production Technology'. Dr Ghulam M. Ali member of plants & sciences division, PARC was the chief guest while Prof Dr Qamar-uz-Zaman Vice-Chancellor of PMAS-AAUR and Dr Waqar from USAID were the guest of honours.

While addressing the participants, Dr Ghulam M Ali said that Pakistan has a diverse geography and ecosystem but unfortunately, we are lacking in utilization. He further said science, research and technology innovations are the keys to the development and prosperity of any country. He was of the view that after completion of education the students should establish new private research labs which would not only help in developing new hybrid seeds but overcome unemployment. Dr Waqar said that agriculture rules the world as all human beings and animals depend upon it for their survival. — APP

IESCO issues power suspension programme

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued 2-day power suspension programme for Friday and Saturday 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 on Friday From 05:30 AM to 07:30 AM Siegalabad, Dhudial Rural, Khanpur, Dhadiyal City, Jund Awan, Dhadiyal Express, Syed Kasran, Doda, C.T.M, Mulhal Mughals, Latifal Feeders, from 07:00 AM to 11:00 AM Daryala Jalip, Jakhar Feeders From 07:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Behkri, Mureed, Mangwal, Maingon from 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Iqbal Town, Fazaia, Tarlai, Highway Feeders.

On Saturday June from 08:00 AM to 01:00 PM Dhudial City, Sarkal, KRL, Fazia, Jinnah Camp, Falcon, CDA, FHS, I-8/4, Shakrial, Noor Mohammad, Kurry Road, Khurram Colony, Service Road, Tariq Shaheed, Muslim Town, Khaipur Feeder from 05:00 AM to 07:00 AM Muntaz Steel, Pothohar Steel, Banni, M Steel Mills, International School, S.S Steel, Capital Steel, I-10/1, Faisal Floor Mill, Noor Flour Mill, Amin Town, Mohammadi Colony, New PTN, Exchange, I-10 Sector, Furnace, Khawaja S. Syed, PTN, United Steel, PTV 2 Feeders and surrounding areas.

IRSA releases 270,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 270,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 231,500 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1445.70 feet, which was 61.70 feet higher than its dead level 1384 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 111,800 and 155,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1154.40 feet, which was 116.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 44,300 and 40,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 160,600, 152,900 and 44,900 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 39,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 5,500 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

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Afghanistan's prospects

AS US troops continue a rapid withdrawal from Afghanistan, Taliban forces have already shown the degree of their strength, launching successive operations in the north of the country. They have taken over a significant part of the Kunduz province, effectively cutting off Afghanistan's links with Tajikistan. This is an important trading route for the country. The US has called President Ashraf Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, the head of Afghanistan's Peace Commission to hold discussions in Washington. But the question is whether there is much that these persons can do and whether the rift that Afghanistan is to become an Islamic Republic, as Mr Ghani seeks or an Islamic Emirate as the Taliban wish.

The PM has categorically said that the Taliban cannot win over the whole of the country, and they must agree to some power-sharing formula rather than aiming to be the sole arbiters of power in Afghanistan. In an oped piece in The Washington Post, Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that while Pakistan partners America in seeking peace and stability in Afghanistan, as well as economic growth for its people, it will not support bases which can be used to hit Afghanistan on its own soil. This is good sense. In the past we have paid a heavy price whenever we offered such services to the US, be it during the dictatorships of Generals Ayub Khan and Ziaul Haq, or under General Musharraf. Pakistan should continue to push for peace in Afghanistan without siding with any of the warring factions. However, the problem arises of how the growing force of Daesh and the Taliban can be controlled in Afghanistan and kept under check.

A pragmatic solution has to be found. This can only come through dialogue. The Taliban have said they are willing to negotiate but it is unclear with whom they will negotiate. President Joe Biden has been asked to meet with top Afghan leaders, as well as other figures involved in the conflict. He has not yet held direct talks with Imran Khan, although Pakistan stands on the borders of Afghanistan and will suffer from any growth in militancy in that region. A joint role has to be played by all parties, and all influence used to ensure Afghanistan can indeed find the peace it so desperately seeks and the stability that is required to give its people a sense of normalcy and a return towards ordinary life.

Climate change

OFFICIALS from the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) reported that significant changes in the sea surface levels will increase the frequency of tropical cyclones in the Arabian Sea by as much as ten times. This shows the severity with which the country could experience the effects of climate change—a multifaceted problem with a diverse range of repercussions for the world. Surely, the government must realise that an all-inclusive environmental policy that is preventative rather than just reactionary is necessary.

As of right now, our environmental efforts have been focused on recovering from the losses incurred overtime. Rapid urbanisation and expansion reduced our national green cover for which the government embarked on projects like the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami, Clean and Green Pakistan along with the Protected Areas Initiative and the Eco-system Restoration Fund. Each of these focus on tree plantation in the hopes that the ecosystem will restore itself eventually. However, when other problems persist, that objective becomes harder to achieve.

Like it or not, Pakistan is still failing to comprehend the urgency of the need to acknowledge the dire ramifications of the rapidly changing atmosphere, as well as the need to combat it. The Global Climate Risk Index of 2020 ranked Pakistan as the fifth most country vulnerable to the effects of climate change. This is primarily due to on-going practices of irresponsible waste disposal, depletion of forest cover, unsustainable use of water—especially when it comes to irrigation—extensive use of motor vehicles, industrial air pollution and crop residue burning, each of which contributes to worsening smog, an ever-growing carbon footprint, floods, lethal heat waves and now, an increased threat of destructive tropical cyclones.

Perhaps we have been too quick to champion ourselves as an environmentally responsible country when the reality is that protection at micro and macro levels still remains unaddressed and unresolved. Our authorities must create an extensive strategy to neutralise, if not eliminate, the diverse effects of climate change on Pakistan. If we have taken such a strong stance against deforestation, there is no doubt that the same commitment can be applied elsewhere. There is a long way to go before we can offer the environment the protection it truly needs.

Assessing the level of functionality of Gwadar Port till the end of the first phase of CPEC in 2020

Dr. Maliha Zeba Khan & Naufil Shahrukh

GWADAR Port, once a small fishermen village has gained much attention worldwide since 2002 when Gwadar Port was inaugurated by Wu Bangguo, the Chinese Vice-Premier. Soon after that, the port went through metamorphic development work. Especially since formal inauguration of CPEC, there have been proposed and started several development projects for Gwadar Port. But unfortunately, despite all tall claims of changing the destiny of Balochistan in particular and Pakistan in general through transforming Gwadar Port, many development projects related with the port have actually been halted at certain stages or slowed down largely causing a stir in provincial leadership and the people of Balochistan. Gwadar Port as the starting point of CPEC has emerged as the most questioned part of the project due to it coming up as not fully-functional till the end of the year 2020 which is the concluding time of phase one of CPEC.

Commercial seaports are the core resource of not only national economy; but defense and territorial security, inter and multi-modal transportation conjunctions, and last but not the least by any means, the commercial diplomacy of littoral countries or island-states. Fully functional seaports are the key to extensive and sustainable economic development. Even in the modern world of technological advancements and evolving economic strategies, the port industry is a substantial national resource which can act as an employment provider/facilitator at different levels, and is trusted to run the national economy unrestricted. It is the most significant seam that abuts different transportation modes too.

