



Islamabad POST

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PM to visit Uzbekistan on President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's invitation

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Pak-Indonesia free trade deal stressed

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Anam Amin is all set for WI challenge

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Briefs

RDA sets new records

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan announced new records set by the Roshan Digital Account (RDA) Sunday, announcing that inflows and deposits had both increased by a huge margin. Taking to Twitter, the prime minister announced the "good news" by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). "Good news from SBP. #RoshanDigitalAccount achieves more milestones. Inflows crossed \$1.5 bn on Friday, with investment in Naya Pakistan Certificates surpassing \$1 bn," he tweeted. He announced that accounts and deposits at the RDA had also set new records since the "\$1bn event two months ago".

Pak not to allow anybody use its soil

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on National Security Dr. Moeed Yusuf says Pakistan would not allow any country to use its soil for terrorism and subversive activities. Talking to a private news channel, he said Pakistan is playing an important role in maintaining peace in the entire region. The National Security Adviser said the prevailing situation of Afghanistan is perturbed for the entire region as it is facing worst kind of internal disturbance. A failure to achieve peace in Afghanistan is the most immediate challenge facing by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

Every public servant must disclose assets

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday demanded to disclose the assets of every public servant. In a statement issued on Sunday, the PML-N spokesperson said that tax revenue bullying and NAB raids do not increase tax revenue. Marriyum Aurangzeb said that this new tactic has been adopted after the failure of NAB-Niaz Nexus.

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Fate of TAPI project hangs in the balance

The PTI government has seriously objected to this agreement and asked Turkmenistan that the existing agreement is not in the interest of the country

SPECIAL REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Turkmen Gas Company on the much touted trans-nations (Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India) TAPI gas pipeline project of worth \$10 billion even after the lapse of 5 years has so far failed to achieve financial closure as earlier it was scheduled to be attained in December 2016. (TAPI) pipeline will be a 1,814km trans-country natural gas pipeline running across four countries. Designed to serve for 30 years, the pipeline was expected to commence operations in 2021. It was expected to transport 33 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas a year. Now the authorities concerned in Pakistan are saying that Turkmenistan Gas Company is now tasked to complete the financial closure in 2021 which is why the project will come on stream in 2023 which was earlier due to be operational in 2020 under its original plan. Though the Turkmenistan authorities in its territory has laid down the 200 kilometers from Galkynish—the gas field to Turkmen-Afghan border, but they have not achieved the financial closure of the project. Sources believe, TAPI may not see the light of the day because India is involved in this project. Turkmenistan is keen to keep India as part of the project, despite negative vibes from Islamabad. A govt source told on the



condition of not being named that Indian presence in the project has caused delays in the implementation and if India remains there, this project may never complete. The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Pipeline (TAPI), also known as Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline, is a natural gas pipeline being developed by the Galkynish - TAPI Pipeline Company Limited with participation of the Asian Development Bank. The pipeline will transport

natural gas from the Galkynish Gas Field in Turkmenistan through Afghanistan into Pakistan and then to India. Construction on the project started in Turkmenistan on 13 December 2015, work on the Afghan section began in February 2018, and work on the Pakistani section was planned to commence in December 2018. Unless and until the Turkmen authorities change the agreement about the gas delivery point and review about the gas prices,

Pakistan will not give its ownership to the project. Under the existing agreement, Turkmenistan will provide the gas to Pakistan at Turkmen-Afghan border and the gas transit loss in the territory of Afghanistan will be borne by Pakistan. However, the PTI government has seriously objected to this agreement and asked Turkmenistan that the existing agreement is not in the interest of the country. The government said that Pakistan's liabilities will only be invoked when the gas is delivered at Pak-Afghan border not at Turkmen-Afghan border and Pakistan will not be responsible for any gas loss during transit through territory of Afghanistan. The sources said the government of Pakistan has already constituted a Price Negotiation Committee for TAPI gas. Sources say the project may be commissioned by end of 2023 if everything goes well. Technical discussions on gas price are ongoing between the Petroleum Division and the Turkmen side. Sources say that Pakistani side is rather more interested in CASA 1000 gas project, which is already at an advanced stage. The President of Tajikistan Imomali Rahmon was in Pakistan few weeks ago and besides other thing the progress on CASA 1000 was also discussed threadbare. Tajikistan is a key partner in CASA 1000 along with Kyrgyzstan and Afghanistan. It is basically Tajik gas that will come to Pakistan, at highly competitive rates.

Budget session resumes today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly will resume its budget session today (Monday) at 12:00 noon. The House will discuss and approve the Demands for Grants for various ministries. Despite making tall claims of making every effort to block the passage of the budget in parliament, the opposition on Saturday for the second consecutive year literally provided a walkover to the government in the National Assembly which approved 49 demands for grants worth over Rs3 trillion and rejected 967 cut motions of the opposition members with a majority vote. The non-seriousness of the opposition members can be gauged from the fact that a majority of its members, including Opposition Leader Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Asif Ali Zardari, were absent from the house proceedings.

