



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Pakistan desires 'civilized' ties with US: PM Imran Khan

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Merkel hopeful for economic recovery by EU

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Korean envoy lauds PAF's professionalism

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Briefs

PTV, PBC renovation underway

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Friday stressed for early implementation of Pak-Japan joint projects of modernization and technical up gradation of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV) and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC). Talking to Ambassador of Japan Kuninori Matsuda, the minister said that both countries enjoyed a vibrant all round six decades partnership nurtured by top echelons of leadership. "We grew up while using Japanese technology and products globally known for their first class quality and durability", he said. Information Minister said that state run Pakistan Television Corporation (PTV), Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) are being transformed to meet contemporary requirements in a fast changing world.

Asad warns of fourth Covid wave

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Head of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) and federal minister Asad Umar on Friday said that a fourth wave of Covid-19 could possibly occur in July if precautionary SOPs are not adhered to. "Reviewed the artificial intelligence-based disease modeling analysis today in NCOC," Umar said in a tweet. "In the absence of strong SOP enforcement and continued strong vaccination program, the 4th wave could emerge in Pakistan in July. Please adhere to SOPs and vaccinate as soon as possible," he stressed. The NCOC also allowed those travelling abroad for work to be vaccinated with the Pfizer vaccine. According to the new guidelines, those who must travel outside the country for employment before July 26 can receive the Pfizer vaccine.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

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Pak desires 'civilized' ties with US: PM

There was this mistrust between the two countries and people in Pakistan felt they paid a heavy price for this relationship

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said Pakistan would want a civilized relationship with the US, which you have between nations, and would like to improve the trading relationship with the U.S. In an interview with the New York Times, the prime minister further elaborated that he wanted the relationships between Pakistan and the United States in line with the relations between the U.S. and Britain, or actually between U.S. and India right now. He said it was a lopsided relationship between Pakistan and the U.S. as the latter felt that they were giving aid to Pakistan, they felt that Pakistan then had to do U.S.'s bidding. "And what Pakistan did in terms of trying to do the U.S. bidding actually cost Pakistan a lot in human lives. Seventy thousand Pakistanis died, and over \$150 billion were lost to the economy because there were suicide bombings and bombs going on all over the country. That's where the problem began. The U.S. kept expecting more from Pakistan. And unfortunately, Pakistani governments tried to deliver what they were not capable of." He said there was this mistrust between the two countries and people in Pakistan felt they paid a heavy price for this relationship and the U.S. thought Pakistan had not done enough. "So in that sense, it was a lopsided relationship. What we want in the future is a relationship based on trust and common objectives. That's actually what we have right now with the U.S. - I mean, our objectives in Afghanistan are exactly the same today."

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World considers Pakistan as part of the solution



ANSAR MEHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said the world considers Pakistan as part of the solution and not part of the problem when it comes to a peaceful and negotiated solution of the long-standing Afghanistan imbroglio. The foreign minister said this while addressing a press conference on Friday. He further said, Pakistan would always want a peaceful Afghanistan and therefore be part all efforts meant towards this goal. He added, Pakistan is all agog to work with the stakeholders in order to achieve early and lasting peace in Afghanistan. To a question about Turkish role in Afghanistan, the foreign minister said, Turkey as coalition partner wants to retain its role in the Kabul airport management.

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Five FC soldiers embrace shahadat

During the exchange of fire heavy losses were inflicted on the terrorists, according to ISPR statement



ISLAMABAD: National Assembly members offering Fateha for five soldiers who were martyred in operation against terrorist. - DNA

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Terrorists targeted Frontier Corps patrolling party in Sanggan, District Sibi. During the exchange of fire heavy

Continued on Page 06

Fawad condemns terrorist attack

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Friday vehemently condemned terrorists' attack on FC patrolling team in Sibi, Balochistan. In a condolence message, he said those who sacrificed

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizda paid a farewell call on General Nadeem Raza, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of Pakistan. The ambassador said in his Tweet that Gen Nadeem has always been kind to him and very keen to further strengthen Azerbaijan, Pakistan relations. - DNA

Bangladesh may accept Pakistan's Covid aid

HC Imran Siddique meets BD FM; conveys Pakistan's desire to extend aid under SAARC emergency fund; Indian, Pakistani envoys arrive at the Ministry at the same time

DNA

DHAKA: In Dhaka, Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswamy and Pakistani High Commissioner Imran Ahmed Siddiqui visited the Foreign Ministry. It is rare incident for top diplomats from two hostile South Asian countries to visit the foreign ministry on the same day. On the one hand, Indian High Commissioner paid a courtesy call on State

Pak HC to get plot

NEWS DESK

DHAKA: There was a long-standing complication in demarcating the plots allotted for the Pakistan High Commission in Baridhara. This week, a concerned department of the government has taken initiative to address it. The High Commissioner of Pakistan has expressed his gratitude to the Foreign Secretary of Bangladesh for this.

Minister for foreign Affairs, Shahriar Alam. On the other hand, the High Commissioner of Pakistan paid a courtesy call on Foreign Secretary Masood bin Momen.

Two courtesy meetings were held at around noon. Pakistan's High Commissioner to Dhaka Imran Ahmed Siddiqui came first to meet Foreign Secretary Masood bin Momen. After 15 minutes, Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswamy came to meet State Minister for Foreign Affairs Shahriar Alam. However, Vikram Doraiswamy left the Foreign Ministry

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Govt will focus on growth strategy

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin has said the govt will focus on growth strategy to create new job opportunities and enhance the income levels of the people. Winding up discussion on the Budget for next fiscal year in the National Assembly on Friday, he said we are heading towards an inclusive and sustainable growth. The Finance Minister said that Prime Minister Imran Khan took bold and difficult decisions to steer the economy in the right direction. Despite COVID-19 challenge, we achieved the growth of four percent during the current fiscal year due to the interventions made in different sectors.

Diplomats briefed about NCOC Covid operations

Participants were given a detailed briefing, showcasing Pakistan's response to COVID-19

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: To highlight the successful efforts of the Government against COVID-19, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) organized a briefing session for members of the diplomatic corps and international organizations based in Islamabad. Mr. Asad Umar, Chairman NCOC and Federal Minister for Planning, Development, Reforms and Special Initiatives outlined multiple dimensions of Pakistan's national response. Lt. Gen. Hamood Uz Zaman, National Coordinator NCOC,

Dr. Faisal Sultan, Special Assistance to Prime Minister on Health, and Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood were also present. The participants were given a detailed briefing, showcasing Pakistan's response to COVID-19 which also highlighted various strands of country's strategy to tackle the pandemic. The briefing included an appraisal of the current level of disease in Pakistan vis-à-vis its prevalence regionally and globally. The participants thanked for the comprehensive briefing and appreciated Pakistan's efforts to mitigate the adverse effects of the disease in the country.

Karachi infection rate hits 11.46%

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Karachi recorded a coronavirus positivity ratio of 11.46% in the last 24 hours, a spokesperson for the Sindh Health Department said Friday. The spokesperson said Karachi registered 404 cases, with an infection rate of 11.46%, while Hyderabad recorded 15 infections, taking its positivity ratio to 4.11%. The remaining districts of Sindh recorded 178 cases, translating into an infection rate of 2.02%, the spokesperson for the province's health department said. The metropolis's infection rate was at 8.21% a day earlier, while it hit an alarming 13.81% two days back, according to the data shared by the health department. The rise to a double digit positivity ratio in Karachi comes two weeks after the Sindh government decided to ease certain curbs that were in place to guard against the spread of coronavirus.

Pakistan to remain on FATF grey list

Dr Marcus Pleyer said, "Pakistan has made significant progress and it has largely addressed 26 out of 27 items on the action plan it first committed to in June 2018"

NEWS DESK / DNA

PARIS: The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) announced on Friday that Pakistan will continue to remain on the watchdog's "increased monitoring list", also known as the grey list, till it addresses all items on the original action plan agreed to in June 2018 as well as all items on a parallel action plan handed out by the watchdog's regional partner - the Asia Pacific Group (APG) - in 2019. Announcing the decision in a virtual press conference after the financial watchdog's five-day plenary meeting, FATF President Dr Marcus Pleyer said, "Pakistan has made significant progress

Pakistan not to face any sanctions: Hammad

COMMERCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Hammad Azhar said on Friday that Pakistan has been given the sternest action plan by the Financial Action Task Force while the FATF president has praised the performance of Islamabad regarding its implementation, media reported. Hammad Azhar made the statement while addressing a media briefing regarding the FATF's decision for retaining Pakistan on its grey list. He clarified that Pakistan is not facing any danger to fall on FATF's blacklist as the debate was made on the country's placement on the whitelist. Pakistan will not face any sanctions after being retained in the grey list, he added. Azhar said that FATF has given a new seven-point action plan to Pakistan and it is important to implement the previous and new action plan.



Since then Pakistan has made improvements. This includes clear efforts to raise awareness in the private sector to money laundering risks and to develop and use financial intelligence to build cases." But, he said, Pakistan was still "failing to effectively implement the global FATF standards" across a number of areas. "This means risks of money laundering remain high which in turn can fuel corruption and organised crime. That is why the FATF has worked with the Pakistan government to work on areas that need to be improved as part of the new action plan that largely focuses on money laundering risks. This includes increasing the number of investigations and prosecu-

tions and making sure that law enforcement agencies cooperate internationally to trace, freeze and confiscate assets. "This is about helping authorities stop corruption and prevent organised criminals from profiting from their crimes and undermining the financial system and legitimate economy in Pakistan," Pleyer said. When asked about the new action plan after the APG evaluation, Pleyer said the plan had "six action items including enhancing international cooperation and demonstrating that assistance is being sought from foreign countries in implementing UN Security Council designations".

Continued on Page 06

US assures support to Afghan leaders

WASHINGTON: The US has reiterated its commitment to continuing to provide critical security assistance to the Afghan forces amid escalating Taliban violence in the country. US Defense Secretary Lloyd J. Austin in a meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Washington stated: "The United States remains committed to continuing to provide critical security assistance to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF)." This comes as the US speeds up its withdrawal of forces from Afghanistan, aimed at ending the country's longest war. - DNA

Briefs

KP Governor
condemns
Sibi attack

DNA

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Shah Farman has expressed grief over the demise of five personnel of Frontier Corps in militants attack at District Sibi, Baluchistan. In a condemnation message issued here on Friday, KP Governor prayed for eternal peace of departed souls and granting courage to bereaved family members to bear the loss with fortitude. He said that whole nation was united against militancy and praised the sacrifices of security forces for the defense of country. Meanwhile, Governor facilitated newly elected office bearers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Press Gallery. He hoped that newly elected press gallery would perform duties with dedication and in a professional manner keeping in view expectations of people.

Abacus
accorded
President
IT Award

DNA

KARACHI: A global leader in next-generation technology and outsourcing services, Abacus Consulting, today announced it has received the prestigious President IT Award. The award recognizes Abacus Consulting's relentless commitment to digital innovation and contribution to the country's economy. In the ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, by the Lahore Chamber of Commerce (LCCI), the firm was honored for demonstrating excellence in Information Technology and digital transformation. "I'm extremely grateful to His Excellency, Dr. ArifAlvi, President of Pakistan and the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industries for this recognition. This award is a testament to our innovation in providing top of the line technology solutions for our clients worldwide," said Fatima Asad-Said, CEO of Abacus Consulting. "We appreciate and are excited to witness the investments by the Government of Pakistan in the ICT sector. As one of the top technology companies, we already see the positive impact of these investments at various levels. Government-led technology and entrepreneurial initiatives are fueling innovation-driven economic growth. The new reforms and policies are investment-friendly and enabling a conducive environment for start-ups, SMEs, and even large enterprises to operate and grow. It's an ideal opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the country's positive growth. Honoring the efforts of LCCI, she added, "LCCI is playing an essential role in bringing together a powerful public-private sector partnership and offering more connected and inclusive space to SMEs, youth and women entrepreneurs to get involved in meaningful initiatives, which are creating social and economic benefits at large".