Pakistan is a country blessed with a naturally deep sea across its coastline by and large. The country has three ports currently, Karachi Port and Port Qasim which are fully functional, though not as per their full capacity individually, mainly as feeder ports but have been used as transit ports too; whereas Gwadar Port is the third deep sea port of Pakistan which is considered a transit port that has not yet been able to function fully. The partial operational capacity is believed to be mere ceremonial due to some serious flaws in the policy making and preferences, and value chain which need to be identified for determining the reasons of poor or slow functioning of Gwadar Port. Gwadar Port is the one which is key port to CPEC. Since April

2015 when CPEC was inaugurated, there have been surfacing many questions regarding pace and success or failure of CPEC and its related projects by political parties, provincial governments, and the people of Balochistan and other provinces from where these routes have to pass through as part of the main corridor. If the reasons for Gwadar Port's poor operational capabilities are to be discussed, the argument can be established in the four aspects as per substantive analysis, i.e., technical, political, socioeconomic, and security.

The technical aspect includes a number of reasons like inadequate value chain due to lack of visionary approach; tunnel vision about intermodal and multimodal transportation and its link with port structure and related infrastructure; lack of advanced mechanized setup for customs clearance of the cargo particularly due to no or slow internet; and no spending on the port development under CPEC. Therefore, the fundamental requirements for basic port structure like construction of more berths and another breakwater as per plan, and even dredging of the previously constructed berths could not be done in these years. Now the draft has decreased significantly by 11 meters from 14 meters and if dredging would further be delayed, that could harm the ships reaching at the berths. The tender/bid for both projects was processed in September 2020 but the project has not been started as yet. Likewise, Gwadar Port is yet to see active liquid and dry terminals. This is affecting the value chain badly as even after many years the port has not become fully functional. Another issue affecting the value chain is a lack of modern-day transportation based on intermodal/multimodal connectivity, i.e., containerized shipping, port terminals, road and railroad links for connectivity with hinterland terminals which are important for transit trade, and airports. So far, Gwadar city has one airport with limited operational capability, but the road and rail infrastructure supporting intermodal transport has not yet been established fully. On the other hand, the project of Eastbay Expressway has not yet been completed leaving a big question mark at the infrastructure building of Gwadar Port. Other connecting roads like the one connecting Turbat to the coastal highway is still far behind from completion, and due to being late start, it could not be fetching the benefits of early harvest of CPEC.

The political reasons behind stalled progress of Gwadar Port are complex. There seems a lack of political will to work on development plans under CPEC for which Gwadar Port carries the status of gateway. Notwithstanding the vociferous political statements by the previous government/s, Gwadar port in particular and Balochistan in general have

not been given their rightful share of the projects. Despite Gwadar being the initiating point of CPEC which is a development project worth billions of dollars, no project has been designed for it even after five years. The financial volume of CPEC is more than \$50 billion but Balochistan's share in this is merely 1%, which depicts the behavior of the quarters concerned towards Gwadar and Balochistan. The first phase (2015-2020) of CPEC was based on development of road infrastructure and other communication networks that work as enablers for later phases of the project, but Gwadar remained deprived of such projects as well. Even political input from Balochistan was not included till 2018. The issue of polarization too seems getting strong significantly, and the divide and political differences present within the society are making things grave; whereas the bureaucracies there too are making things difficult to handle. There are issues of inefficient working of some of the bureaucratic offices which is a major discouraging factor for smooth running of development projects. Even the officials about whom that had been decided mutually by federal and provincial governments to be sitting in sub-offices at Gwadar for four months to facilitate the smooth execution of CPEC projects including Gwadar Port and its ancillary facilities are not found sitting in these sub-offices showing nonseriousness towards the commitment. Politically motivated priorities of the previous government have directed/ influenced CPEC's first phase mainly towards energy projects to overcome power shortages in the industrial zones of other regions instead of Gwadar Port.

The socioeconomic reasons are one of the most ignored areas which have been causing mutual distrust and polarization within society. Despite the fact that people are the core focus of all policies, planning for Gwadar Port as well as CPEC appears to have not been focused on the local population and their concerns, and ground realities due to which Balochistan felt ignored in the policy making. The people of Balochistan, especially from the coastline, find themselves in disconnect from the process of policy decision-making. Intrinsically, these areas have been underdeveloped. The communities living in Balochistan belong to different ethnicities with certain mindsets, ideologies and customs. The policies meant for these areas need to be structured by keeping their grievances and concerns in view, and to make them feel part of the decision making process, thus giving them a sense of inclusiveness. It was for the first time in 2019 when the federal government made the provincial government a direct part of policymaking and valued their feedback and input, but it will take time to repair the

damage done to the mutual trust levels. The socioeconomic grievance which later transform into political extremes can be mitigated through speedy work on SEZs and establishing industries to make them direct beneficiary as well as stakeholder to the development projects.

Last but not least are the security reasons which have hindered functioning of Gwadar Port since its establishment in the year 2002; and then inauguration of CPEC in 2015 has brought a new wave of security challenges to the region. The threats and even attempts to attack these development projects by declaring them unjust for Baloch people have become a serious concern for the state agencies. There has been a number of reasons behind these increased security concerns including involvement of other regional actors with certain agendas like destabilizing Balochistan to halt the progress under different political or socioeconomic plans. In some of the cases, the external actors do utilize natives with certain inclinations and fund them to create law and order situation in the region. This is resulting in precarious conditions for the development projects undergoing in different areas of Balochistan. The security concerns are the most discouraging factor to deter potential international investors and need to be resolved as primary requirement along with provision of utilities like electricity, potable water, gas, and stable high speed internet connectivity, and social services like health, education, and waste management.

A multipronged coherent approach to deal with the delays in the development work is the only key to get benefits from Gwadar Port and CPEC and to enter into the second phase of CPEC which will start focusing on business to business and people to people contacts and establishment of businesses and entrepreneurs.

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Extended BRI health partnership

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



CHINA the "champion" of pure "humanity" and "pioneer" of vaccine diplomacy has been helping the developing countries, weaker communities, marginalized groups, fragile civil society, and numerous organizations battling against the deadly pandemic of COVID-19 since its outbreak.

Now China is rated as real "savior" of struggling humanity in the world in which visionary president Xi Jinping philosophies of "shared prosperity", equitable and equal world have played an important role.

Most recently the State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi presided over the High level video conference on Belt and Road International Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific which vividly reflected Chinese superior state policies of services and integrated mechanism of human survival.

On this occasion, Chinese President Xi Jinping highlighted Chinese willingness to work with all parties to build a closer "Belt and Road" partnership. He showcased the purpose of proposing the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to inherit the Silk Road spirit jointly build an open cooperation platform and provide new impetus for the cooperation and development of all countries.

Chinese president hailed the pragmatic progress of the BRI which have actively enhanced connectivity in policy, infrastructure, trade, finance and people-to-people ties. He said a partnership for all-dimensional and composite connectivity has been set up, which opened up new prospects for common development.

Chinese president Xi highlighted holistic policies of China which has been supporting and assisting each other in the most difficult times and pushed forward the construction of the BRI, conveying confidence and strength to the international community and making an important contribution to global cooperation against the pandemic and economic recovery since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chinese president reiterated that the joint pursuit of the BRI should follow the principles of extensive consultation, joint contribution and shared benefits, pursue open, green and clean cooperation, as well as pursuing high-standard cooperation to improve people's lives and promote sustainable development.

The conference focused on COVID-19 prevention and control cooperation in the region and the region's economic recovery. It provided a platform for the representatives of more than 30 countries and international organizations to pool their wisdom in addressing the challenges the region faces. It hopes that the quality of Belt and Road cooperation projects will be higher in the future, and although infrastructure constructions remain crucial, more attention will be paid to strengthen public health collaboration and ensure the reliability and security of supply chains, and enhance cooperation in innovation, technology and green development.