Sajid Javid new UK health secy

DNA

LONDON: Sajid Javid has been named Britain's new health secretary after Matt Hancock was forced to resign on Saturday following revelations he broke coronavirus rules by kissing his aide. "The Queen has been pleased to approve the appointment of the Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care," a short press release from the government read on Saturday. Javid, the former chancellor of the exchequer and home secretary, said he was "honoured" by the appointment.

Qureshi slams FATF's decision

BUREAU REPORT

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has once again raised fingers on FATF's decision against removing Pakistan from the grey list and said that if it was a technical decision then the country would have been added to the white list. "Now FATF members and the world has to decide if it is a technical or a politically motivated forum," he said while addressing media in Multan. The foreign minister said that even FATF members have admitted that Pakistan has

'FATF to assess India's anti-money laundering regime'

COMMERCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federal Energy Minister Hammad Azhar has said the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will conduct assessment of India's regime for Anti-Money Laundering/Combating the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) in the near future, which will be a test case for the task force. The minister said on Saturday the AML/CFT regime in Pakistan was far better than it was in India; this would be clear whenever the FATF carried out assessment of the regime in India. "This will be a test case for FATF," said Mr Azhar, who is also the government's top coordinator for efforts on AML/CFT. He said the illegal sale and purchase of uranium in India did not fall directly under the purview of FATF, as this was a subject for another international body; however, if the sale proceeds were used for money laundering or terrorism financing then it would fall under the domain of FATF.

Continued on Page 06

People of Kashmir 'will not follow a puppet regime'

STAFF REPORT

KOTLI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday said that the people of Kashmir "will not follow a puppet regime". His remarks came during a campaign rally in Azad Kashmir's Rawalakot, to shore up support ahead of the July 25 elections of the AJK Legislative Assembly. "We must get this message across to Islamabad that the people of Kashmir will decide their future on their own," Bilawal said, adding that

Continued on Page 06

Bilawal oblivious to PPP position in AJK: Fawad

Says PM Imran's OBL statement a slip of tongue

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Sunday said Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Zardari was even oblivious to his party position in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as only eight candidates were contesting the upcoming elections of

Continued on Page 06

COVID-19 deaths lowest since June 1

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 32,241 with 901 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 1,347 people recovering from the disease during the last 24 hours. Twenty-three corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 19 of whom were under treatment in the hospitals and four out of the hospitals had perished in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). Most of the deaths occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Out of the total 23 deaths occurred, six of them died were under treatment on ventilators. There were 1,941 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities of the country. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 2.02 percent. The Covid positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major cities including Islamabad 22 percent, Lahore 17 percent, Bahawalpur 22 percent and Multan 27 percent.

NAB seeks access to tax record of politicians

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: In a major development, the National Accountability Bureau has asked the government to give it access to local and offshore tax records of all politically exposed persons, bureaucrats and their families by introducing new legal amendments before approval of the budget. The bureau has recom-

mended four major amendments in the Income Tax Ordinance 2001 through the Finance Bill 2021, which the National Assembly is expected to approve next week on Tuesday. These proposals, if accepted by the government, will allow NAB to even reopen the past and closed transactions of the last 20 years, official documents showed.

Continued on Page 06

Indian Air Force base at Jammu reports 'drone attack'

NEWS DESK

JAMMU: Two blasts took place at an Indian Air Force base in Jammu airport during the early hours of Sunday, according to various Indian media reports. The blasts, as per Indian media, were caused by drones while another IED explosive, meant for use in a possible strike at a "crowded place", was

thwarted, reports quoted Indian police as saying. Two IAF personnel were injured in the blast, which took place a little before 2:00 am at the airport. "Reports say the explosions, the first at 1.37 AM and the second at 1.43 AM, were heard a km away," says the NDTV. One of the bombs, as per the report, damaged the roof of a building in the technical section while the other ex-

ploded in an open area. "Drones with payload were used in both the blasts at Jammu airfield. Another crude bomb was found by the Jammu police," Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbagh Singh told news agency ANI, adding that this IED was to be detonated at a "crowded place". Indian Police have registered an FIR under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The Act allows the arrest and detention of suspects up to six months without evidence. IAF teams, forensic data experts, and others are currently investigating the blasts, says an Indian media report. So far, there have been no reported flight disruptions due to the attack. The Jammu airport is a dual-use facility managed by the IAF. It is also used to operate passenger flights.