Minority's
delegation
calls on KP
Law Minister

PESHAWAR: A representative delegation of National Lobbying Delegation on Minority Rights Friday called on Provincial Law Minister, FazalShakoor Khan and apprised him about their problems. The delegation also discussed legal problems and issues being confronted by minorities living in the country. Speaking on the occasion, law minister said "Minorities are free to practice their religion and enjoying basic rights as enshrined in the constitution." He said that rights of minorities were protected and they were being given constitutional and legal cover. He also assured the delegation complete cooperation and assistance in resolution of their problems. He said that minorities were being provided equal rights and their welfare was among priorities of existing government. - APP

Norwegian envoy sees great
scope for trade with Pakistan

He said that all procedures should be simplified which would attract more companies of Norway to start their businesses in Pakistan. The Ambassador said that Norway is establishing a solar power plant of 150 MW in Sindh

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Norwegian Ambassador Kjell Gunnar Eriksen said on Friday that Norway and Pakistan had great potential to boost mutual trade. Various Norwegian companies are operating here including Telenor and more are ready to invest, he said. While talking to LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry at the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, the Ambassador said that Norway is one of the largest foreign investors in Pakistan. He said that that Pakistan needs to take measures for ease of doing business for the foreign investors. He said that all procedures should be simplified which would attract more companies of Norway to start their businesses in Pakistan. The Ambassador said that Norway is establishing a solar power plant of 150 MW in Sindh. LCCI Vice President Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that Norway is second home to many Pakistanis and both the countries have excellent relations ranging from diplomatic, cultural and economic relations. "We wish to further strengthen the economic and



trade relations with Norway", he added. He said that the volume of bilateral trade has not even touched 100 million dollars as it stood at around 83 million dollars in 2020. Exports from Pakistan to Norway are around 57 million dollars while our imports from Norway are around 26 million dollars. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan's exports to Norway are heavily concentrated in

textiles. The LCCI Vice President said that although Pakistan enjoy a positive trade balance with Norway but the volume can be increased by many times and in this connection the support and guidance of the Embassy of Norway holds great importance. He said that Norway holds a special place in the world's economy due to its Energy sector. He said that there are tremendous

opportunities for Norwegian companies to enter into joint ventures with Pakistani companies, particularly in Oil, Gas, Renewable Energy and Maritime sectors. Tahir Manzoor Chaudhry said that the other potential areas where Pakistan and Norway can enhance trade and economic cooperation are Mobile Phone Manufacturing, Electric Vehicle Manufacturing, Automotive Parts, Pharmaceuticals, Processed Food, and Surgical Instruments etc. He said that Special Economic Zones are being established all across the country under China Pakistan Economic Corridor with all the essential infrastructure facilities. The government is also giving lucrative tax incentives to both the local and foreign investors in these SEZs. We would request you to play a role in apprising the Norwegian companies about these latest developments. He said that there is a vast scope for joint venture between the two countries in the fields of biotech and cosmetics. Former LCCI Senior Vice President Amjad Ali Jawa, Muhammad Khalid, Dr. Riaz Ahmad, Haji Asif Sehar, Wasif Yousaf and NaemHanif also spoke on the occasion.

Faisalabad: Road safety awareness
camp inculcates road sense

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Road safety awareness is essential for every citizen. It enhances the road sense and responsibility among commuters to behave responsibly while driving. SSP MirzaAnjum Kamal said while launching a road safety awareness campaign in order to highlights the importance of wearing seat belt, helmets, side view mirror and observance of traffic rules. Mobile education Unit organized road safety awareness camp near Patrolling post RoshanWali-Jhaal, Samundri road in collaboration with Next Cola to create awareness among

road users about traffic rules and importance of safety helmets. National country manager Next Cola Hassan Baija, Marketing Manager Tahir Baig and Dsp Patrolling Malik Muhammad Amin accompanied the SSP patrolling in the distribution of pamphlets, brochures and pasting of reflectors on the slow moving and long vehicles. SSP added that most of the accidents occur due to human error and most common of these mistakes are violation of one way, using of mobile phones/ Texting, over speeding, distraction, non usage of indicators while turning and overtaking and worst of all non observance of lane line discipline. Road

courtesy and behaviour matter a lot, he added. Notwithstanding, the traffic awareness is ongoing process, but the citizens require to cultivate road sense and courtesies to avoid accidents and any sort of mishap. During the awareness campaign, SSP gave flowers to commuters in order to enhance their trust on police. The citizens appreciated and acknowledged the efforts of Punjab highway patrol in reducing the accidents and prevention of crime on the highways. Inaugurating the campaign, SSP Punjab Highway Patrol, Region Faisalabad MirzaAnjum Kamal said that motorcyclists are mostly involved

in most of the accidents so that it is required to sensitize and educate them about road safety measures. He said that Care, protection and love are the hallmark of PHP, adding that Mobile Education Unit and PHP officials are employing their utmost potential to educate the people, besides enforcing traffic rules and laws. SSP said that almost 17 thousand road users fall prey to road traffic accidents every year and lost their precious lives and 40 % of casualties are of Motorcyclists and pedestrians. Head injuries are major causes of death on highways. Non-helmeted motorcyclists are three times more likely

to sustain head injuries in a crash compared to those wearing helmets. Further, he said that wearing of safety helmets is necessary for Motorcyclists while on road. SSP patrolling appreciated the efforts of Incharge Mobile Education Unit Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti and Organizers of Next Cola Tahir baig for organizing such an amazing awareness camp to educate citizens about the importance of safety helmets. The citizens were also provided with Beverages and water during the campaign. Further, the road commuters were educated about helpline 1124. Every road user can call on helpline 1124 in case of emergency and mishap on road.



FAISALABAD: DC Muhammad Ali inspecting BHU in Tehsil Jaranwala. - DNA

DC visits BHUs
Jaranwala

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Muhammad Ali paid a surprise visit to Basic Health Units (BHUs) of Tehsil Jaranwala on Friday and checked attendance of doctors and other staff in addition to availability of medicines, record of immunization of children, storage of medicines in required temperature, cleanliness and other matters in details. He went to BHUs of Chak 200/RB and Chak 90/RB and reviewed the medical facilities being provided to the patients coming for treatment in these centers. He directed the BHU incharges to ensure all possible facilities for treatment of the patients. He said that BHUs and RHCs were of special importance in the field of treatment at grassroot level which would be further improved so that people could get prompt treatment in minor cases near their doorsteps. Deputy Commissioner urged to ensure highest standard of cleanliness and also checked the expiry date of some medicines. AC Jaranwala Muhammad Zubair informed that monitoring of THQ hospital, BHUs and RHCs are continued so that medical emergency services would remain alert at all time.

PDMA KP
prepares
Monsoon
plan

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has prepared Monsoon Contingency Plan in consultations with all stakeholders including district administrations and departments concerned of provincial and federal governments. The Director General (DG) PDMA, Sharif Hussain said that the contingency plan has been prepared while keeping in view technical as well as situation after natural disasters occurred in past. In past, he said natural disasters have caused the loss of human lives, livelihood and houses. Under this plan, planning has been evolved to protect from losses due to natural disasters and combating of emergency situation. Under Monsoon Contingency Plan 2021 all aspects of large and small scale disasters, large scale losses and emergency situation have been pinpointed.

All Jamia mosques to
be solarized across
KP: Akbar Ayub

BUREAU REPORT

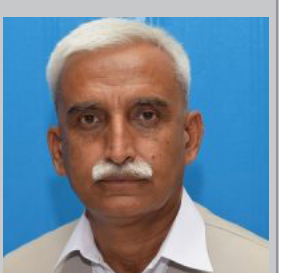
PESHAWAR: Minister for Local Government and Rural Development, Akbar Ayub Khan on Friday informed the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly that all Jamia mosques across the province would be solarized phase wise for which Rs. 5 billion allocated for solarization in financial year 2021-22. Replying to cut motions of the opposition MPAs on the Planning and Development and the Administration Department, the minister said that the solarization of mosques was appreciated by people as now they are getting free electricity. He said that when PTI government came into power the province contribution was 10 percent in GDP and now it is 15 percent with 40 billion dollars which is reflecting excellent planning

and development by the department concerned. The minister said that an amount of Rs 2 billion would be spent on development and beautification of provincial metropolitan. He said that Chief Minister Mahmood Khan today visited chamber of the opposition leader and assured him to give a positive consideration to demands and suggestion of the opposition MPAs in development schemes. Akbar Ayub said that provincial government on the directive of Chief Minister had decided to compile a digital diary of vehicles in use of various departments and in projects to stop misuse by government officials and elected representatives. He informed that renovation and repair work in FATA house would be completed in two months after which accommodation would be given to MPAs from merged districts.

All hurdles in Pak-
Afghan trade being
removed: CM's aide

STAFF REPORT

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries and Commerce, Abdul Karim Khan on Friday said that Pakistan was taking all required steps for the promotion of bilateral trade with Afghanistan and removing hurdles in this regard. He said this while talking to a delegation of Afghan industrialists and traders here. Afghan Commercial Consular led by the delegation. During the meeting, industrialists and traders from both side stressed need for the utilization of their expertise. On this occasion, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KPBoIT) highlighted the objectives of the meeting in detail. Beside, the authorities of various departments, the representatives of chamber of commerce also participated in the meeting. Afghan industrialists highlighted their problems and said that they were ready for payment of any kind of tax and called for the protection of their properties and issuance of work permits to them. Speaking on the occasion, the Afghan Commercial Consular also highlighted problems faced by Afghan traders in detail and specially related to checking at border and clearance of fruits and called for the formation of Pak-Afghan Business Council to help address these problems. He also expressed gratitude to provincial government for provision of facilities to Afghan businessmen. The CM aide assured that problems faced by Afghan businessmen would be resolved immediately.



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'Gupkar gang' met Modi to beg for power in IIOJK

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Masood Khan on Friday said that Kashmiri leaders, who went to New Delhi shook hands and exchanged pleasantries with Prime Minister NarendraModi and Home Minister Amit Shah, have rubbed salt on the wounds of the Kashmiri nation. "NarendraModi's hands are stained with the blood of innocent people whether it was the carnage of innocent Muslims in Gujrat or state-sponsored tyranny in India-Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)," he said while speaking at a launching ceremony of a research report on "Building Sustainable Tourism in AJK". The ceremony, organised by the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UJK) in collaboration with the Centre for Peace, Development, and Reforms (CPDR), was

also addressed by Registrar of the UJK Dr Ayesha Sohail, Secretary Tourism, Chaudhry Intiaz Ahmed, author of the report Prof DrShahen Akhtar, Executive Director CPDR, Irshad Mehmood, Prof DrRukhsana Khan, and others. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK president, while referring to Thursday's meeting of some of Kashmiri leaders affiliated with the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration with Modi, asserted that they flock to Delhi not to get any relief for the people of IIOJK but an assurance from rulers in Indian capital to get power in Srinagar. "They must keep in mind that it is the same Modi and his criminal gang who killed thousands of Kashmiri people for demanding freedom and their inalienable right to self-determination," he said. Masood maintained that we are well aware of the history and past of those who were keen to shake hands with the killers of our children.

"These people from generation to generation have been compromising on freedom and rights of Kashmir for the lust of their power, and now they are once again out to get the lost power." "Modi will never hand over power to them and they will further lose the trust, if any, of the Kashmiri people," the AJK president added. He said that there is no need for backdoor diplomacy or confidence-building with the killer of the Kashmiri people and their children. "Will the Kashmiri people forget that 1,500 youth and children were made blind when Mehbooba Mufti was the chief minister of IIOJK, and similarly thousands of youth were killed and buried in unmarked graves during the regimes of Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar Abdullah," he recounted. Touching upon the promotion of tourism in Azad Kashmir, Masood said that it could not be promoted in the liberated territory in the

past because most of the areas attractive for tourists were located close to the Line of Control (LoC) and were not safe for tourists due to Indian shelling. "Now we are focusing on the construction of three different tourists corridor away from the LoC and the road network and allied infrastructure is being built to make these corridors accessible for tourists." The AJK president stressed the need of providing facilities of international standards to the tourists and proposed that the AJK tourism department should hold roadshows in London, Brussels, Gulf, and the European countries to market and explore the potential of tourism of Azad Kashmir. He went on to say that a large number of Kashmiri expatriates would gladly invest in tourism, hydropower generation, and other sectors here. Speaking on the occasion, Dr Ayesha Sohail said that if tourism in the liberated ter-

ritory is promoted as an industry under a well-chalked out strategy, this can play a key role in improving the economy of the state besides raising the standard of the life of the local people. Emphasising that the tourism sector can play a vital role in the economic development of the country especially for AJK, she said that "we need to focus our attention on the challenges and opportunities of tourism development in the areas". She said that the UJK has established the Sharda Centre of Learning in the Department of Art & Designs of the university has also signed an MoU with the Tourism and Archaeology Department of the AJK government for the preservation of archaeology assets of AJK. The Department of Art and Design is leading the project with other researchers from Quaid Azam University, Hazara University, and experts from the federal government, she added.

Seminar
on drug
abuses held

FAISALABAD: The government is taking multidimensional measures to root out narcotics in the province and establishing a drug free society. This was stated by Director Excise and Taxation & Narcotics Control Ahmed Saeed while addressing a seminar at Government Degree College for Boys here Friday. He said that educated youth was our bright future and we should take measures to keep them away from this curse. He urged the students to focus their education and take part in healthy activities. He said that special attention should be given on the rehabilitation of the addicts. Deputy Director Social Welfare Nasir Mahmood said that addiction was a root-cause of all evils hence we should make a commitment for elimination of this menace. - APP

Briefs**Govt making efforts for teachers' vaccination**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has made all-out arrangements to vaccinate teachers and other educational staff on priority basis in order to prevent them from Covid-19 and ultimately keep schools open. The teachers' vaccination would help in ensuring the elimination of disruption in the education sector and reduce learning losses. The government through social media has also urged the teachers to vaccinate themselves if they had already not been vaccinated, the sources told APP.