It has further strengthened its regional as well as global stature being a staunch supporter of better and healthier world. It showcased its holistic approach towards the help of struggling people combating against COVID-19 around the globe. It also highlighted its multiculturalism global drive by promoting global cooperation by negating all sorts of propaganda and discriminatory policies.

The noble initiative received immense response from the other participants in the conference reflecting regional unity and harmony and desire to get their socioeconomic development back on the right track at an early date, build more responsive and efficient public health systems, and develop new growth engines through international cooperation.

During which spirits of global solidarity and cooperation was recognized as the most important and effective tools for defeating the COVID-19 pandemic. It upheld the importance of Chinese holistic strategy of humanity, sharing & caring projecting that "No one can be safe until everyone is safe". For the time immortal Since China has always been firmly believed in equitable and equal world so it has now stressed the need to have equitable distribution system/mechanism of vaccines.

Unlike the Build Back Better World (B3W) initiative the US proposed at the G7 Summit earlier this month, the Belt and

Road Initiative (BRI) starts from the practical needs of the participants rather than any single country's geopolitical ambitions. Functioning on the basis of joint construction, collective consultation and benefit sharing, instead of one participant telling the others what to do, it produces tangible benefits for the people.

Furthermore, in accordance with the true spirits and resolutions of the United Nation General Assembly, the World Health Assembly and last but not least, political declaration of equitable global access to COVID-19 Vaccines being a responsible country of the world, China called open, fair, free and non-discriminatory international cooperation on vaccines. In this context, the noble Initiative for Belt and Road Partnership on COVID-19 Vaccines Cooperation commended the efforts and cooperation of the United Nations system and the World Health Organization on COVID-19 vaccines.

It urged all the BRI partners to disseminate the real essence of this grand initiative which should also be replicated in all the member countries. It reflects the common will of the people in the region working together for a better world that enables the Belt and Road Initiative to stand the tests of such grave challenges as the COVID-19 pandemic, and continuously demonstrate robust vitality and strong adaptability.

It was wisely advised that further strengthening of communicative and coordinative system on vaccines regulatory policies would enhance and ensure the safety and efficacy of vaccines. It stressed the need to have more and more production of vaccines and called on vaccines producing countries to support their companies for the capacity building sphere enabling massive production of vaccines to Access (COVAX) facility of the WHO.

To promote spirits of donation or affordable exports COVID-19 vaccines to developing countries it encouraged the joint collaboration between the governments and private sectors/ vaccines companies throughout the world.

It upheld the importance of joint vaccine research, technological exchange and encouraged vaccine companies to transfer technologies to developing countries.

It pinpointed that waiver of intellectual property rights (IPRs) must for massive production and easy and smooth supplies of COVID-19 vaccines in which World Trade Organization (WTO) should follow a holistic approach of accommodation. For the scaling up of global production, it encouraged universal collaboration between global vaccine producers and partners from developing countries.

It considered provision of concessional financing of regional as well as multilateral development banks to developing countries for the production as well as procurement of COVID-19

vaccines with complete free right of selection of vaccines. It further called upon all the member countries of the BRI to strengthen the operationalization and channelization of easy and smooth flows of vaccines and raw, auxiliary materials and manufacturing equipment. It desired to have more and more partners in the most recently launched Initiative for Belt and Road Partnership on COVID-19 Vaccines Cooperation.

Being prominent regional expert of China, BRI and CPEC I really appreciate the BRI development concept in which so far 140 countries and 32 international organizations have been engaged which highlights the great significance attached to it. With plentiful substantial achievements having been made since it was proposed in 2013, the initiative has provided the world with many global public products that manifest practical progress toward the realization of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

It is a development oriented mega project of the 21st century which has prompted countries to work together to protect public health and promote common development. It has been providing essential medical supplies through mutual assistance programs and intensive exchanges on epidemic prevention and control work, and macro policy coordination which demonstrate the vitality of the BRI, which is an open and inclusive multilateral platform.

On its part, China will continue to play a core role in providing vaccines, economic assistance, infrastructure development, connectivity, and technical know-how to both the Asia-Pacific region and the BRI countries.

The Asia and Pacific High-Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation showed unity and solidarity among partner countries in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and restoring regional economies during and after the pandemic. I submit that collective efforts, actions and measures should be initiated as soon as possible to effectively fight against this pandemic and to achieve socio-economic recovery as well as enhance partnership for sustainable and inclusive development.

It provides historic opportunity for participating BRI countries to strengthen inclusive multilateralism and enhanced partnership in an endeavor to jointly defeat these transnational health issues. It also demonstrates unity, shared political commitment and shared responsibility to tackle this global health crisis.

To conclude, it is recommended that common interests and aspirations should be institutionalized for building the community having a shared future and plan to overcome the critical issues pertaining to humanity and human survival with joint solutions and cooperation.

Briefs

Sajid Sadpara announces summer K-2 expedition

ISLAMABAD: Sajid Ali Sadpara, the son of renowned Pakistani mountaineer Muhammad Ali Sadpara who had gone missing early this year in an attempt to ascend K2 in winter, on Thursday announced that he would be embarking on summer expedition from Friday (June 25) to comb the mountain for his father's body. Missing climbers Ali Sadpara, Iceland's John Snorri Sigurjónsson and Chile's Juan Pablo Mohr Prieto were officially declared dead in February. The three climbers were last seen on February 5 near the Bottleneck on K2 as they attempted to reach the summit of the Savage Mountain. Sajid Sadpara, who was accompanying the three, had to abandon his summit bid after his oxygen regulator malfunctioned and he returned to camp 3. Bad weather thwarted multiple attempts to search for the missing climbers, though the efforts continued. A February 14 update on the search mission said the "leads - taken after scrutinising satellite images, using SAR technology and checking testimonials and timings - turned out to be a sleeping bag, torn tents or sleeping pads, none of which belong to these climbers." - APP

Top EU court raps Spain over wetlands

MADRID: The European Union's top court warned Spain Thursday it needs to do more to protect Donana National Park, home to one of Europe's largest wetlands which is threatened by intensive farming. The massive park in the southern region of Andalusia boasts a diverse ecosystem of lagoons, marshlands, scrub woodland, beaches and sand dunes and is home to fallow deer, wild boars, European badgers and endangered species including the Spanish imperial eagle and the Iberian lynx. It is also on the migratory route of millions of birds each year. Environmentalists have warned that over-extraction of water by neighbouring farms, often through illegal wells, is causing the lagoons and marshlands to dry out. The area around the park is a major producer of strawberries, blueberries and raspberries. Green groups also complain that large amounts of water are being diverted to meet the needs of tourists. The Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice ruled that Spain was in breach of EU nature legislation because it "did not take into account the illegal water extractions" in the park and their impact on groundwater. "It has not taken appropriate measures to avoid disturbances of the protected habitats located in the park which were caused by this catchment" of water, the court added. The court was responding to a complaint filed by the European Commission in 2019 against Spain for failing to protect the park. If Madrid does not follow the recommendations of the court it faces hefty fines. Spain racked up more infringements of EU environmental laws between 2015 and 2018 than any other member state - and nearly three times the average per member, according to the European Commission. - APP