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Briefs

Balochistan reports 71 covid cases

DNA

QUETTA: Balochistan has reported 71 cases of COVID-19 with above 9 positivity rate of infections in last 24 hours. Provincial Corona Operation Cell in a statement said that 747 tests conducted in nine districts of the province in the said time with 71 coronavirus infections and 9.49 percent positivity rate.

Two patients of novel coronavirus died of the COVID-19 in last 24 hours, Balochistan Corona Operation Cell stated. In Quetta, the ratio of positive tests remained 3.8 percent.

"Overall recovery rate from the disease in the province remained 97 percent," provincial government's operation cell said. The COVID-19 pandemic claimed 23 more lives in Pakistan during the last 24 hours, lifting the nationwide death toll to 22,211, the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) said. A total of 901 new cases of the virus emerged when 44,544 samples were tested, taking the country's caseload to 954,743.

PVMA says ghee, cooking oil price to jump up to Rs18 per kg

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Vanaspati Manufacturers Association (PVMA) on Sunday said the price of ghee and cooking oil will jump up to Rs 18 by July 01 due to the recent budget measures. The prices of different brands will jump from Rs 13 to Rs 18 depending on their respective retail prices in the market, said Chairman PVMA Abdul Waheed.

In a statement issued here Sunday, he said that local currency has lost Rs5 against US dollar while taxes to the tune of Rs18 per kg have been imposed in the budget therefore there will be no price reduction in the near future. He said that the government is getting almost Rs90 tax on per kilogram of ghee and cooking oil which are highest in the region. Abdul Waheed said that three percent additional sales tax has been imposed on the sale of ghee and cooking oil to unregistered buyers, whole-sellers, and retailers will pay 0.1 and 0.5 percent withholding tax while input sales tax adjustment up to 90 percent has been allowed.

He demanded that input sales tax adjustment up to 100 percent should be allowed so that uniform tariff should be imposed on the whole industry, withholding tax on wholesale and retail purchase should be reversed. Additional sales tax should be abolished so that the prices of essential food items should remain stable as per the wishes of the government, he added.

16,560 health workers contract covid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As many as 16,560 healthcare workers have been infected while battling the outbreak of COVID-19 in Pakistan, quoting sources. According to sources at the Ministry of National Health, so far 9,893 doctors, 2,363 nurses and 4,304 other staff of hospitals have contracted the coronavirus.

While battling the deadly outbreak of COVID-19 in the country 163 healthcare workers have lost their lives, the sources said. Overall 16,111 health workers have recovered from the pandemic. Most of the medical workers infected by the virus and deceased belong to Sindh. As per the province-wise breakup, in Sindh, 5,830 health workers were infected by coronavirus while 56 died in the disease. In Punjab, 3,477 healthcare workers contracted the coronavirus and 29 of them died.



ABBOTTABAD: An attractive view of Abbottabad Tunnel-1 on Mansehra Motorway. - APP

KP govt ensuring basic amenities on top priority

It was very encouraging that the people were also jointly caring and protecting the plants alongside forest department officials

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Forests, Environment and Wildlife Syed Muhammad Ishtiaq Urmair Sunday said that to providing basic amenities to the people was one of the top priorities of the present government.

He said that in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, effective measures were being taken for sanitation and elimination of environmental pollution in the province.

He expressed these views while talking to various delegations in Peshawar, provincial minister said that billions of rupees were being spent on projects for the welfare of the people and provision of other basic amenities and work on various major development schemes was in full swing which would bring significant benefits to the people of Peshawar.

He said that the PTI government had completed various

Steps taken for solution of people problem: SACM

HANGU: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Haji, Endowments and Religious Affairs Muhammad Zahoor Shakir Sunday said that the government was taking effective steps to improve the living standard of the people by resolving their problems on priority basis. He expressed these views while addressing a joining ceremony in Hangu. On the occasion, Talib Jan, Haji Gulabat Khan and others along with their families announced to join PTI. The Special Assistant in his address welcomed all those joining PTI.

development schemes in the public interest on time with transparency and high standards across the country and work on several of them was in full swing that would be completed on time.

He said that it was a good thing that for the first time in the history of Pakistan, the people, including the federal and provincial governments were being planted on the same page not only in the corners of the country but also to

avoid the deadly effects of climate change and environmental pollution.

It was very encouraging that the people were also jointly caring and protecting the plants alongside forest department officials.

He said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) had taken concrete steps to change the system of government and today it had put the country on the path of correct and faster development. - APP



KOTLI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari addressing a public rally in Kotli in connection with upcoming AJK elections. - DNA

Balochistan opposition MPs say govt dialogue bid just eyewash

QUETTA: The Opposition members of Balochistan Assembly who have been lodging in a Quetta police station to court arrests for the 7th straight day on Sunday have termed the government's dialogue bid a bluff.