According to the official sources, "Vaccine is an effective tool to prevent you and your community from COVID-19". The teachers and students were also directed to keep at least six feet distance between themselves in class rooms and play grounds, wash their hands regularly for 30 seconds and sanitize themselves, he added. The teachers were asked to ensure that the number of students would not increase in the class rooms and assembly halls. The class rooms should have proper ventilation system, he said.

Tarbela: WAPDA awards \$241m contract

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) Friday awarded contract amounting to \$241.1 million for electro-mechanical (E&M) works of the 1530 MW-Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project to a joint venture comprising Harbin Electric International Company and Harbin Electric Machinery Company (HEIC-HEMC) through an international competitive bidding. The signing ceremony of the contract held at WAPDA House, said a press release. The E&M contract was signed by Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project Director (PD) Muhammad Azam Joya and HEIC-HEMC Vice President Zhang Yu Long on behalf of their organizations. WAPDA Chairman Lt Gen Muzammil Hussain (Retd), Member Finance Naveed Asghar, Member Water Abdul Zahir Khan Durrani, Managing Director (Administration) Khalid Saleem, WAPDA Secretary Fakhruzzaman Ali Cheema, general managers concerned and representatives of the consultants also attended the ceremony. It is worth mentioning that WAPDA has already awarded contract for civil works of the project in May. - APP

Govt achieves targets from polio campaign

ISLAMABAD: The sub-national anti-polio campaign on Friday achieved targets as more than 33 million children under five years of age received their vaccinations. The campaign was conducted from June 7 to June 11 in 124 districts of the country including all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the federal capital which was inaugurated by Prime Minister Imran Khan reaffirming the government's commitment to eradication. Congratulating the provincial government and partners for the successful polio campaign, the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Faisal Sultan said, "This is the most critical time for the programme, reaching and sustaining zero polio cases and transmission requires even greater efforts. We must work in close integration with broader routine immunization services to tackle all vaccine-preventable diseases." More than 225,000 Sehat-Tahafuz frontline workers visited families and caregivers during the campaign and ensured vaccination of children against the polio. As a result, the programme successfully achieved its target to build children's immunity amid the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. - APP

PM Khan to visit Uzbekistan on July 13: Uzbek envoy

Zafar Bakhtawari said on the occasion that the dream of the Pakistani people is to reach Tashkent in four hours by train from Islamabad

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The extension of ML-1 rail project between Uzbekistan and Pakistan will be a breakthrough for centuries. Zafar Bakhtawari The Ambassador of Uzbekistan, Mr. Aybek Arif Usmanov, has said that the road and rail link from Karachi and Gwadar to Uzbekistan via Peshawar will be an important milestone in regional cooperation. And it is not appropriate to wait for peace in Afghanistan.

The prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan will be attending the conference of the countries of South Asian and Central Asia in Tashkent on July 13 as a special guest and it will be a milestone in regional co-operation. He expressed these views at his Embassy here on Friday while talking to Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman, Pakistan Central Asia Friendship Association.

He said that the people of Uzbekistan are eagerly awaiting the visit of Imran Khan and Minister of Commerce Abdul Razzaq Daud will attend the Uzbek-Pakistan



Business Forum on July 12. He said that airline service between Pakistan and Uzbekistan would be resumed from July. Zafar Bakhtawari said on the occasion that the dream of the Pakistani people is to reach Tashkent in four hours by train from Islamabad. And the ML-1 project will be

an important step in fulfilling that dream. We have wasted thirty years in realizing this dream and now our future generations will not forgive us for further delay in it. He added that peace in Afghanistan is important not only for Pakistan and Uzbekistan but also for Afghanistan and its neighboring

countries. Waqar Bakhtawari emphasized on trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and the importance of direct air link between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Zafar Bakhtawari presented his newly published book Jahan Dost to the ambassador of Uzbekistan.

Zafar Bakhtawari said on the occasion that the dream of the Pakistani people is to reach Tashkent in four hours by train from Islamabad. And the ML-1 project will be an important step in fulfilling that dream. We have wasted thirty years in realizing this dream and now our future generations will not forgive us for further delay in it. He added that peace in Afghanistan is important besides Pakistan and Uzbekistan as well as for Afghanistan and its neighboring countries. Waqar Bakhtawari emphasized on trade and economic ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and new direct flights between Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Zafar Bakhtawari presented his newly published book Jahan Dost to the ambassador of Uzbekistan. Waqar Bakhtawari was also present on the occasion.

2 brothers killed as their motorcycle hit by trailer

FAISAL MUNIR

ATTOCK: Two brothers were killed and their friend was injured when their motorcycle was hit by a speeding trailer near Burhan Bridge on GT Road in limits of Hassanabdal Police Station on Friday.

According to a spokesman of District Emergency Office, the deceased were identified as Chamman Gull (20) and his brother Aman Gull (13) and the injured as Agha. The spokesman said the trailer was rashly driven by its driver which after hitting the motorcycle crushed the two brothers to death. The trailer driver managed to escape.

PANAH to hold 'Annual Asylum Walk'

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) Murree will organize a walk on Sunday for raising awareness about heart diseases among the masses. The awareness walk will start and end at GPO Chowk after passing through Cann Chowk and Mall road. PANAH General Secretary Sana Ullah Ghuman will host the walk.

Special guest of the walk will be former member Provincial Assembly Tehseen Fawad and will be attended by people belonging to all walks of life. The participants will spread the message among people that walk, exercise and simple diet should be everyone's motto for a healthy life that could be beneficial against all diseases including heart. - APP

Gold prices decrease by 100 per tola

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs 200 and was sold at Rs109,100 on Friday against its sale at Rs109,300 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa and Jewellers Group reported. The price of 10 gram 24 karat also decreased by Rs 171 and was sold at Rs 93,536 against its sale at Rs 93,707 while the prices of 10 gram 22 karat gold went down to Rs 85,741 against Rs 85,898. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs1420 and Rs1217.42 respectively. The price of gold in international market remained unchanged at \$1783.

FIA submits blasphemous content report

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday submitted its detailed report pertaining to uploading blasphemous content on social media to IHC. FIA Director Law Qaiser Masood submitted the report containing his department's crackdown against blasphemous contents. The report said 167 accounts containing blasphemous contents, sectarian and hate speech were blocked in 2020, with 110 reported so far this year. The PTA had blocked the account, at the request of the FIA, in 2020. The PTA blocked 111 accounts involved in the promotion of blasphemous content and 47 reported accounts involved in hate speech in 2020. The FIA report also said 28 inquiries and 11 cases had been registered this year.

One wheeling goes unchecked

RAWALPINDI: One wheeling was going unnoticed on various roads of the garrison city of Rawalpindi as motor bikers, mostly teenagers, continued to perform wheelie and stunts putting their and others life in danger. The individuals doing wheelies were seen performing dangerous stunts and acrobats on the roads near Ayub Park, Peshawar Road, Saddar, Murree Road and other areas and usually succeeded to dodge the police deployed on the roads. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Begum Samina Arif Alvi addressing an awareness session on Breast Cancer for female employees of Aiwan-e-Sadr, organized by Shifa International Hospital, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on 25-06-2021. - DNA

Over 5500 building plans get approval from CDA

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has given approval to over 5500 building plans of residential and commercial to boost construction activities in the federal capital. The authority has responded the applications timely in line with the policy of incumbent government to boost construction sector in the country, its spokesman told media on Friday. "It was the highest number of plans ever approved by the federal apex agency in short span of time," he added. Furthermore, he said a meeting of Design Vetting Committee (DVC) for commercial projects

would be convened on June 29, before the end of financial year to facilitate the builders in applying for incentives announced by the federal government. Cases received for approval of commercial buildings would be discussed for approval in the meeting. Besides, requests already available, builders, developers who have their documents ready and willing to apply for approvals in the upcoming DVC meeting were also encouraged to submit their documents in or before June 28, the spokesman added. Office of Building Control would remain open on Saturday and Sunday from 10 am to 3 pm to facilitate such applications, he said.

Vacations demand amid extreme heat

RAWALPINDI: A large number of parents in the garrison city of Rawalpindi have demanded of the authorities concerned for announcing summer vacations for students of the educational institutions especially at primary level facing serious health risk due to prolonged exposures in scorching heat outside and risk of contracting Covid-19 deadly virus. The health experts told APP that they had urged the masses to ensure preventive measures against extreme heat wave incidents due to dry spell during monsoon and advised the parents to provide protective gears like caps, head coverings, umbrellas and sunglasses to prevent temperature borne disease particularly heat strokes, diarrhea, nausea and eye disease. Recently, videos on social media made rounds highlighting school children at primary level losing consciousness in different schools of the federal capital while many were unable to attend schools. - APP

CRSS organizes National Youth Caucus for political awareness

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: I am very proud of this incredible document, and I am pleased that youth in Pakistan is stepping up to participate in the political process. These were the words used by MNA Shandana Gulzar at a National Youth Caucus organized by the Center for Research and Security Studies (CRSS). She said that the policy document distilled from over 20 meetings with over 450 youth across Pakistan was brilliant, well-presented, and a valuable asset for policymakers when it comes to youth issues. The two-day event was attended by 21 youth representatives from across Pakistan, and held in Serena Hotel, Islamabad. Over the last year CRSS has conducted



caucus meetings with youth from every corner of Pakistan, including all four provinces, Gilgit Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and the Islamabad Capital Territory. Youth is our treasure and we need to know what has not been done to utilize their full potential, said Gulzar. She encouraged youngsters that they must learn to appreciate themselves and brush up on their managerial and communication skills. There is an absence of critical thinking and responsible behavior in our society. We must not always rely on the government to take action, said Intiaz Gul, Executive Director CRSS. He insisted that young people today need to separate fact from opinion, and objective truth from rampant misinformation/disinformation to ably participate in the political process. Prominent industry experts delivered lectures on how multiculturalism, plurality, and awareness of the rights

regime helps better understand political divides, and aids in better political engagement by youth. Youth are our future, Gulzar said, and we have many examples where Insaafians like Murad Saeed and Shahid Khattak, who have come up through the ranks, having engaged in the political process as young as fifteen. Pakistan's youth must actively engage in the political process, and the impetus must come from within.

SNGPL directed to facilitate consumer

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Friday, taking note of the grievance of a domestic gas consumer, directed the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) to reconsider the exorbitant bill and provide him relief through 'average billing'. The complainant Ghulam Rasool had filed a representation with the President of Pakistan against the order of Wafaqi Mohtasib, wherein his case was closed without extending him any relief. The complainant had approached the Wafaqi Mohtasib after receiving an "excessive and unjust" bill of Rs 20,100 for the month of December, 2019 by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited following the replacement of a faulty gas meter installed at the mosque.

However, on finding no remedy to his grievance, the complainant made a plea to the President of Pakistan for a possible relief. President Alvi in his written order mentioned that "the investigation of the case showed that the bill of December was quite high compared with prior months and thus was liable to be reconsidered by the SNGPL". "In such view of the matter, the Agency [SNGPL] needs to reconsider the bill on the average basis and provide possible relief to the complainant," he wrote in his order. The President, therefore, disposed of the representation with a direction to SNGPL to provide relief to the complainant through average billing. - DNA

**Primary school graduation bonus of Rs. 3000 announced**

Dr. Sania joined children and their mothers at Government Boys High School, Akwal in Talagang to witness new enrolments of children from poorest households under the Ehsaas education CCT

DNA

CHAKWAL: Today, Dr. Sania Nishar, made an unannounced visit to Talagang Tehsil of Chakwal together with Ehsaas team. This was the first visit of Dr. Sania since the payments began on June 16, 2021 under the phase II of Ehsaas Emergency Cash. At the cash distribution site in Municipal Administration offices, she interacted with Ehsaas beneficiaries who had come to collect their payments. Each one of them had 8171 messages on their phones to collect cash emergency cash or Kafaalat handout of Rs. 12,000. All of them had been identified and declared eligible through the new Ehsaas survey. The Ehsaas Emergency Cash dis-

bursements to the beneficiaries have been commenced last week. However, payments to newly enrolled Ehsaas Kafaalat beneficiaries are underway since January 2021. Also, the payments to new enrollees being identified through Ehsaas survey are underway. Besides, several beneficiaries had come with their children to collect the quarterly payment of Ehsaas primary education conditional cash transfer (CCT) stipends. Dr. Sania also witnessed the quarterly payment of Ehsaas education stipends being made to mothers of children. As per Ehsaas policy, all payments are biometrically verified in real time. Girls get Rs. 2000 and boys get Rs. 1500 per quarter, when 70% school attendance is ensured. Later, Dr. Sania joined children and



their mothers at Government Boys High School, Akwal in Talagang to witness new enrolments of children from poorest households under the Ehsaas education CCT. She sat with children and mothers who were waiting in the queue to get enrolled

in the programme for quarterly stipends. She also oversaw details of a child being entered in the end-to-end digital enrolment system. Regional team of Ehsaas briefed Dr. Sania on the recently launched nationwide drive to enroll deserving children for Ehsaas educational stipends. The campaign is being rolled out at Tehsil levels in close coordination with provinces, district administration and key development stakeholders. The campaign primarily aims to enhance primary school enrolments and minimize dropouts. The Ehsaas drive entails social mobilization through Tehsil level Ehsaas field teams, compliance monitors, school teachers and mosque announcements. The Ehsaas education CCT programme

is currently being executed at primary level education across all districts of Pakistan. "Ehsaas is also introducing a one-time graduation bonus of Rs. 3,000 to encourage girls completing primary education. The central reason for this incentive is to tackle gender disparity in education. This will also ensure that every girl child after receiving the graduation bonus gets enrolled in secondary education programme", said Dr. Sania while talking to local press and media. Poverty is one of the most persistent barriers to acquiring education. Education Conditional Cash Transfers (CCTs) are an important component of Ehsaas and are included in the Ehsaas framework as Policy #73 'Education CCTs'.