White House, lawmakers strike deal on infrastructure

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden announced Thursday he has reached a deal with a bipartisan group of senators on a landmark infrastructure package, likely the most funding for roads, bridges and ports in decades. "We've struck a deal. A group of senators - five Democrats and five Republicans - has come together and forged an infrastructure agreement that will create millions of American jobs," Biden said on Twitter. The president had sat down with the lawmakers at the White House to culminate weeks of negotiations on Capitol Hill, where Democrats and Republicans have squared off over the size and scope of the funding. - APP



ABU DHABI: Peshawar Zalmi players celebrating after taking a wicket against Multan Sultan in PSL-6 final match. - DNA

China donates anti-pandemic medical equipment to Pakistan

Ambassador Moin especially appreciated Ambassador ShaZukang and Lin Songtian for their continued support to Pakistan throughout the pandemic

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese enterprises donated oxygen concentrators and face masks to bolster Pakistan's capacity in its ongoing efforts to combat Covid-19 pandemic at a ceremony held at the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC) here on Thursday. The donation ceremony was especially organised to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and China which is

being celebrated this year. Speaking on the occasion, President of CPAFFC, Ambassador Lin Songtian said that as iron-brothers and all-weather strategic partners, Pakistan and China stood together in their fight against the pandemic and extended complete support to each other. He remarked that 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties marked a new starting point to further elevate bilateral ties to a new pinnacle of bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding. Reiterating China's support to Pakistan against the pandemic, Ambassador Lin said



that both countries would continue their ongoing co-operation for vaccine development and distribution.

Thanking Chinese enterprises for the donations, Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin-ul-Haq paid rich tribute to the Chinese people and government for supporting Pakistan in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. He highlighted that Pakistan-China closer cooperation during the pandemic has added another glorious chapter to the proud history of bilateral relations. Ambassador Moin especially appreciated Ambassador ShaZukang and Lin Songtian for their continued support to Pakistan throughout the pandemic.

The ceremony was attended by Ambassador ShaZukang, Chairman of China-Pakistan Friendship Association; high ranking Chinese officials from government departments and corporate sector and representatives of media organisations. It may be mentioned here that the oxygen concentrators and face masks were donated by China Centre for Promoting SME Cooperation and Development, Anhui Health Box Technology Corporation; Jiangsu JumaoKangwanjia Medical Equipment Corporation, SinoHydro Bureau and Sichuan Normal University.

Sri Lanka pardons suspected Tamil Tigers

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's president has pardoned 16 men linked to the Tamil Tiger rebels, as the island nation faces renewed pressure under the United Nations over detentions without charge under an anti-terrorism law. Thursday's pardon is a first for people linked to the Tigers since Gotabaya Rajapaksa came to power in 2019 on a nationalist agenda, which included a promise that troops who crushed the rebels would not be prosecuted. The men were convicted under the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) that gives security forces sweeping powers to arrest and detain suspects. The UN HR Council and other international rights groups have called for it to be repealed. "The 16 Tamil detainees are among 94 prisoners who received a presidential pardon," prison superintendent Chandana Ekanayake said about the release that came on the Buddhist festival of Poson. - Agencies

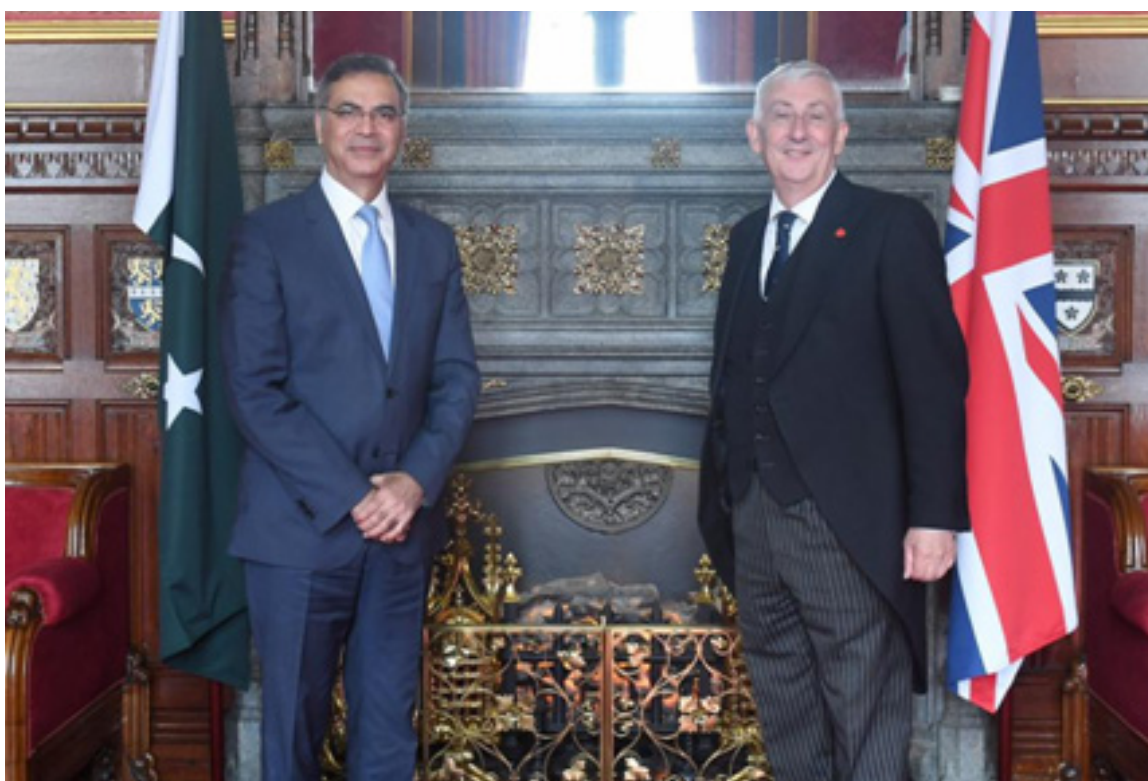
Hundreds of unmarked children graves found in Canada

FOREIGN DESK

TORONTO: Another mass grave has been found in the yard of a boarding school in Canada, an indigenous group said Wednesday. The Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations (FSIN) said in a statement that hundreds of unmarked graves of children were found at the site of the former Marieval Indian Residential School in the province of Saskatchewan.

In a joint statement, Cowessess First Nation region Chief Cadmus Delorme and FSIN chief Bobby Cameron said that efforts are underway to obtain a precise number, but that the remains in the region will be the largest ever found in Canada. According to Canadian official records, the Marieval Indian Residential School operated from 1899 to 1997 in the Cowessess region, about 140 kilometers (87 miles) east of the provincial capital, Regina. New graves were discovered in radar

scans launched at 139 schools across the country, after unregistered graves containing the remains of 215 children were found in the garden of a boarding church school in Kamloops, British Columbia on May 29. Authorities are expected to make a statement on Thursday about the number of unregistered graveyards found in the Cowessess area. Meanwhile, a national chief for Assembly of First Nations in Canada, Perry Bellegarde described the event as "tragic" on Twitter.



LONDON: Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan called on Speaker House of Commons Sir Lindsay Hoyle MP in his office at the British Parliament. The two sides discussed a wide range of issues of common interest including trade, regional matters and strengthening Pakistan-UK parliamentary linkages. - DNA

Palestinian Authority critic dies during arrest by PA

FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: An outspoken critic of the Palestinian Authority (PA) who intended to run in parliamentary elections before they were cancelled earlier this year died during his arrest in Hebron by PA forces on Thursday. Nizar Banat, 44, was a harsh critic of the Palestinian Authority, which governs parts of the Israeli-occupied West Bank, and called on Western nations to cut off aid to it because of its growing authoritarianism and human rights violations. In a brief statement, the Hebron governorate said Banat's "health deteriorated" when Palestinian forces went to arrest him early on Thursday and that he was taken to a hospital where he

was pronounced dead. The specific circumstances of his death remain unclear. According to his family, Banat was in bed when some two dozen PA officers broke into his home and started beating him. He was dragged away screaming, local media quoted them as saying. In early May, gunmen fired bullets, stun grenades and tear gas at his home, where his wife was inside with their children. He blamed the attack on President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah party, which dominates the security forces, saying only they would have access to tear gas and stun grenades. "The Europeans need to know that they are indirectly funding this organisation," Banat told The Associated Press in a May in an interview at a home where he was hiding out.

Egypt opens up to vaccinated tourists

FOREIGN DESK

CAIRO: Cairo has said it will allow travelers to visit the country without providing a negative PCR test, as long as they have been inoculated with vaccines approved by the World Health Organization and the Egyptian Medicines Authority. In a statement on Thursday, the Egyptian Ministry of Health said it was updating its health controls, requirements, and procedures for entering the country during the pandemic.

A spokesperson for the ministry stated that the relaxation was only relevant for holders of vaccination passports with Covid-19 shots approved by the World Health Organization and the Egyptian Medicines Authority.

The statement specified that travelers must have received at least two doses of vaccines made by Sinopharm, Sinovac, Sputnik, Pfizer, AstraZeneca or Moderna. People arriving from countries affected by Covid-19 variants will be subject to a rapid test upon arrival, while those without a vaccine must present a PCR test.

Talks with Pak ongoing...

FROM PAGE 01

particularly in the tax and energy sectors, and social spending. IMF staff were unable to complete the talks during a recent mission, but the global lender remained "fully engaged" and aimed to resume the discussions in the period ahead. Rice told a regular IMF briefing.

"We stand ready to continue to support Pakistan," he said. "As the recovery gains strength, it will be important to accelerate the implementation of policies and reforms needed to address some of the long-standing challenges facing the Pakistani economy." Pakistan this month set a target of 4.8 per cent growth in gross domestic product for the 2021-22 financial year and a fiscal deficit target of 6.3pc. The country surpassed growth projections in the 2020-21 financial year despite a third wave of Covid-19 infections, reaching GDP growth of 3.96pc, after a 0.47pc contraction in 2019-20.

Japan envoy grieved...

FROM PAGE 01

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the government, the people of Pakistan, and the families of those who have lost their dear ones in the tragic incident. Please accept our deepest condolences, and we wish for a quick recovery of the injured," said the Ambassador. The Ambassador prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and wished for the bereaving families to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude and equanimity.

Afghan peace: FM warns of spoilers

FROM PAGE 01

He said a sustainable Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political solution through a comprehensive dialogue was the best option to resolve the conflict. He mentioned that the unrest in Afghanistan had affected both Pakistan and Iran.

Qureshi emphasized that the Afghan factions must take immediate steps to make the Afghan peace process fruitful through dialogue. He said peace would help boost trade activity, repatriate Afghan refugees and help regional stability. The foreign minister also conveyed the best wishes of the Pakistani leadership to the newly elected President of Iran Seyed Ibrahim Raisi. Iran's Special Envoy on Afghanistan Mohammad Ebrahim Taherian Fard thanked Foreign Minister Qureshi and expressed a desire for joint efforts for peace in Afghanistan. The two sides also discussed Pak-Iran bilateral relations and other areas of interest.

Munir stresses Parliaments' co-op in achieving SDGs

"Achieving the sustainable development agenda requires inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder partnerships between national govts, the private sector and the people"

NEW YORK: The President of UN Economic Council (ECOSOC), Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram, has underscored the role of Parliaments in generating momentum towards achieving the anti-poverty Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and overcoming the challenges posed by the coronavirus crisis. "Achieving the sustainable development agenda requires inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder partnerships between national governments, the private sector and the people," he said in an online address to a two-day meeting of the International Forum of Global Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation which opened in Bukhara, Uzbekistan, on Wednesday. "Such inclusive partnerships, built

upon principles, values, and shared goals, that place people and the planet at the centre, are needed at the global, regional, national and local level," Ambassador Akram told the meeting which is discussing implementation of SDGs. Noting that global landscape is marked by pervasive inequities, the ECOSOC chief said they have grown since the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 and been further exacerbated by the pandemic. He therefore called for adequate global action to contain and defeat the virus; recover from the impact of the pandemic; and revive the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the global climate and environmental goals. "Mobilizing the participation and

support of parliaments for the global development agenda is urgent," Ambassador Akram said. In this regard, he said four areas merited immediate attention: (1): The Parliaments of the developed countries can ensure that the COVID-19 vaccine is made available to everyone, everywhere, as soon as possible to overcome Covid-19, with scaling up production, supply, distribution, and, above all, emergency mass vaccination programmes in every country and community. A waiver of intellectual property rights on the vaccine must be agreed immediately to enable broader production of the vaccine in developing countries, and close the funding gap of roughly \$18.1 billion (as of

June 4th) for the ACT accelerator including the COVAX facility; (2): Parliaments should support adequate financing for sustainable development, through debt suspension and restructuring, the creation of \$650 billion in new Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and the reallocation of unused SDRs to developing countries, longer and larger concessional financing; (3): Parliaments should support massive investments in sustainable infrastructure as its indispensable to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. Both public, and especially, private sector investments in sustainable infrastructure - in energy, transportation, housing, agriculture, ICT, and other sectors - must be scaled up.

(4): Parliaments must support developing countries to build the capacity to transition into the new world economy - to enter the new global supply chains, to create new and decent jobs, and expand production and productivity. This requires rapid progress in digitalization and investing in digital infrastructure and skills. It implies greater access to advanced technologies and research and development focused on realizing the sustainable development and climate goals. "We hope that inter-parliamentary cooperation will lead to generating momentum towards achieving the SDGs and overcoming the challenges posed by COVID crisis," Ambassador Akram added. - APP

Briefs

Venezuelan president congratulates Raisi

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, in a phone conversation on Thursday, congratulated Ebrahim Raisi on winning a July 18 Iranian presidential election. Maduro said that in this election, the Iranian people demonstrated the glory of democracy. Noting that Venezuela is determined to broaden relations with Iran in all areas, Maduro called on Iranian president-elect to regard Venezuela as Iran's friend and brother in the fight for building a fairer and more democratic world. The Iranian president-elect said for his part that the smart resistance of Iran and Venezuela to the US arbitrary sanctions proved the possibility of taking the sustainable and long-term chances of defusing the sanctions. Raisi said that the economic diplomacy of his government will lose no chance to promote relations with other countries. Iran's economic capabilities and Venezuela's various capacities have provided a chance for a boost in bilateral relations between the two countries, Raisi said.

Azerbaijani Navy drills at Caspian Sea wrap up

DNA

BAKU: Tactical exercises held by the Azerbaijani Naval Forces at the Caspian Sea have ended, the Defence Ministry press service reported on June 23. During the drills, the skills of commanders and staff in organizing combat activity and managing forces in battle were improved. The goal was achieved and the tasks were successfully completed. "In the course of summing up the results, the commanding staff highly appreciated the participation of the military personnel of the Naval Forces in the exercises," the ministry reported. The two-stage drills by the Azerbaijani Navy at the Caspian Sea started on June 22 and lasted till June 23. The drills were held in line with the training plan approved by the Minister of Defence.