Briefs

Active Covid cases over 32 thousands

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Friday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 32,921 with 1,052 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 1,013 people recovering from the disease during the last 24 hours.

Forty-four corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 41 of them were under treatment in the hospitals and three of them perished in their homes or respective quarantine facilities, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC).

Most of the deaths occurred in Sindh followed by Punjab. Out of the total 44 deaths occurred 25 of them died under treatment on ventilators. There were 2,029 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition admitted in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities in past 24 hours.

The National Covid positivity ratio was recorded 2.29 percent. The Covid-19 positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals.

Pak in grey list reflect FATF's malice

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PML-Q Punjab Deputy Secretary Information Khwaja Rameez Hassan said in a press release that it is incomprehensible for the FATF to keep Pakistan on the grey list. It is a failure to show flexibility despite the implementation of 26 points is a reflection of international malice the state of Pakistan is safe and completely free from terrorism. State institutions have full control over all financial matters, including money laundering.

IGP Islamabad holds e-kutcheri

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP), Islamabad, Qazi Jameel-ur-Rehman on Friday held an e-kutcheri on social media website for addressing public grievances. People from across the country put their proposals before the IGP, to which he directed the officers concerned to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

Most of the problems were related to traffic, delay in registration of FIR, activities of land-grabbers, drug-peddling and police attitude. According to police officials, over 1600 people contacted through facebook while some 50 conveyed their problems to IGP through phone call in a two hour long session.

Speaking to the citizens, the IGP Rehman said police was striving hard to redress public issues as early as possible, adding that the purpose of such activities was to bring the public and police closer to each other. DG Safe City Project, SSP (Operations), SSP (Investigation), SSP (Headquarters), SSP (Traffic), SSP (Security) and other senior police officers were also present on the occasion. — APP

Oil tankers association calls off strike

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Oil tankers association has decided to call off their strike following its talks with the government body.

According to a private television channel Friday, the dialogues between the government and the oil tankers association remained successful and the oil tankers association was agreed to resume the oil supply across the country. Energy Minister Hammad Azhar, Special Assistant to PM on Petroleum Division Tabish Gohar and secretary petroleum participated in the meeting held at Petroleum Division.

The strike announced by the All Pakistan Oil Tankers Contractors Association (APOTCA) was entered the second day on Friday as the APOTCA stopped the petroleum products supply all over the country.

ICCI for restoration of businesses to normal timings

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that the government should defer the bank loans for one year and waive off utility bills of those businesses that remained closed due to Covid-19 pandemic

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) said that the coronavirus positivity rate in Islamabad has now come down to less than 1 percent and urged that the government should restore all businesses to normal timings without any restrictions along with allowing indoor dining & functions in restaurants, weddings halls & marquees as these businesses have suffered huge losses due to ban on their indoor business activities.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that ICCI in collaboration with NCOC, DHO and other stakeholders launched an active vaccination drive in the federal capital by opening vaccination centres in markets and industrial areas. This drive covered almost 90 percent of Islamabad for vaccination, which led to marked reduction in coronavirus cases, therefore, it was the right time that the government should restore all businesses to normal operations so that they could revive business activities and play a more effective role in uplifting the economy. ICCI President said that thou-



sands of workers were employed in restaurants, wedding halls and marquees, but due to the ban on

their indoor activities to control the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, these businesses have suffered badly and were facing multiple problems.

He said that due to the continued ban on their indoor economic activity, many restaurants, wedding halls and marquees have suffered closure due to which hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs. He cautioned that keeping a ban on indoor activities of these businesses would render more workers jobless that would create social unrest.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that the government should defer

the bank loans for one year and waive off utility bills of those businesses that remained closed due to Covid-19 pandemic. He further said that the government should also provide financial support to the workers of closed businesses from Ehsaas Emergency Cash program to alleviate their financial problems.

He was of the view that with less than 1 percent positivity rate of Covid-19 pandemic, there was no need to keep restrictions on business timings and urged that the government should now restore all businesses to routine operations.

Efforts to fight against drug abuse underway

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Narcotics Control, Brig (R) Ijaz Ahmad Shah on Friday said that the Ministry of Narcotics Control and Anti Narcotics Force are making collaborative efforts to fight against drug abuse.

In a message on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, he said, "War against drugs is a multidimensional challenge that the Ministry of Narcotics Control and Anti Narcotics Force is trying to combat by combined efforts."

He said that by making the best possible use of available resources, the government had devised strategies to control the spread of drugs in society. "In order to secure the future of our coming generations, every individual has to play his role in fighting against drugs. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Malik Sohail Hussain Secretary General US-Pakistan International Chamber offering Dua for departed soul late Mr. Sagheer Chughtai beloved uncle of Sardar Yasir Ilyas President Islamabad Chamber. — DNA

Pak needs a systematic approach to combat poor food quality

Meet micronutrient deficiency, reduce contamination from pathogens and residues of chemicals and pesticides

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Insufficient intake of balanced diet rich in proteins, vitamins and micronutrients (Fe, Zn), folates, and unaffordability/inaccessibility to food rich in nutrition, along with adulteration, lack of education about healthy food and imbalanced food habits are main reasons for stunted growth in children and due to Iron deficiency anemia in women, which is increasing at alarming rate, said National and International experts while speaking at International Webinar on "A Way Forward to Food Quality and Food Safety", held on

online. More than 1000 participants attended the event virtually. The event was organized by University of Agriculture, Faisalabad and Pakistan Agricultural Scientists Forum (PAS Forum) in collaboration with, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FPCCI), National Alliance for Safe Food (NAFS), UK-Pakistan Science and Innovation Global Network (UPSIGN), COMSTECH and Young Professionals for Agricultural Development (YPARD). Mian Abdul Rasheed from FPCCI inaugurated the event by offering full support from the industry

to work with academia to address the food quality crisis in Pakistan through innovations. Prof. Khurshid Hasanain, Advisor COMSTECH emphasized the need for collaboration among Muslim world to tackle the food quality crises and learn from each other. Dr. Omer Mukhtar from PCSIR Labs highlighted the nutritional status of Pakistan population indicating severe issue of micronutrient malnutrition in Pakistan. Food fortification, supplementation and bio fortification are some of solutions to address the challenges, highlighted by International speakers, Professor Nicola Lowe from

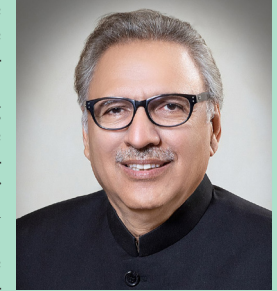
UCLAN University, Dr. Jalil Miyan from University of Manchester and Dr. Khalid Mahmood, UPSIN/Roth Amsted Research. Access to safe food free from pathogens, chemicals, pesticide residues is another challenge which need to be addressed through transformation in food systems especially food value chain, and promoting the use of fair & clearly written food labels. Pakistan faces the challenge of access to cold chain that add another layer affecting the shelf life of perishable food products that includes milk, meat and fresh vegetables, noted the experts.

Pakistan not to allow US to use its bases: President

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi on Friday reiterated Pakistan's principled stance that it would not allow the United States to use its bases against Afghanistan. He said Pakistan was making serious efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan as it would be the major beneficiary of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. The president made these remarks during an interactive session here at the Aiwan-e-Sadr with the military officers from 12 foreign countries, currently undergoing National Security Workshop Course at the National Defense University. He urged the international community to take serious note of the recent incidents of illegal selling of uranium in black market in India as such radioactive material could fall into wrong hands endangering human lives and security of the nations.

The president deplored that such an important incident had been ignored in the international media, a press release issued by the President's Media Office said. He highlighted Pakistan's success story against the war on terror, saying the country's armed forces and law enforcement agencies had successfully defeated terrorism. He stated that Pakistan had paid a heavy cost while fighting the war on terror as it lost over 70,000 people, besides suffering economic losses to the tune of around \$150 billion. The president added that Pakistan was the biggest sufferer of the prolonged conflict in Afghanistan that adversely affected its economy as well as security of the country. He said Pakistan, from the very beginning, had advocated for a negotiated settlement of the Afghan imbroglio as war was no solution to any dispute that increased human sufferings and miseries. The president briefed the participants about the achievements of the country, stating Prime Minister Imran Khan took a compassionate and smart decision by not enforcing total lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic and provided emergency cash relief, under the Ehsaas Programme, to over 15 million families to save them from poverty and hunger. He went on to say that Pakistan successfully handled the pandemic due to the cooperation of religious leaders and media as well as the entire nation which showed exemplary discipline.



Pak-U.S. engagement key to achieve goals of peace: FS

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood on Friday said a structured engagement between Pakistan and the United States was key to the promotion of the shared objectives of peace and development.

The foreign secretary, who received a telephone call from U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs Ambassador Victoria Nuland, said Pakistan was committed to forging a broad-based and long-term bilateral relationship with the United States.

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and key regional issues. Underlining Pakistan's focus on geo-economics, the Foreign Secretary reiterated the importance of enhancing economic, trade and investment ties between Pakistan and the United States.

He highlighted the progress made by the government in improving the ease of doing business and promoting a more conducive environment for foreign investment in Pakistan. On regional situation, the Foreign Secretary reiterated that there was no military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for

the Afghan peace process.

He stressed that there was a fundamental convergence between Pakistan and the United States on the need for a peaceful settlement in Afghanistan. The Foreign Secretary underscored the urgency of accelerating intra-Afghan peace negotiations and the importance of a responsible withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. He said that it was important for the key regional and international stakeholders to press all Afghan parties to engage constructively towards achieving an inclusive, broad-based and comprehensive political settlement.

PRCS expands door-to-door vaccination drive

AbRAR ul Haq urges people to get themselves vaccinated at the earliest to rid country of pandemic

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) has expanded its recently launched campaign for door-to-door and mobile vaccination against Covid-19 virus in order to contain the spread of pandemic in the country. As part of the initiative, door-to-door vaccination drive is in full swing in the territorial limits of Islamabad Capital Territory in collaboration with the Islamabad Capital Territory Administration (ICTA). PRCS volunteers as well as ambulances are engaged for vaccination of people at their doorsteps. The initiative has been launched to facilitate such people who have got themselves registered but cannot go to designated vaccination facilities for any reasons. PRCS has also signed a MoU with

Department of Health, Government of AJK, for 'Corona Free Kashmir Initiative' under which eligible persons will be vaccinated through mobile vaccination units in different districts of the region.

In another development, PRCS in collaboration with the Health Department of Government of Sindh and National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has opened two mobile Covid-19 vaccination units in Karachi at Dolmen Mall and Lucky One Mall. Besides this, PRCS is also establishing static vaccination centres at Hilal-e-Ahmer House in Clifton and Red Crescent Medical Centre Gurumandir. Preparations are also underway to establish vaccination centers at Pakistan Red Crescent Hospitals in different districts of Sindh, Baluchistan and Tribal areas.



In a statement on the occasion, PRCS Chairman AbRAR ul Haq said the fight against Covid-19 pandemic has entered a decisive phase as fresh cases are on continuous decline due to stringent enforcement of safety guidelines by the government, coupled by people's cooperation and a robust vaccination drive. He said the third wave of coronavirus was

dangerous, more contagious and deadlier as compared to the first two spells, however the Covid-19 positivity ratio is now going down with each passing day. He said life has started coming back to normal in most parts of the country.

AbRAR ul Haq urged the people to get themselves vaccinated at the earliest as the government has announced to allow walk-in facility for every individual eligible for vaccination in the country. He also cautioned the people continue to strictly follow health and safety guidelines in order to help the country defeat the disease. Regarding the vaccination initiatives launched by the PRCS in different parts of the country, AbRAR ul Haq said the community-level intervention aims at ensuring that every individual is vaccinated against Covid-19 so that spread of deadly virus is contained and precious lives are

saved. He said the PRCS volunteers and healthcare professionals have been working tirelessly from day one to contribute to the ongoing national effort to overcome the spread of Covid-19 in the country through a synergized response.