53 Afghan servicemen crossed Uzbek territory

DNA

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan expressed extreme concern about the increase in violence in Afghanistan. This is stated in a statement by the country's Foreign Ministry. On 23 June, 53 servicemen of the Afghan border troops and fighters of the local militia with weapons crossed into the territory of Uzbekistan in the area of Shortepa district. The statement notes that Uzbekistan is closely following the development of the military-political situation in Afghanistan, including in the bordering northern provinces.

"The increase in violence in the neighboring country is of utmost concern. The escalation of tensions amid the new wave of the coronavirus pandemic is making life more difficult for the Afghan people," the statement said. The Uzbek Foreign Ministry called on all parties involved in the conflict to refrain from the use of force and to prevent civilian casualties.

The Foreign Ministry of Uzbekistan noted that on 23 June, 53 servicemen of the Afghan border troops and fighters of the local militia with weapons crossed into the territory of Uzbekistan in the area of Shortepa district. "After carrying out the necessary procedures of inquiry and investigative actions, these Afghan citizens were returned to their homeland," the Uzbek Foreign Ministry said. The Foreign Ministry said that any attempts to illegally enter the territory of Uzbekistan will be strictly suppressed, and the most stringent measures will be taken against violators of the state border.

Pak culture fair in Shanghai brings exotic products

Hussain Haider, Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, who addressed the fair, China is Pakistan's largest trading partner, largest source of imports, second largest export destination and largest source of foreign direct investment

BEIJING: A Pakistani culture fair featuring jewels, handcrafted carpets and garments produced in Pakistan is being held in Shanghai this week and brings the charm of Pakistani products to locals without having to travel abroad. According to Hussain Haider, Consul General of Pakistan in Shanghai, who addressed the fair, China is Pakistan's largest trading partner, largest source of imports, second largest export destination and largest source of foreign direct investment. "The two countries' ministries of commerce have made great efforts to provide convenience

for trade between the two countries since the launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), including a tax-exempt agreement, through which our jewel industry has also gained benefits from," Aqeel Chaudhry, founder of renowned Pakistani jewel brand WINZA told the Global Times. It is noteworthy that sales of the jewels of WINZA, which has participated in the China International Import Expo (CIIE) since 2020 and launched their first flagship store in China last November at the Shanghai New World Daimaru Department Store on the famous

pedestrian street Nanjing Road East, are expected to achieve a 35 to 40 percent increase this year compared with pre-epidemic sales volume in 2019. "The sales growth is related to China's overall increase in consumption economy and consumption market. The jewelry consumption market saw a 40 percent increase during the first quarter of 2021 compared with the same period in 2019, the only jewelry market in the world with such an achievement," Chaudhry said. "The policies under the BRI and the free trade agreement have

inspired more Chinese businessmen to go to Pakistan and activated our industrial parks there. The financial policies and green channel under the CPEC dismissed our worries about the flow of funds," Xiao Yan, a person in charge of the Pakistani culture exchange platform OBOR Batter, told the Global Times. According to Xiao, almost all the business sectors of his company have basically fully recovered from the epidemic. After living in China for 11 years, Chaudhry thinks the long-term friendship and mutual trust between the two countries and

their peoples have brought prosperity to his family business and personal career. "Although the employees of our company are all Chinese, we understand each other's cultures very well and developed an enterprise culture that satisfies the needs of Chinese employees," Chaudhry said in fluent Chinese. "In Pakistani people's minds, the CPC witnessed China's rise from poverty to prosperity and China's influence to the world as a responsible power. During the progress, China and Pakistan have always been in the same boat," Xiao said. — APP



TASHKENT: Delegation of the Republic of Uzbekistan led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Abdulaziz Kamilov took part in a virtual Asia and Pacific High-level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation. Deputy Foreign Minister Furqat Sidikov is also seen in the picture. — DNA

Pentagon translator jailed for exposing US sources

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A Pentagon translator has been sentenced to 23 years in prison for passing the names of United States informants in Iraq to a person linked to Lebanon's powerful Shia movement Hezbollah. Mariam Thompson, 62, admitted transmitting the classified information to a Lebanese national in the belief that it was being passed on to the group — designated a "terrorist organisation" by Washington. "Thompson's sentence reflects the seriousness of her violation of the trust of the American people, of the human sources she jeopardised and of the troops who worked at her side as friends and

colleagues," John Demers, head of the Department of Justice's National Security Division, said in a statement on Wednesday. "This case should serve as a clear reminder to all of those entrusted with national defence information that unilaterally disclosing such information for personal gain, or that of others, is not selfless or heroic; it is criminal," said Alan Kohler Jr, assistant director of the FBI's Counterintelligence Division. According to court documents, Thompson, a Lebanon-born US citizen, worked as an interpreter on a foreign military base when, in 2017, she began a relationship on a video app with a man who said he was connected to Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Zobaida Jalal meets her Belarusian counterpart

DNA

MINSK: On the second day MILEX 2021 exhibition in Minsk, Minister of Defence Production Zobaida Jalal held a bilateral meeting with her Belarusian counterpart Mr. Dmitry Pantus, Minister of State Authority for Military Industry of the Republic of Belarus. During the meeting, matters of bilateral interest came under discussion. She appreciated the range of products displayed in the exhibition and expressed her gratitude for the warm hospitality. Earlier in the day, the Minister also visited several stalls in the exhibition hall and acquainted herself with different products on display.



RIYADH: Ambassador of Pakistan Bilal Akbar received the Ambassador of China to KSA at Pakistan embassy, Riyadh. Several matters of mutual interest were discussed & Pakistan China Friendship was reaffirmed. — DNA

Dozens of Israeli settlers storm Al-Aqsa complex

FOREIGN DESK

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM: Dozens of Israeli settlers on Thursday forced their way into the Al-Aqsa Mosque complex in occupied East Jerusalem, according to a Palestinian agency. The Islamic Endowment Department in Jerusalem said in a brief statement that 76 settlers broke into the flashpoint compound under the protection of Israeli police. More settlers are expected to enter the site later in the afternoon.

Israeli settlers storm the complex every day except on weekends; Friday for Muslims and Saturday for Israelis. Israeli police began allowing the settler incursions in 2003, despite repeated condemnations from the Islamic Endowment Department in Jerusalem. Al-Aqsa Mosque is the world's third-holiest site for Muslims. Jews call the area the "Temple Mount," claiming it was the site of two Jewish temples in ancient times. Israel occupied East Jerusalem, where Al-Aqsa is located, during the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Former Philippine President Benigno dies

WEB DESK

MANILA: Former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III has died after a prolonged illness, according to several news reports and later confirmed by his family. News reports say Aquino had been undergoing dialysis for at least five months and had recently undergone heart surgery. According to ABS-CBN News, he was hospitalised earlier in the day on Thursday. Aquino, 61, served as the country's 15th president from 2010 to 2016 and was succeeded in office by the incumbent, Rodrigo Duterte. In a statement on Thursday afternoon, the Aquino family said the former president died "peacefully in his sleep" after suffering from renal disease secondary to diabetes at 6:30am Manila time on Thursday (2230 GMT June 23). The family also thanked the supporters of Aquino as well as those who worked in his household during his final days.

HC interacts with Birmingham Pak community

DNA

BIRMINGHAM: On the first leg of his visit to the West Midlands and South Wales, Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan visited the Pakistan Consulate General in Birmingham on 23 June 2021. Besides meeting the Consulate officials, he held interactions with faith leaders of Pakistani origin and eminent members of the Pakistani community, both virtually and in-person. In his address to the faith leaders, the High Commissioner highlighted the need for promoting greater cohesion and understanding among various faiths and sects of Islam. He encouraged the leaders to utilize

their sermons to foster love, amity, understanding and goodwill among and within various faith

communities. Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan

also emphasized the important role faith leaders could play in encouraging vaccination against

COVID-19. Lauding the contribution of the Pakistani community to the UK's development, as well as progress and development of Pakistan, the High Commissioner stated that the Diaspora could play an important part in projecting Pakistan's true and positive narrative. He also urged the community to play its role in further strengthening bonds of friendship between Pakistan and the UK. The High Commissioner further apprised the audience of the initiatives taken under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan to facilitate Overseas Pakistanis, including Roshan Digital Accounts (RDA) as well as various other schemes for welfare and facilitation of Overseas Pakistanis.



17 soldiers killed in Kenya heli crash

WEB DESK

NAIROBI: Kenya's military on Thursday confirmed soldier fatalities in a helicopter crash that had occurred earlier in the morning, without sharing the actual death toll, with an exclusive source saying 17 had been killed. Kenya Defense Forces spokeswoman Zipporah Kioko said that all passengers who were on board the Kenya Air Force helicopter Mi 171E, which crashed on its way to land in Ol Tepesi in Kajiado County, were accounted for and that survivors had been rushed to the Defense Forces Memorial Hospital in Nairobi. "Regrettably, following the crash, we suffered fatalities. The process of communicating with the families to relay the information and KDF condolences are underway," she said.

A top security official from the area who spoke to Anadolu Agency on the condition of anonymity due to restrictions to speaking to the media said that "17 people were killed in the accident, we don't know what caused the crash as of now." Local residents who rushed to the area as first responders posted images of smoke rising from the crash site as early as 9 a.m. (0600GMT). Kajiado West police chief Muthuri Mwongera told local media that rescue efforts were underway, adding that the army chopper was carrying at least a dozen passengers.

Khamenei to receive Iranian-made vaccine

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader will receive the domestically-developed COVIRan Barakat coronavirus vaccine in the near future, the country's top doctor has said. Alireza Marandi, the head of Iran's Academy of Medical Sciences, told Khamenei.ir that Khamenei will be given the COVIRan Barakat vaccine in the coming days, which was developed by state-owned firm Shifa Pharmad. Marandi said Khamenei did not want to skip his turn, and has only agreed to receive a homegrown vaccine. Khamenei banned the import of vaccines manufactured by the US and the UK earlier this year, citing distrust towards the two nations. The Islamic Republic eventually allowed the use of the Russian-made Sputnik V and Indian-made Covaxin, as well as the AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine purchased through the COVAX scheme. COVIRan was cleared for emergency use this month. The Mehr News Agency cited Mohammad-Reza Shanesaz, the head of Iran's Food and Drug Administration, as saying that those who have received a dose of a foreign-made vaccine can use COVIRan as their second dose.

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Briefs

US, Pak launch women's economic empowerment activity

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: The United States government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the Women's Economic Empowerment Activity (WEEA). This five-year initiative supports the Government of Pakistan's efforts to promote women's social and economic empowerment through safe and dignified access to income opportunities, information, resources, and services. The WEEA program offers solutions for women, communities, and governments to address structural and socio-economic barriers that prevent women from fully participating in their communities. It also aims to reduce economic gaps and make progress toward gender equality, at both the community and institutional levels. In accordance with Pakistan's national strategy, WEEA demonstrates the United States' commitment to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by helping women and girls attain their full potential in every aspect of society. "USAID proudly partners with the Government of Pakistan to promote peaceful communities, increase economic growth, and strengthen global health security capacities," said USAID Mission Director Julie Koenen. "The Women's Economic Empowerment Activity is yet another manifestation of our commitment to enabling women-led business that will play an important role in Pakistan's economic growth."

Kashmiris reject Modi's tactics: Siraj

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Sirajul Haq has said the people of Occupied Kashmir have completely rejected the tactics of New Delhi to create confusion in the world on Kashmir freedom movement. The drama screened in New Delhi in the name of APC on Kashmir had nothing to do with the millions of the people of held valley who wanted liberation from Indian yoke at any cost, he added while presiding over the JI Majlis-e-Aamla meeting at Mansoor on Thursday. The meeting approved the agenda of the three-day Majlis-e-Shoora meeting which was scheduled to be started on Friday. The JI Emir would address the press conference and announce future course of action on the concluding day on Sunday. Sirajul Haq said that people of Kashmir would never abandon their struggle against Indian occupation. He assured the people of Kashmir that every Pakistani was standing by them unshaken. — APP

1 dead, dozens missing in US building collapse

MIAMI: A 12-story ocean-front apartment block in Florida partially collapsed early Thursday, killing at least one person and leaving dozens more unaccounted for as teams of rescuers combed the rubble for possible victims. Video footage posted online showed a large portion of the building in the town of Surfside — just north of Miami Beach — reduced to rubble, with the apartments' interiors exposed. It was unclear what caused the building to collapse, nor how many people were inside at the time, since it was occupied by a mix of full-time and seasonal residents and renters according to Miami-Dade County Commissioner Sally Heyman. "It's hard to get a count on it," Heyman told CNN. "It is 51 people who were supposedly, supposedly, residing there at the time (and) have not either called out or had people call in to reach them." — Web Desk

Marina Bakanov's 'The Kyrgyz' launched at Kyrgyz embassy

Ambassadors of Central Asian States, Austria, Jordan, Republic of Korea attended the launching ceremony; author presents her book to the Kyrgyz ambassador



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Yemen, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, South Korea, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Austria and Tajikistan posing for picture on the occasion of book launching ceremony.



ISLAMABAD: Erik Beishembiev, Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic presenting souvenir to author.



ISLAMABAD: Author Marina Bakanov presents her book to Kyrgyz ambassador.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Yemen posing for a picture.

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Marina Bakanov's book 'The Kyrgyz' launching ceremony took place at the Embassy of Kyrgyzstan. Ambassadors of Central Asian States, Austria, Jordan Republic of Korea attended the launching ceremony. The author presented her book to the Kyrgyz ambassador. This event was organized on the frame of the celebration of 30 years of independence August 31, 1991. Ambassador of Kyrgyzstan while speaking on the occasion praised the work of the author and termed it highly productive and informative. He congratulated Marina with another achievement in her second career in the field of literature and science, first certainly being an excellent doctor. The ambassador said, he was glad to note that the book was launched this year, when Kyrgyzstan was celebrating its 30th anniversary of Independence. 'Taking this opportunity let me share with you some thoughts about the historical path of my people on the way to independent state. Although history of Kyrgyz nation dates back as early as III century B.C., when the name Kyrgyz

was first mentioned in Chinese chronicles, our people passed through a long and difficult way to fulfill its dream and form its own modern state only after dissolution of Soviet Union. On August 31, 1991, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan adopted a law on the "Declaration on State Independence of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan", he added. Ambassador Erik further said, he was glad to note that Kyrgyzstan enjoys excellent bilateral relations with Pakistan since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992. During last 30 years our countries exchanged presidential visits twice, Kyrgyz Prime Ministers visited Pakistan twice, Pakistani Prime Ministers came to Kyrgyzstan four times, Speakers of the Kyrgyz parliament visited Pakistan twice and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of our countries exchanged visits. In June 2019, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan met his Kyrgyz counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in our capital Bishkek. During conversation, they reviewed bilateral relations and agreed to hold Joint Ministerial Commission and Bilateral Political Consultations, to comprehensively upgrade mutual cooperation in