AbRAR ul Haq said the Red Crescent Corona Care Hospital (RCCCH) in Rawalpindi has selflessly served people during the pandemic wherein hundreds of Covid-19 patients were treated free of cost. He said it is a matter of great honor for the PRCS that the RCCCH was designated by the government as a mass vaccination centre for Covid-19 where thousands of people have been vaccinated so far. He said efforts of the PRCS to help the vulnerable segments of the society will continue with utmost commitment until the monster is completely defeated.

IBCC issues guidelines for SSC, HSSC exams

ISLAMABAD: Inter Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC) has prepared special guidelines for the students and teachers that will be adopted in SSC and HSSC examinations 2021 by all the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs) across the country. The guidelines have been issued under the directives of Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mehmood and National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), a statement issued by the IBCC Friday said.

The video guideline is available on IBCC website i.e. www.ibcc.edu.pk, official YouTube channel and Facebook page, already shared with all BISEs on June 22, 2021. It was the joint responsibility of the students, parents, teachers, and examination staff to ensure implementation of COVID-19 standard operating procedures during conduct of BISEs examinations across the country.

The IBCC official told that examination halls surface will be disinfected and cleaned on regular basis to reduce the risk of infection. The students are strictly asked to keep social distance while entering the examination center and within the center. Candidates must leave the examination hall one by one to prevent themselves from the risk of pandemic. — APP

NA approves 68 demands for grants

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday approved 68 demands for grants worth Rs 804,710,214,000 having no cut motions on them after voice voting in the House. Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Fayaz Ahmed Tairn presented these demands for grants which were approved after voting.

These demands for grants having no cut motions were related to Climate Change Division, Commerce Division, Communication Division, Pakistan Post Office Department, Defence Division, Federal Government Institutions in Cantonments and Garrisons, Defence Services, Economic Affairs Division, Federal Education and Professional Training, Higher Education Commission, National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), National Heritage and Cultural Division, Housing and Works Division, Human Rights Division, Industries and Production Division, Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Secretariat, Information Technology and Telecommunication Division, Interior Division, Islamabad Capital Territory, Combined Civil Armed Forces.

IHC suspends FIA's call up notice to journalist

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday suspended a call up notice issued by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to a journalist and summoned Cyber Crime Wing director in person on the next hearing.

The court asked the FIA director to explain that why its orders dated November 3, were not implemented. IHC Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case filed by journalist Bilal Ghauri challenging FIA call up notice served to him.

During the hearing, Iman Mazari and Usman Warraich advocates appeared in the court on behalf of journalist Ghauri and took a stand that FIA were misusing its authority. Ghauri had been summoned without giving any reason, they added.

The chief justice said the court had repeatedly pointed out that fundamental rights should be taken care of. The FIA officials were constantly repeating the same exercise and violating the court orders, he added. The court also clubbed all the identical cases against the FIA notices for hearing together on the next date of hearing. The court adjourned the hearing till June 30.

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Electricity policy

FOR any federation to work smoothly, it is significant that the interests of the federating units take preference over the desires of the central government. What we have been witnessing lately is the tendency of the government to make policies and take decisions that are not entirely the result of any consultations with the provinces. The new National Electricity Policy 2021 is yet another case in point. Since hydropower is a major source of energy in the country, naturally the concerned provinces do have their reservations when their voice is not heard or incorporated in any new strategy that deals with the power sector in the country.

According to reports, the draft policy is not people-friendly as it does not take into account the interests of all federating units. The draft National Electricity Policy 2021 has not been discussed publicly and the government in its unilateral style does not seem interested in giving the provinces a role in the power sector. This is in violation of Article 157 (1) of the constitution according to which it is mandatory for the federal government to consult the provincial government. If the new policy is approved, it is likely to empower the federal government to undertake a hydropower project without the approval of the province where it is located. After the 18th Amendment, provincial governments are accepted as major stakeholders in the power sector.

The federal government must refrain from unilaterally choosing strategic projects without taking the provinces into confidence. The new policy is also reported to aim at allowing the central government to build storage projects in the provinces without consulting them. It is true that the country needs expansion in its storage capacity but that should be done with the provinces on board. The same applies to the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP) whose formulation and implementation needs consensus. This plan contains a list of projects identified by the federal government on the basis of 27 indicators. Another element is the payment of net hydel profits (NHP) as share of the provinces where the power station is located. All these are serious issues and must be tackled in a harmonious manner.



Better coordination

A special meeting of the recently established National Intelligence Coordination Committee was chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan at the Inter-Services Intelligence Secretariat (ISI) Islamabad. The occasion was to commemorate the fact that the National Intelligence Coordination Committee (NICC), the liaison body for the country's spy agencies, is functional at last.

Plans for the creation of a liaison body for spy agencies had been in the works since November of last year. Although there had been several discussions about the establishment of the coordination forum, the proper functioning of the body kept getting delayed because of indecision of its terms of reference and modus operandi. It is good then that all security agencies have set aside their differences and managed to get to the point of this special meeting with approval of the Prime Minister.

It has been clear for many years that improvements are needed in synchronising the different intelligence factions. The Abbottabad Commission investigating the US raid to capture Osama bin Laden in 2011 had noted the absence of a mechanism whereby civil and military intelligence could be integrated. Had there been more coordinated efforts from security agencies in the last decade, the country would not have seen the number of large-scale terror attacks it did. Incidents like the storming of Bannu jail by the TTP in April 2012, and the horrific APS Peshawar attack might have been prevented had there been better collaboration and communication between civil and military intelligence bodies.

While this is a needed initiative, the state must also be careful that the fate of the NICC does not end up as that of National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), which was established via executive order in 2002. NACTA was tasked with similar functions but was left dysfunctional due to a breakdown in communication and information between various agencies. The new organisation must learn from the mistakes of its predecessor, especially in this crucial time when there has been a spike of insidious blasts and explosions.

BRI: Pro-active constructive economic diplomacy

Shakeel Ahmad Ramay



China's commitment to cooperation and BRI is also evident from the investment during the COVID-19. When the world economy was shrinking and FDI was on decline, China kept investing in BRI programs. It provided a much-needed breathing space to many countries, including Pakistan, through CPEC

CHINA'S transition from a poverty-ridden country to second-biggest economy has taught one critical lesson "sustainable growth and development is only possible through cooperation". China is cognizant of the importance of cooperation and is trying to create avenues to foster cooperation. Belt

and Road Initiative (BRI) is interventions and it was initiated with the vision of shared prosperity by engaging in pro-active constructive economic diplomacy. China considers constructive economic engagement built on the principles of win-win cooperation is essential to pave the way for sustainable development and peace without indulging in conflict or war. It is contrary to the American approach of pre-emptive war or strike, which leads to nowhere. Thus, China kept BRI an open and transparent program, which led to the overwhelming response from the world. The official statistics show that 140 countries have joined BRI, and more than 32 international and regional organizations have also cooperated with BRI. Despite all the odds and negative propaganda, it is growing, and more countries and organizations are joining it. The expansion of BRI attracted more propaganda and negativity from the opponents. Now they have invented new tools like debt trap, human rights and environmental degradation etc.

Fortunately, the propaganda gives a new impetus to Chinese efforts, and China is further expanding and strengthening cooperation and BRI. China is not in the mood to compromise on BRI, which is evident from the recently held Asia-Pacific High-Level Conference on BRI Cooperation. President Xi Jinping, while addressing the conference, urged BRI members to work for open, green and clean cooperation through wide-ranging consultations. He further emphasized the importance of high-standard cooperation, focusing on improving the lives of people and promoting sustainable development. It is pertinent to mention here that people have always been a center to President Xi's policy and speech. State Councilor and Foreign Minister, Mr. Wang Yi further highlighted that BRI is an open and transparent initiative. It is inclusive and welcome everyone to join, without any discrimination. Two speech provides the crux of the BRI and the efforts China is making to foster international cooperation and share its prosperity.

China's commitment to cooperation and BRI is also evident from the investment during the COVID-19. When the world economy was shrinking and FDI was on decline, China kept investing in BRI programs. It provided a much-needed breathing space to many countries, including Pakistan, through China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). CPEC related projects provided jobs to thousands of Pakistanis during the

COVID-19, which was a great relief for Pakistan. It was made possible due to the continuity of work on CPEC projects. Moreover, China and Pakistan expanded cooperation during the COVID-19 and signed MoUs on agriculture and science and technology cooperation. Most recently, China and Pakistan also started work on the construction of two major dams in Pakistan. I am sure the same would be the case for other countries.

China also generously supported countries to combat the pandemic COVID-19. China provided necessary material to all countries, including 290 billion masks, 3.5 billion protective suits and 4.5 billion testing kits. China also provides the vaccine has already donated or sold more than 400 million doses of vaccine to 90 countries. However, the donation of vaccine, especially to less developed or developing countries, was the main instrument of cooperation in the fight against COVID-19. It is worth mentioning here that China provided vaccine at a timewhen other leading countries were hesitating. China is also working tirelessly to convince the world to eliminate intellectual property rights and declare vaccine a common good. It is a dire needed step in the fight against COVID-19.

Despite all these efforts, China is still facing propaganda. Western countries are hell-bent blaming China for their own perceived assumption. They are also not hesitating to criticize Chinese assistance in the form of the vaccine. They are trying to dub it as vaccine diplomacy and are spreading rumors against it. Fortunately, China is not giving any head to it and keeps itself busy providing vaccines to other countries. Rather, China is putting efforts to turn this challenge into opportunity for humankind to build a more prosper world on sustainable development principles.

Mr. Wang Yi, State Councilor and Foreign Minister, deliberated on the subject. Mr. Wang's speech can be summarized as, "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". China considers these interventions necessary as COVID-19 jolted the world economies and human life. Economic and health issues have aggravated the state of poverty. According to the World Bank report, Poverty and Shared Prosperity has projected that 88 million to 115 million people will be added

to the extreme poverty (US\$ 1.90) group. South Asia would be a major hit and bear the brunt of poverty. It was estimated that 63 percent of these extreme poor would be from the South Asia. If we change the poverty line from US\$ 1.90 to US\$ 3.20, the number will jump to 223 million at the global level, and South Asia will account for 71 percent. It is expected that the second wave of COVID-19, especially in India, will increase the number of poor.

Sustainable development and green recovery have been identified as key work areas to counter the COVID-19 and ensure that no one left behind. China considers it the most urgent and needed interventions to save the future of the human race and planet earth. Mr. Wang announces that China will be working to turn BRI into a green program. China had already started to work on it, and in 2020, China diverted 58.8 percent investment towards green energy and initiatives under the BRI. It is a concrete effort to transfer the BRI into a green initiative. China is also making all possible efforts to align BRI with SDGs to realize the dream of sustainable development and no one left behind. On the domestic front, China, under the 14th Five-Year Plan, had committed to lower carbon intensity by 18 percent till 2025. Energy intensity will go down by 13.5 percent. The share of non-fossil energy will be dropped by 20 percent. Thus, it can be inferred that China will lead the way to combat COVID-19 and green recovery by practical steps.

However, the key to success would be cooperation. Regrettably, China is not getting the required cooperation from the developed countries, especially from the USA, UK, Australia, France etc. Rather, they are trying to erect stumbling blocks in the way of China and BRI. It is evident from the communique of G-7 and NATO. G-7 had introduced the Better Build Back World (B3W) program, built on the anti-thesis of cooperation. It is exclusive and gives no weightage to other countries' efforts. It is the unfortunate reality. The world needs to recognize that we all belong to one race, have common resource and most importantly we have common future. The challenges and common future of mankind urge us to cooperate. If we fail to cooperate, everyone will lose, no matter which country or ethnicity we belong.

The writer is Member Board of Experts, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad.

Palestine's forgotten oil and gas resources

Mahmoud Elkhafif



The prolonged closure and recurrent military operations in Gaza have left more than half the territory's population living below the poverty line and cost \$16.7bn in lost GDP annually. This figure does not account for the huge opportunity cost of preventing the Palestinian people from using their natural gas field off the shores of Gaza

AFTER Israel's latest military operation, and the ensuing massive devastation in Gaza, the international community has pledged hundreds of millions of dollars to help with the reconstruction of the Strip. However, a lasting end to conflict between Israel and Palestine will not be possible without long-term investment in Palestine's economic and human development, running into billions of dollars per year.

An overlooked means of generating these revenues would be to allocate Palestine its fair share of benefits of oil and natural gas reserves in the occupied territories and the Eastern Mediterranean, which are currently being exploited only by Israel. A recent study by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) points out that new discoveries of natural gas in the Levant Basin are in the range of 122 trillion cubic feet, while recoverable oil is estimated at 1.7 billion barrels. These reserves offer an opportunity to distribute and share about \$524bn among the different parties in the region.

The Israeli military occupation of Palestinian territories since 1967 and the blockade of the Gaza Strip since 2007 have prevented the Palestinian people from exercising any control over their own fossil fuel resources, denying them much-needed fiscal and export revenues and leaving the Palestinian economy on the verge of collapse.