diverse fields and strengthen the land and air connectivity between the two countries, to enhance people-to-people contacts and boost tourism cooperation through friendly visa regimes. Prime Minister Imran Khan invited Kyrgyz President to visit Pakistan. Cooperation in the field of education is developing actively. About 7,000 Pakistani students are studying in Kyrgyzstan mostly in medical universities. In February this year, Kyrgyz Minister of education and science A. Beishenaliev visited. Talking about trade the ambassador said, the existing trade volume between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan is not up to the actual potential that exists and both countries should work towards increasing it. In order to promote trade and economic relations Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Pakistani commission was established in 1994, which held its third meeting on 11-12 January 2017 in Islamabad. Now we are expecting the Pakistani delegation to come to my country for the next meeting of the commission. There are several priority areas for economic cooperation between our countries, which may include electricity production and supply, mining industry, light and food

industries, medicine and pharmaceuticals, IT technologies. Kyrgyzstan is rich in water resources, which are used for electricity production by a number of hydropower stations. My country is a member of the project CASA-1000, which is aimed of brining surplus electricity from Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan hydropower stations in summer times to Pakistan through the territory of Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan is interested in development of short transportation links through its territory between Central Asia and China and Pakistan with access to Gwadar and Karachi ports using railway and automobile roads, which are being constructed in the framework of CPEC. Pakistani and Kyrgyz businessmen may open joint ventures on textile production as Kyrgyzstan is already a major supplier of textile goods to Russia and Kazakhstan and Pakistan is one of the world's top textile producers. Of course, agriculture and livestock are dynamic sectors, where both sides can explore opportunities of opening joint ventures on agricultural products processing to increase exports to Eurasian Economic Union, European Union or Arab world.

'Committed to restoring statehood', Modi tells IJK leaders

NEW DELHI: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a three-hour meeting with top political leaders from Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) on Thursday, has "committed" to restore the occupied valley's statehood. On August 5, 2019, the Modi's government had revoked articles in the Indian constitution that guaranteed IIOJK's partial autonomy and other rights including its own flag and constitution. A huge accompanying security operation saw tens of thou-

sands of extra troops — adding to 500,000 already there — enforce a siege-like curfew. Thousands were arrested and telecommunications were cut for months. IIOJK was demoted to a union territory governed directly from New Delhi, while the Ladakh region was carved out into a separate administrative area. Creating such new "facts on the ground" in IIOJK has long been advocated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the hard-line Hindu parent organisation to the Modi's BJP party. — DNA

Pakistan for uninterrupted supply of Covid-19 vaccine

NCOC organised a briefing session for members of the diplomatic corps regarding Covid-19 and vaccination

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday stressed the need for a joint global strategy and response to fight the pandemic and called for an uninterrupted and even supply of vaccines globally for early eradication of the coronavirus pandemic. To highlight the successful efforts of the government against Covid-19, the Na-

tional Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) organised a briefing session for members of the diplomatic corps and international organisations based in Islamabad, a statement from the NCOC said. It said that NCOC chief and Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Reforms and Special Initiatives Asad Umar outlined multiple dimensions of Pakistan's national response. The participants were given a detailed briefing, showcasing Pakistan's response to Covid-19 which also highlighted various strands of the country's strategy to tackle the pandemic, the statement added. The briefing included an appraisal of the current level of disease in Pakistan vis-à-vis its prevalence regionally and globally. The participants were also briefed on various aspects

of the "smart" and "micro smart" lockdown strategy as well as its success in containing the spread of the disease. According to the NCOC, statistics on disease outlook, vaccination strategy of the government, the ability of the health care system to cope with the existing requirements as well as its future capacity building were highlighted during the meeting.

Vaccination centre opens for travelers and students

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Today, vaccines remain as one of the most powerful innovations in the history of medicine. The rapid development, approval and administration of not one but several safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 is a triumph of science, and the Government of Sindh, Ministry of Health has been successful in turning the tide on the pandemic faced in Pakistan. With COVID-19 Immunity Vaccination certificates becoming a mandatory requirement for any international travel, earlier this week, an MoU was signed between the Government of Sindh, Ministry of Health and Gerry's International (Pvt.) Ltd. (Gerry's Visa) to launch a Vaccination Centre, especially facilitating a large dose of Pfizer - BioNTech Vaccines for Pakistani students travelling to the United Kingdom and Australia (Ages 18+). Other World Health Organization (WHO) approved vaccines will be available for all Pakistanis travelling internationally. The Centre has been launched in accordance with the Sindh Government's COVID-19 Immunity Vaccination Program.

US envoy returns to Russia

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: The US envoy in Moscow returned to Russia Thursday saying he was ready to work on a "stable and predictable relationship" after a US-Russia summit aimed at reducing tensions. "Arrived back in Moscow today," Ambassador John Sullivan said in a statement, several days after Russia's envoy to Washington, Anatoly Antonov, resumed his own posting, saying he hoped to build "equal and pragmatic ties". Sullivan said he was ready to work with Russia "on our goal of a stable and predictable relationship between our countries." Russian President Vladimir Putin said last week that Moscow and Washington had agreed for their ambassadors to return to their posts, after summit talks in Geneva with US counterpart Joe Biden earlier this month. In March, Russia had recalled Antonov and recommended the United States bring back Sullivan for consultations after Biden agreed with a description of Putin as a "killer". Sullivan departed Moscow for Washington the next month, as the US and Russia announced a series of tit-for-tat sanctions and expulsions of diplomats.

China ready to work with BRI partners: Xi

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China stands ready to work with all parties to build a closer Belt and Road partnership, President Xi Jinping said Wednesday in a written message to the Asia and Pacific High-Level Conference on Belt and Road Cooperation. Xi said the joint building of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that he proposed is aimed at carrying forward the spirit of the Silk Road, working together to build an open platform of cooperation, and providing new impetus for cooperation and development among countries. Over the past eight years, 140 countries have signed cooperation agreements with China under the BRI, with more and more cooperative partners, according to Xi. All parties have actively promoted policy coordination, connectivity of infrastructure and facilities, unimpeded trade, financial integration, and people-to-people bonds, launched many practical cooperation projects that benefit the people, established a comprehensive and compound connectivity partnership, and created a new prospect for common development, Xi said.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Tarek Mohamed Dahroug called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. — DNA

Egypt envoy calls on Air Chief

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt Tarek Mohamed Dahroug called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. During the meeting, both the dignitaries discussed matters of professional and mutual interest. Ambassador Tarek Mohamed Dahroug commended the professionalism of PAF and acknowledged its rising indigenous capacity in aviation industry.

28 civilians killed in Afghanistan

KABUL: Intense fighting in the northern Afghan province of Kunduz killed at least 28 civilians and injured 290 this week, according to hospital officials, as conflict surges in the war-torn nation while foreign forces withdraw. Ehsanullah Fazli, head of Kunduz's provincial hospital, said 28 bodies and 290 wounded civilians had been delivered to two local hospitals in the past three days, with the vast majority of the casualties children, women and elderly people. "The war is still going on in the city of Kunduz and the death toll will rise," he said. Fighting has worsened around Afghanistan but especially in the north where insurgents have conducted a wave of offensives in recent days, moving beyond their southern strongholds. Since the United States announced plans in April to withdraw its troops without conditions by September 11 after nearly 20 years of conflict, violence has escalated throughout the country as the Taliban seek more territory. — Agencies