The economic costs inflicted on the Palestinian people under occupation are well documented: tight restrictions on the movement of people and goods; the confiscation and destruction of property and assets; loss of land, water and other natural resources; a fragmented domestic market and separation from neighbouring and international markets; and the expansion of Israeli settlements that are illegal under international law.

The Palestinian people also exercise only limited control over their fiscal space and policy. Per the stipulations of the Paris Protocol on Economic Re-

lations, Israel controls Palestinian monetary policy, borders and trade. It also collects customs duties, VAT and income taxes on Palestinians employed in Israel which it then disburses to the Palestinian government. UNCTAD estimates that, under occupation, the Palestinian people have lost \$47.7bn in fiscal revenues over the 2007-2017 period, including revenues leaked to Israel and accrued interest. In comparison, the Palestinian government's development spending over the same period was approximately \$4.5bn.

The prolonged closure and recurrent military operations in Gaza have left more than half the territory's population living below the poverty line and cost \$16.7bn in lost GDP annually. This figure does not account for the huge opportunity cost of preventing the Palestinian people from using their natural gas field off the shores of Gaza.

The 1995 Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, known as the Oslo II Accord, gave the Palestinian Authority (PA) maritime jurisdiction over its waters up to 20 nautical miles from the coast. The PA signed a 25-year contract for gas exploration with the British Gas Group in 1999, and a large gas field, Gaza Marine, was discovered at 17 to 21 nautical miles off the coast of Gaza the same year. However, despite initial discussions between the Israeli government, the PA and British Gas on the sale of gas from this field and the provision of much-needed revenue to the occupied Palestinian territories, the Palestinians have not realised any benefits.

Since the blockade of Gaza in 2007, the Israeli government has established de facto control over Gaza's offshore natural gas reserves. The contractor, British Gas, has since been dealing with the Israeli government, effectively bypassing the Palestinian government regarding exploration and development rights.

Israel has also taken control of the Meged oil and natural gas field, located inside the occupied West

Bank. Israel states that the field lies west of the armistice line of 1948, yet most of the reservoir is situated beneath the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967.

More recently, Israel has begun to develop new oil and gas finds in the Eastern Mediterranean, solely for its own benefit.

In commandeering and exploiting Palestinian oil and gas resources, Israel is acting in violation of the letter and the spirit of the Hague Regulations, the Fourth Geneva Convention and a body of international humanitarian and human rights law that addresses the exploitation of common resources by an occupying power, without regard for the interest, rights and shares of the occupied population.

The international community has so far pledged \$860m for the reconstruction of Gaza after the recent assault but, even prior to the latest military aggression, UNCTAD estimates that it would cost a minimum of \$838m per year to lift Gaza's population out of poverty. A fair share of oil and gas revenues would provide the Palestinians with sustainable financing to invest in long-term economic reconstruction, rehabilitation and recovery. The alternative is for these common resources to be exploited individually and exclusively by Israel, and to become another trigger for conflict and violence.

Of course, sustainable economic recovery and a sustainable political settlement go hand in hand. The UN maintains its longstanding position that a lasting and comprehensive peace can only be achieved through a negotiated two-state solution. The UN continues to work towards the establishment of an independent, democratic, contiguous, sovereign and viable State of Palestine, existing in peace and security with Israel. The economic survival of a Palestinian state will depend on the ability of Palestinians to control their own economy and have fair access to their share of oil and gas reserves in Palestine.

—Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs

German soldiers injured in Mali attack

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: A number of German soldiers were among UN peacekeepers injured in an attack on a camp in northern Mali on Friday, Germany's military said. A vehicle-borne explosive was reportedly used in the attack. Some of the group suffered severe injuries, according to initial reports. The UN peacekeepers' temporary base was set up near Tarkint in the northern Gao region. A tweet in French from MINUSMA, the official name for the UN peace-keeping mission in the country, said that a temporary operational base was the target of a "vehicle bomb attack" and 15 "peace-keepers" were injured and are being evacuated. The tweet did not specify the nationality of those injured.

Five FC soldiers embrace shahadat

FROM PAGE 01

Hav Zafar Ali Khan resident of Lakki Marvat, Lnk Hidayat ullah resident of Lakki Marvat, Lnk Nasir Abbas resident of Bhakkar, Lnk Basheer Ahmed resident of Naseerabad, Sep Noor Ullah resident of Lakki Marvat A sanitization / search operation is also in progress to block the escape routes of the terrorists and apprehend the perpetrators. Such cowardly acts by inimical elements, backed by Hostile Intelligence Agencies cannot sabotage the hard earned peace and prosperity in Balochistan. Security forces are determined to neutralize their nefarious designs even at the cost of blood and lives.

Fawad condemns terrorist attack

FROM PAGE 01

their lives for the sake of country were the real heroes of the nation. However, the anti-state elements would not succeed in their nefarious designs. Acknowledging the services security forces for offering great sacrifices in restoring law and order in the country, he said, the entire nation stands with the security forces in the war against terrorism and such cowardly acts cannot sabotage the government's efforts to maintain law and order in the country. The minister prayed the Almighty Allah to grant martyrs a high place in Jannah and grant patience to the bereaved families of the martyrs to bear the irreparable loss with patience and equanimity.

Bangladesh may accept Pakistan's Covid aid

FROM PAGE 01

before the end of the Pakistani High Commissioner's talks with the Foreign Secretary. Foreign Ministry officials told this correspondent in the afternoon that Indian High Commissioner Vikram Doraiswamy was scheduled to pay a courtesy call. The discussion could not take place for miss matched of the schedule for several days. The 'informal' meeting took place today at noon. However, no one wanted to talk about what the top Indian diplomat had discussed with the Bangladesh foreign minister in Dhaka.

Talking to senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was learned that Imran Siddiqui discussed with the Foreign Secretary the issue of Pakistan's desire to assist a private aid agency of Bangladesh to curb Corona under the SAARC Emergency Fund. Last December, the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka sent a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressing its interest in providing various items including medical equipment to the Bangladesh-based organization from SAARC's Covid-19 Emergency Fund.



BAKU: Pakistan ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee welcomed Turkish ambassador Cahit Bagci at Pakistan embassy. Both sides reviewed excellent Pak Turkey bilateral ties and prospects of trilateral cooperation with brotherly Azerbaijan. – DNA

Baku-Yerevan deal prerequisite to regional peace, says Aliyev

He made the remarks in Baku on June 25 at a meeting with the Romanian, Austrian, Lithuanian foreign ministers and an EU delegation, who are on a visit to Azerbaijan mandated by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that the Azerbaijani-Armenian peace agreement is a prerequisite to peace in the South Caucasus region, Azertag reported on June 25. He made the remarks in Baku on June 25 at a meeting with the Romanian, Austrian, Lithuanian foreign ministers and an EU delegation, who are on a visit to Azerbaijan mandated by EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and European Commission Vice-President Josep Borrell.

"If we do not have a peace agreement with Armenia, it means that there is no peace. There is no peace not only between the two countries but also in the South Caucasus. We need peace and sustainable development, forecasting, zero war risk, we do not need war. We did not need a war before," Aliyev said. Touching on the fact that the visit is dedicated to the current post-conflict situation between Armenia and Azerbaijan, the



head of state noted that the main fundamental approaches to the post-conflict situation will be developed and that the country's position is very clear in this context. "I have repeatedly said that we want to move from a post-conflict situation to peaceful development and cooperation in the South Caucasus. Unfortunately, we have never heard anything like this from the Armenian government. The Armenian government is ignoring any of our statements about start-

ing negotiations on a peace agreement with Armenia," he added. Aliyev underlined that the pre-election situation in Armenia could possibly be unsuitable for making statements about the aforesaid. "But now, after the elections in Armenia, we hope for a positive response. Of course, I think that this issue will be discussed during your contacts in Armenia," he added. The president noted that Azerbaijan and the EU could actively cooperate in ensuring peace and

reconciliation in the region. "I am glad that the EU is demonstrating its involvement in regional issues, and your visit is a clear indication of this. We appreciate any participation in the South Caucasus that serves the cause of peace, reconciliation, development, and cooperation," Aliyev said. The head of state stressed that Azerbaijan has always been committed to the peaceful settlement of the conflict with Armenia, and the fact that Baku has

been in the negotiation process for 28 years since the establishment of the Minsk Group is a clear sign of this. He underlined that he had been taking part in talks since 2003 with three Armenian leaders and said that after these meaningless negotiations which lasted for many years, Azerbaijan clearly realized that Armenia does not want peace. "They wanted to keep the status quo unchanged. They wanted to keep our lands under occupation forever, and their participation in the talks was a kind of imitation of the negotiation process," Aliyev said. The president said that Armenia tried to confuse the international community and European organizations claiming that they "want a solution, but Azerbaijan is not constructive". Aliyev said that the Armenian government, which had taken many provocative steps to incite the war, was responsible for the escalation in the region and that there is a lot of evidence supporting his position.

Iran's Khamenei receives local COVID vaccine



FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Hosseini Khamenei has received a dose of the country's first locally developed COVID-19 vaccine. Khamenei on Friday called the development of the vaccine a point of "national pride". "Some insisted from a while ago that I use a vaccine," the 82-year-old, who has had a string of previous health problems, said after receiving the first dose of the jab called COVIran Barekat. "I didn't want to use a non-Iranian vaccine. I said we will wait until, inshallah, the local vaccine is produced and we can use our own vaccine," he said. The supreme leader had in January outlawed the use of United States and United Kingdom-made vaccines, notably those developed by Pfizer and Moderna, as he said they "cannot be trusted". Human trials on the COVIran Barekat vaccine began in late December and about 24,000 volunteers received jabs as part of its third phase of trials that recently concluded. The vaccine received an emergency use authorisation earlier this month and is expected to be rolled out on a large scale in the coming weeks. Setad, a powerful organisation under the supreme leader that is in charge of developing the vaccine, has said it now produces three million doses per month.

Thousands of Palestinians attend funeral for PA critic Nizar Banat

After Banat's death large crowds of Palestinians took to the streets in the city of Ramallah to protest against his killing

FOREIGN DESK

HEBRON: Thousands of Palestinians turned out on Friday in the occupied West Bank city of Hebron to attend the funeral of Nizar Banat, an outspoken critic of the Palestinian Authority (PA), who died in the custody of PA forces on Thursday. Mourners travelled from across the occupied West Bank to attend Banat's funeral prayers at Wasaya al-Rasool Mosque and marched through the streets along with his family and friends before he was buried. The funeral began with the transfer of Banat's body to his family home for a final farewell. Banat, 43, intended to run in parliamentary elections before they were cancelled earlier this year. He was a harsh critic of the PA, 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. The PA receives millions of dollars in foreign aid as it is recognised by the West to

represent the Palestinian people. Banat was in bed in his home in Dura in southern Hebron, when some two dozen PA officers broke into his home and started beating him in the early hours of Thursday morning, according to his family. He was dragged away screaming, local media quoted them as saying, and he was beaten on the head with batons and pieces of metal. After conducting an autopsy, a Palestinian rights group said Banat took blows

to the head, adding the wounds indicated "an unnatural death". Since Banat's death, Palestinians have been widely sharing his previous writings and videos. Videos shared on social media on Friday showed large crowds of mourners protesting against the PA following Banat's funeral. Many chanted "leave, leave Abbas" and "the people want the overthrow of the regime" as anger continued to mount against the Palestinian Authority.



Chinese vessels sought shelter at Gwadar Port

"Gwadar Port is the closest port to our fishing ground. And we all know that Pak is our iron-clad brother, that's why we headed to Gwadar Port." According to the Chinese fishery company, they were in full compliance with the rules of Int'l waters with related documents during their stay in Pak territorial waters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Five Chinese fishing vessels at Gwadar Anchorage calling for emergent shelter from the monsoon of the Indian Ocean were slandered by Indian media as pillagers of fishery resources in Pakistan. However, such an allegation seemed to be on shaky ground, according to Gwadar Pro. As per the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, the five Chinese fishing vessels at Gwadar Anchorage

were calling for emergent shelter from the monsoon of the Indian Ocean on May 27. The afore said Chinese vessels were only 5 nautical miles away from the Gwadar port and have informed all the relevant authorities such as Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Model Customs Collectorate Gwadar (MCC Gwadar), Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) and Balochistan Fisheries Department (Fisheries) on June 4. According to the Consulate General of the People's Republic of China in Karachi, these Chinese

vessels would like to stay at Gwadar Anchorage and Gwadar Port to maintain machines, replenish stocks, etc. The Chinese crew, who took shelter from the monsoon, told Gwadar Pro that the fishing boat arrived in the international waters of the Indian Ocean in late November 2020 for fishing. As the southwest monsoon prevailed in the northern part of the Indian Ocean in mid-May this year, the fleet started to enter Pakistan's territorial waters from the high seas to take shelter from the wind. "In the fishing ground

where our fleet operates, the wind gust can reach level 7-8 every day; the sea waves can reach 2.5-3.6 meters; and the surges can reach 1-1.8 meters. Under such circumstances, the fishing boats are shaking terribly, which poses a very big safety risk," the crew said, adding that things got worse when the engines of two of the fishing vessels malfunctioned and they had to get shelter as soon as possible. "Gwadar Port is the closest port to our fishing ground. And we all know that Pakistan is our iron-clad

brother, that's why we headed to Gwadar Port." According to the Chinese fishery company, they were in full compliance with the rules of International waters with related documents during their stay in Pakistani territorial waters, and did not conduct any Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing. On June 11, Pakistani media Azadi News posted a video on YouTube showing these Chinese fishing boats heading for Gwadar Port, alleging that Chinese fishing boats plunder Baluchistan's fishing resources.

World considers Pakistan...

FROM PAGE 01

Things are at early stage now and we are waiting for the Turkish authorities to come up with plans in this regard. He made it clear Taliban they have to see the reaction of Taliban as well regarding Turkish plans of having control of the Kabul Airport. FM Qureshi added, he was not privy to any development regarding deployment of peace keeping troops in the region. Qureshi emphasized that the Afghans, including the government and Taliban, needed to sit together. "Whatever the outcome evolves out of their negotiations, Pakistan would respect that," he added, saying that "We will remain the partners of peace and not conflict". Asked about the blame-game against Pakistan ahead of the meeting between U.S. president Joe Biden and Afghan president Ashraf Ghani, he said, "They [Afghan government representatives] can say whatever they want, but the U.S. knows Pakistan's role very well and the world is oblivious to our role".

Foreign Minister said as Kashmiris wanted a full-fledged restoration of statehood of Jammu and Kashmir, the claim of Indian prime minister Narendra Modi to fulfill such demand "at some opportune time" was entirely "vague and against the interest of Kashmiris". He termed the meeting between Indian prime minister Narendra Modi with Kashmiri leader minus the All Parties Hurriyat Conference a "staged drama and a public relation exercise" to cover the illegal acts of August 5. "This was a failed attempt on part of the Indian prime minister to mend the tarnished image of his government following the illegal acts of revocation of special status of Jammu and Kashmir," the foreign minister said here at a press conference.

The foreign minister was referring to Thursday's meeting where Narendra Modi met political figures from Occupied Jammu and Kashmir – the first high-level engagement since August 2019 when India revoked the region's autonomy by scrapping Article 370 of its constitution and ended the special status of J&K. He said the all-parties conference called by the Indian prime minister exposed the tall claims about normalcy of the situation in Jammu and Kashmir ended up in failure. He said there existed a wide gulf between the aspirations of Bhartiya Janta Party government and the true representative of Kashmiris who remained "in search of their identity and the basic right of self-determination".

Pakistan to remain on FATF...

FROM PAGE 01

He said "this is about demonstrating that supervisors are conducting both onsite and offsite supervision commensurate with the specific risks associated with the non-financial sector." "It's also about demonstrating that sanctions are applied to all legal persons and arrangements for non-compliance with beneficial ownership requirements; increase in money laundering investigations and demonstrating that non-financial sector is being monitored for compliance with proliferation financing requirements," he added.

Pak desires 'civilized' ties with US..

FROM PAGE 01

About Pakistan's strategic relevance for the US after the Afghanistan exit, PM Khan said the states really have relationships based on common interests and Pakistan is a country of 220 million people, a young population, in a sense strategically placed for the future if our relationship with India improves at some point. "So we have one of the biggest markets on one side of Pakistan, and then China on another side. So two of the biggest world markets. And then the energy corridor, Central Asia, Iran, if that relationship improves between the U.S. So Pakistan, in that sense, is strategically placed for the future in terms of economics."

Briefs

Maharashtra tightens curbs on fears of new virus variant

MUMBAI: India's richest state Maharashtra tightened restrictions Friday, citing fears of a "more severe third wave" as the country recorded its third death caused by a new coronavirus variant.

The announcement came days after India's health ministry called Delta Plus a "variant of concern", citing its increased transmissibility and ability to bind to lung cell receptors more easily. India has recorded 48 cases of the variant so far, with Maharashtra reporting 21 infections - higher than any other state.

Three people have died after contracting Delta Plus, including one in Maharashtra, the state's health department spokesman Ajay Jadhav told AFP.

Under the new guidelines, malls and theatres in Maharashtra, home to financial hub Mumbai, will remain closed, while restaurants will be permitted to operate on weekdays at 50 percent capacity until 4:00 pm. Gyms, salons and shops will also have to shut their doors at 4:00 pm, while a limit of 50 guests will be imposed on weddings.

US to reopen soon for Europeans

PARIS: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken voiced hope on Friday that Europeans would again be able to travel to the United States as coronavirus concerns ease.

The European Union, eager for US tourist money after a devastating 2020, has opened up to Americans who are vaccinated or offer negative Covid tests and its leaders have urged the United States to reciprocate. Blinken, asked repeatedly about the issue on a trip to Europe meant to repair relations that were rocky under Donald Trump, voiced understanding but gave no date.

"We need to be guided by the science and by medical experts, not taking a political decision but one based on the facts," Blinken told an online forum with young French people on the Brut network. "I hope that this will happen quickly. We really want to. I hope it will be a matter of weeks rather than months," he said in fluent French. But he pointed to the rise of the Delta variant, which first emerged in India and has caused renewed concerns in Western countries that had fought Covid-19. The United States arguably has less political pressure to lift restrictions. While Southern European nations dependent on tourism pushed for the EU to open up, President Joe Biden was elected in part on his promises to better address the pandemic.

Container ship ablaze in Indian Ocean

NEW DELHI: The Indian Coast Guard said Friday a ship and an aircraft were being deployed after a container ship lost a crew member and suffered an engine room fire between Sri Lanka and Singapore.

The Liberian-registered MV MSC Messina with 28 crew reported the fire on Friday morning 425 nautical miles (787 kilometres) from Port Blair in the Indian Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the Coast Guard tweeted.

It added that the Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Port Blair was coordinating assistance through another container ship in the vicinity, the MSC Deila. As of 0415 GMT, the MV MSC Messina was disabled and adrift, the Maritime Bulletin reported. It was unclear if the fire was out or what the ship was transporting. The vessel was on its way from Colombo to Singapore and reported the fire halfway to the Malacca Strait. Sri Lankan navy spokesman Indika Silva told AFP that Sri Lanka was also helping with the coordination of rescue efforts. It is the second ship to burn in the Indian Ocean since the Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl caught fire and eventually sank off the Colombo port earlier this month.

RDAs helping overseas, contributing to economy

DNA

OTTAWA: High Commissioner for Pakistan to Canada Raza Bashir Tarar has described Roshan Digital Accounts (RDAs) as a landmark achievement of the government in providing the overseas Pakistanis with excellent digital solutions to invest and participate in the growing economy and socio-economic development of Pakistan.

He made this statement while addressing a webinar arranged by Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan on the theme of 'Banking Beyond Boundaries with Roshan Digital Accounts'. During the webinar, the participants highlighted key features and benefits of RDA Scheme for the expatriate Pakistanis to stay connected with Pakistan and meet their everyday and lifestyle banking requirements and investment aspirations to participate in Pakistan's burgeoning economy. It was pointed out that deposits in Roshan Digital Accounts had reached an impressive figure of US\$ 1.5 billion through 165,000 accounts opened



in just 10 months by overseas Pakistanis to take advantage of the digital solutions offered under RDAs. In his keynote address, High Commissioner Raza Bashir Tarar noted that Prime Minister Imran Khan had been consistently emphasizing

the importance of overseas Pakistanis and their contribution to the economy of Pakistan as well as the vital role their remittances played in the economic development of Pakistan.

He lauded the overseas Pakistan-

is for helping reach Pakistan to an impressive figure of being the sixth largest receiver of foreign remittances. He said the RDA scheme was an excellent way of further optimising the potential of overseas Pakistanis and an unprecedented re-

sponse to the scheme spoke volume for the trust reposed by overseas Pakistanis in the economic policies of the government.

The High Commissioner described the RDAs as a tailor-made financial solution designed to facilitate non-resident Pakistanis in remitting their money to Pakistan and the growth of potential was immense in view of nine million Pakistanis residing abroad. He paid rich tributes to the State Bank of Pakistan and other Pakistan banks participating in the Roshan Digital Accounts initiative which was a leap forward in terms of connectivity and the optimum use of IT.

Raza Bashir Tarar said the RDAs were a reflection of the quality and strength of Pakistan's banking system and its trustworthiness and it was evident by a great number of accounts that had been opened and a very large sum deposited along with investments in Naya Pakistan Certificate reaching US \$770 million. He also lauded the launch of new products such as Roshan Apni Car Scheme and the Roshan Samaji Khidmat for the overseas Pakistanis.

Angela Merkel hopeful of swift EU economic recovery

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: European leaders gathered in Brussels Friday at the EU leaders' summit and dedicated a large part of the second day of discussions to the economic recovery plan for a post-pandemic Europe.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel expressed optimism that the economy could soon regain the ground it lost as a result of COVID.

"Chances for a swift economic



recovery as well as for a quick return to pre-pandemic levels are relatively good," Merkel told reporters in Brussels on Friday. "However, this all depends on us doing everything to prevent a fourth wave of

the pandemic, which would set us back again."

European Central Bank Chief Christine Lagarde told reporters on arrival that an agreement on fiscal and monetary policy was necessary "to encourage the recovery which is underway."

In the run-up to the summit, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had been touring European capitals formally launching the EU's collective pandemic recovery rescue package. Several leaders of front-

line EU countries which share borders with Russia addressed the proposal put forward by Germany and France for an EU-Russia summit as they headed into Friday's talks.

The proposal for an EU summit with Russia comes on the heels of the meeting US President Joe Biden held with Russian leader Vladimir Putin in Geneva on June 16. Germany and France share concerns about being sidelined by Biden in the transatlantic dialogue with Russia.

Germany bans Hamas, PKK flag

BERLIN: Germany's Bundestag lower house of parliament has passed a law outlawing symbols of groups designated as terrorist organisations by the European Union, including the Palestinian movement, Hamas.

The new law passed on Friday, which must still be approved by the Bundesrat upper house, also outlaws symbols of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is listed as a "terrorist" group by Turkey and its Western allies. Previously, only symbols of organisations banned by Germany had been banned. The move comes after several pro-Palestinian rallies in Germany during the escalation of the Israel-Palestine conflict in May, during which there were instances of violence and anti-Semitism.

Thorsten Frei, a lawmaker for Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, told Die Welt newspaper last week that the government wanted to ban the Hamas flag in response to the demonstrations.

"We do not want the flags of terrorist organisations to be waved on German soil," he said, adding that a ban would send "a clear signal to our Jewish citizens". - Agencies

Govt urged to exempt raw salt from tax regime

KARACHI: Ismail Suttar, President, Employers' Federation of Pakistan, and Chairman of Salt Manufacturers' Association of Pakistan (SMAP), while appreciating the people-friendly Federal Budget of 2020-21, appealed to the Finance Minister, Shaukat Tareen to reconsider for exemption raw salt from tax regime.

In an appeal to the Finance Minister, EFP Chief stressed that table salt is considered an essential food item. He added that from 1990, until today, the iodized salt has remained exempted but businessmen

producing iodized salt from table salt will have to pay sales tax on table salt and this will be reflected in the retail price of iodized salt. "Table Salt is produced from raw Sea Salt, Ismail claimed, and Iodized Salt is produced by adding Iodine to the Table Salt. Law forbids marketing of table salt and allows only iodized salt for eating purposes. Therefore, raw salt if taxed will increase the cost of iodized salt and it will be a burden on the common man. So, the raw salt should be exempted from the sales tax regime", he added. - DNA

Zobaida Jalal meets with Foreign minister of Belarus

DNA

MINK: On June 25, 2021 Federal Minister for Defence Production of Pakistan, Zobaida Jalal held a meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, Vladimir Makei. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Foreign Minister Mikalai Baresевич and Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed existing state of bilateral relationship and prospects for future development of the Pak-Belarus



cooperation in different spheres including political, economic, defence, education and culture. Expressing her complete

satisfaction over the proceedings of her visit to Minsk in connection with MILEX exhibition, she expressed her hope that the visit will fur-

ther provide fresh impetus to strengthening cooperation between the two countries and will lead to concrete results in the future.

Number missing in Miami collapse rises to 159

FOREIGN DESK

MIAMI: The number of people listed as missing after the collapse of a 12-storey building in the US city of Miami has risen to 159, officials say. Four people are known to have died.

The mayor of Miami-Dade says they "still have hope" of finding survivors. Search teams working around the clock have reported hearing people banging beneath the debris. What caused the 40-year-old building to collapse early on Thursday morning remains unclear. At least 102 people have now been accounted for, but it is uncertain how many were in the building when it came down. Dozens of people have been evacuated from what is

left of the structure.

President Joe Biden has approved an emergency declaration for Florida, meaning the Federal Emergency Management Agency (Fema) will help state agencies with the relief effort. Overnight hundreds of rescuers used sonar cameras and specially trained dogs as they scoured the rubble for survivors. Teams were tunnelling from an underground car park below the building in an effort to reach victims. The mayor of Surfside, where the disaster happened, Charles Burkett, said at an early-morning news conference that some 15 families had walked out of the building. Most residents would have been asleep when the collapse happened at about 01:00 (05:00 GMT).



BIRMINGHAM: Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan, after his meeting with Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham City University, Professor Julian Beer on academic collaboration between Pakistani and UK universities, presenting him a coffee table book "Karakorom: Ice Mountains of Pakistan" by famous Scottish photographer Colin Prior. - DNA

US to evacuate Afghan interpreters before pullout

President Joe Biden said: "Those who helped us are not going to be left behind. They're welcome here just like anyone else who risked their lives to help us."

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: The US plans to evacuate thousands of Afghans who worked for the American military ahead of September's troop withdrawal, senior officials have said. The plan could involve moving as many as 50,000 people to other countries along with their families. Afghan interpreters who have worked for the US for years fear reprisals from the Taliban after the withdrawal. As many as 18,000 Afghans have applied for US visas, but the

lengthy process has been hindered by delays. The plan is to move them to other countries before September where their applications can be finalised in safety. Speaking at the White House on Thursday, President Joe Biden said: "Those who helped us are not going to be left behind. They're welcome here just like anyone else who risked their lives to help us." Mr Biden is due to hold talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Washington on Friday. They are expected to discuss the current security situation

in Afghanistan, as well as the nature of US support after its military withdrawal. Republican Congressman Mike McCaul, who has advocated for the evacuation programme, told Reuters news agency that about 9,000 interpreters who had applied for Special Immigration Visas (SIVs) would be included in the plan, along with their family members. "You are probably talking about 50,000 people. There's no way to expedite their visas in-country... on a timely basis that would save their lives," he said. Mr McCaul said destinations

that "could be on the table" include Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain. He said the operation would involve "a lot of planes". Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said plans for the evacuation were well under way, but that military aircraft might not be needed. "We are taking this seriously. We know we have an obligation to these men and women and their families," he told journalists. "Planning is ongoing, lots of options are available." Other senior US officials involved in the plan said visa processing would continue after the

military withdrawal "including for those who remain in Afghanistan". "Should it become necessary, we will consider additional relocation or evacuation options," one official quoted by AFP news agency said. President Biden announced in April that US troops would leave by 11 September, after 20 years of military involvement in Afghanistan. "It is time to end America's longest war," Mr Biden said. There are at least 2,500 US troops in the country as part of the 9,600-strong Nato Afghan mission.

C.Sydney locks down amid delta cases

WEB DESK

SYDNEY: Parts of Sydney are going into a week-long lockdown starting at midnight on Friday as authorities in the Australian city battle an outbreak of cases of the coronavirus variant known as delta.

Downtown Sydney and the city's eastern suburbs, including Bondi Beach, will be put under lockdown meaning people will only be allowed to leave their homes for essential work or education, medical emergencies, grocery shopping or outdoor exercise. The city logged 22 new locally transmitted cases on Friday. The city - Australia's most populous - has detected at least 65 cases since noting the first delta variant case last week. "We don't want to see this situation linger for weeks, we would like to see this situation end sooner rather than later," New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian told reporters in Sydney.

The Australian Medical Association has said that the lockdown in some areas is not enough and are calling for a complete lockdown in Sydney to contain the spread of the virus and prevent possible deaths.

Australia and New Zealand have both kept case loads very low by international standards, thanks in part to both their isolated geography and an aggressive approach to containment.

Azerbaijan bans poultry import from 40 countries

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan has banned the import of poultry from over 40 countries, chief state veterinary inspector Galib Abdulaliyev has told local media.

The restriction in poultry import has to do with the bird flu that is present in 55 countries and is in line with recommendations from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

"When imports of both meat and chicken are restricted, there is a waiting period after the threat has been eliminated, which can range from three months to three years. After that, the restriction on the import of the product can be removed. This restriction does not apply to the whole country, but to the area where the disease occurred", Abdulaliyev said.

Azerbaijan's Food and Safety Agency has so far imposed a temporary ban on the import of poultry from some territories of Bulgaria, Korea, Ukraine, Estonia, Kuwait, Germany, Northern Ireland, Poland, Romania, Iran, Sweden, Vietnam, Iraq, India, Wales, France, England, Finland, the Netherlands, Mali, Scotland, the Czech Republic and Belgium into Azerbaijan after the World Organization for Animal Health's warnings.

Neo-Nazi group defaces Floyd statue

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: A statue of George Floyd was defaced and marked with the name of a neo-Nazi group in New York City, according to police, less than a week after it was unveiled.

Police officers said the nearly two-metre-tall monument to the 46-year-old Black man murdered by a police officer in May last year was found covered in paint on Thursday morning.

The inscription was of the United States far-right cell Patriot Front, which is thought to have similarly vandalised another Floyd tribute in neighbouring New Jersey.

Authorities released a video showing four individuals, one of whom was holding a spray paint can, near the scene of the crime in the Flatbush area of Brooklyn. The defacements came before the Friday sentencing of Derek Chauvin, the 45-year-old officer whose killing of Floyd sparked the biggest demonstrations for racial justice in decades in the US.

New York police said they are investigating the attack on the monument.

Briefs

Lahore blast: House of suspect traced

DNA

LAHORE: Security personnel on Friday have traced the house of arrested foreign national suspect Peter Paul David who was involved in blast in Lahore's Johar Town that killed three and injured 21. Sources told that the suspect allegedly belonged to Mehmoodabad and that important documents were also confiscated from his residence. On June 24, 2021, in a major breakthrough in the ongoing investigation into Johar Town blast, law enforcement agencies had detained David, owner of the vehicle used in the explosion. David was offload from a Karachi-bound flight at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport and was shifted to an undisclosed location for interrogation. Earlier, it was revealed that the car which was allegedly used in Johar Town blast entered Lahore from Babu Sabu interchange around 9:40am on Wednesday and went through checking by police personnel at the interchange. A case of Johar Town bomb blast was also registered in CTD Lahore police station on the complaint of SHO Abid Baig. The FIR included 7ATA, 3/4 Explosives Act, 302, 324, 148/149 and other serious provisions. Three unidentified terrorists were named in the FIR. The text of the FIR stated that the terrorists used a vehicle and a motorcycle for the operation.

KSA finalizes preparations to welcome pilgrims

FOREIGN DESK

ISLAMABAD: Hajj officials in Saudi Arabia have said they had completed all the organizational, service, and health preparations to provide the best services to pilgrims upon their arrival at the Grand Mosque in Makkah during this year's Hajj season, which will begin mid-July. The General Presidency for the Affairs of the Two Holy Mosques said that all field and administrative agencies and departments are working to improve the outputs of business and services through pre-prepared plans and programmes. Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the Saudi Arabia's Ministries of Health and Hajj announced earlier this month that a total of 60,000 pilgrims will be allowed to perform the pilgrimage this year as registration is only open to citizens and residents of the Kingdom, Arab news reported. Authorities will take into account COVID-19 health requirements to preserve public health and safety while also facilitating the performance of rituals and worship in the Grand Mosque.

Pakistan-China friendship tree planted at the Foreign Ministry

Nong Rong also presented a Diplomatic Note to the Foreign Minister, regarding donation of 7000 saplings to support the "Clean Green Pakistan Movement" and "Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme", launched by Prime Minister Imran Khan



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Ambassador of China Nong Rong planted a Friendship Tree, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of ongoing celebrations to commemorate

the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations. Nong Rong also presented a Diplomatic Note to the Foreign Minister, regarding donation of 7000 saplings to support the "Clean Green Pakistan Movement" and "Ten Billion Trees Tsunami Programme", launched by Prime Minister Imran Khan.

On the occasion, the Foreign Minister highlighted that this year marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). He lauded Chinese leadership and the CPC for lifting 800 million people out of extreme poverty in a short span of 40 years and for spearheading the Chinese nation's efforts for peace and

development. The year 2021 also marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. Unrelenting efforts of the successive generations of the people and leadership has transformed this relationship into 'All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership', the Foreign

Minister said. A wide range of events are being held in Pakistan and China to celebrate the landmark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Foreign Secretary Sohail Mahmood and senior officers from the Ministry of Foreign Officers and diplomats from Embassy of China participated in the ceremony.

Pakistan keen to enhance miltary ties with Germany

COAS discussed matters of mutual interest in his meeting with General Eberhard Zorn, Chief of Defence German Army



BERLIN: Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), along with General Eberhard Zorn, paying respects at the monument.

DNA

RAWALPINDI: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), during an official visit to Germany, called on His Excellency General Eberhard Zorn, Chief of Defence German Army, on Friday. Dr. Detlef Waechter, Director General for Security and Defence Policy at German Ministry of Defence was also present on the occasion. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, re-

gional security situation, mutual cooperation in defence & security domain and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed. COAS said that Pakistan Army would like to expand bilateral defence cooperation to benefit from German expertise in training and technological advancements. It will have positive impact both on bilateral relationship b/w to countries as well as on regional security. The German dignitary also commended the role

of Pakistan for regional peace and security, the efforts of Pakistan Army in battling the scourge of terrorism and bringing peace and stability in the region, especially Pakistan's role in the Afghan Peace Process. Both sides pledged to further expand defence and security cooperation at all levels. Earlier on arrival at Ministry of Defence, COAS also laid floral wreath on the monument and was presented a Guard of Honour by a smartly turned out military contingent.

FIA arrests two Chinese nationals

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Friday arrested two Chinese nationals from Karachi's Jacob Lines area for living in Pakistan despite the expiry of their 30-day business visas. The two were living in Pakistan since 2019 and 2017, respectively. After the expiry of their visas, they illegally stayed in the country and continued doing business with the locals, FIA officials said. Both men arrived in Pakistan on forged documents. Jin Bang Bin landed in Lahore in 2017, while Zhao Yongdong came to Karachi in 2019. The accused were doing business in Karachi's Ayesha Manzil, Li-aqatabad, Lines Area, and Ranchhor Line, they added. The officials said the arrests were made after a source had tipped them off. Meanwhile, cases have been launched against them, while a probe is underway.

Govt actively pursuing CPEC projects: Hammad

Amb. Nong Rong said up to now, CPEC has attained \$25.4 bn investment in Pakistan

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar has said the present government has been actively pursuing China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Projects for early their completion. Addressing at virtual inauguration of high-power Testing of ± 660kV Matiari-Lahore HVDC Transmission Line project being witnessed simultaneously in Pakistan and China here on Friday, the minister said CPEC was of utmost importance for Pakistan as it would enable the country to enhance industrial production, upgrade energy and communication infrastructure and improve connectiv-

ity within the region. The CPEC has generated number of employments and investment opportunities in Pakistan and beyond, he said. The minister said the government was committed to providing basic necessities to the masses through its power projects. The government has performed well in last 3 years and it has attained various projects on different fronts, he said. Hammad said the government has also worked to improve electricity transmission system in the country and a record 24,633 MW power was transmitted in current month through its national power system. He said Matiari Lahore HVDC project was now successfully starting of high power transmission.

Rashid Skakir appointed PM's PRO

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Abdul Rashid Shaik, a BS-18 officer of the Information Group has been assigned his duties in Prime Minister's Office on deputation basis for a period of three years, replacing Faisal Ilyas, who has been posted as the Press Attaché in Cairo, Egypt. According to a notification issued by the Prime Minister's office, a fresh panel of suitable officers has also been sought for post of Public Relations Officer (PRO) of the Prime Minister, replacing Irfan Ashraf Qazi. Abdul Rashid Shaik has previously worked in the prime minister office. He is considered a competent officer of the Ministry with excellent communication skills. He is an elaborated writer as well and has contributed scores of articles to various reputed newspapers and journals.



17 passengers test corona positive

DNA

KARACHI: As many as 17 passengers from Saudi Arabia who arrived at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport on Friday tested positive for the coronavirus. However, according to sources in Sindh Health Department, authorities at the airport, in blatant violation of the standard operating procedures (SOPs), instead of asking those testing negative to quarantine, sent them home. Meanwhile, Karachi's Khaliq Deena Vaccination Center head Dr. Farhat Abbas Shah has said that after Pfizer, the Sindh government will receive doses of Russia's Sputnik vaccine in a week. Talking to a private news channel, he said prior to that Sputnik vaccine was being administered to people by the private sector hospitals. He said right now Pfizer vaccine was not available at his center. "However, the vaccine can be found at Dow, expo center and SIUT," he informed.



ISLAMABAD: Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting in a meeting with Kuninori Matsuda Ambassador of Japan. - DNA

Korean ambassador lauds PAF's professionalism

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force. - DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E. Mr. Suh Sangpyo called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel and the exceptional progress made by PAF over the years, especially through indigenization. The Air Chief highlighted that both countries enjoy cordial relations and reiterated his resolve to further enhance the existing bilateral cooperation between the air forces of the two countries. Various matters of mutual interest and professional cooperation also came under discussion during the meeting.

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