The Balochistan Opposition members were still present at BijliGhar police station on the 7th day to present their arrests following the registration of an FIR against them by the provincial government for creating obstruction and resorting to violent action in order to stop the presentation of the provincial budget in Balochistan Assembly on June 18.

The Opposition members were of the view that government's dialogue bid was just an eyewash. Opposition leader in Balochistan Assembly Sana Baloch said that the government's dialogue team did not have any mandate. He said the team assured them that the provincial government would withdraw FIR against opposition members but so far no action had been taken in this regard. Mr Baloch said he had already stated that the provincial government was not serious at all in this matter. - DNA

Government committed to promote renewable energies

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister for Energy Dr. Akhtar Malik performed the ground breaking of solar plant of 2 KW at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and inaugurated UAF retrofitting project worth Rs 71.99 million under which 7,466 energy efficient fans and 20,723 LED lights were installed and replaced by conventional inefficient appliances. It will save Rs 35 million annually. He was flanked by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Anas

Sarwar Qureshi, Punjab Minister for Cultural & Colonies Mian Khayal Ahmad Kastro, Minister for CMIT Muhammad Ajmal Cheema, Parliamentarians Sha-keel Shahid and Mian Waris Aziz (MPA), Ashraf Sohna former provincial minister and other attended.

Punjab Minister said that only renewable energy is a viable solution to meet the demands of electricity and also help combat the challenges of climate changes. He said that in the southern Punjab, 24000 basic health units had been converted on solar energy. He said

Business community hails restoration of self-assessment

LAHORE: President SAARC chamber of commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday hailing the restoration of self assessment scheme demanded the government to bring 15 million identified tax evaders into tax net to lessen burden on existing tax payers.

Talking to a 20 member traders delegation from South Punjab led by Ch Zahid Iqbal Arain, former VP FPCCI he said that draconian action must be taken against tax evaders and defaulters after a high level impartial scrutiny preferably conducted by a third party. He lamented that 9.5 % tax to GDP ratio in Pakistan is even less than other countries of South Asia whereas its 46.2 % in France, 46.0 % in Denmark and 44.6 % I.

He stressed the urgent need of broadening the tax base exclusively with new tax payers which he added is oxygen to strengthening of national economy. He said world over judicious taxation plays a key role in economic growth of the nations and especially it matters a lot in developing countries.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said that government must promote tax culture and improve tax collection besides raising tax revenue in addition to clipping the powers of tax collector for leashing unnecessary harassment. - DNA

Family supplying drugs arrested

DNA

KARACHI: Police on Sunday claimed to have arrested six members of a family involved in drugs supply in Karachi. According to the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Malir, Irfan Bahadur the action was carried out on a tip-off by the Steel Town police in the metropolis.

10kg of drugs were recovered by the police during a search operation of a vehicle in which the family was traveling. The drugs were concealed in packets.

Arrested include husband, wife, their son, and three others, the SSP Malir said and added the man named Adalat Khan was supplying drugs in the city along with his family to doge the police during supply.

Further investigation into the incident was underway. Earlier in February, Karachi's Shah Latif Town police officials had arrested a member of an inter-provincial gang of drug peddlers.

Sindh govt indoor games from Monday

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh government has ordered the reopening of all religious shrines and dargahs, swimming pools and all kinds of indoor games in the province from Monday (tomorrow). Easing the COVID-19 restrictions in the province, the Sindh Auqaf Department notified reopening of the shrines that were closed down owing to the third wave of coronavirus.

The Sindh Auqaf Department issued notification after getting approval from the National Command and Operation Center (NCO). The notification stressed to wear masks and ensure social distancing and use of hand sanitizers. The Sindh Auqaf Department urged the devotees to perform ablution (Wuzu) from their homes.

The department put a ban on the entry of children and people over 50 years of age in shrines; also, there would be no free-meals (langar) distribution in shrines.

FATF strategy against Pakistan

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan needs to take a serious look at the FATF background. The Institute is adopting a strategy against Pakistan on political grounds.

Khawaja Rameez Hassan Khawaja Rameez Hassan, Deputy Secretary Information, PML-Q Punjab, said in a press release that an attempt is being made to present the image of a Unsafe and destable state under a well-conceived conspiracy against Pakistan. He said that Pakistan needs to take a serious look at the FATF background. The organization is adopting a strategy against Pakistan on political grounds.

509,090 people get vaccination

FAISALABAD: As many as 509,090 people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Sunday that 396,284 citizens were given first dose while 73,493 were injected second dose of vaccine.

He further said that 25,351 health workers were also injected first dose while 13,962 received second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of anti-coronavirus vaccine was available in the district.

As of now 18,490 first doses and 1,232 second doses were in stock in Faisalabad. He said that 34 vaccination centers were operational in Faisalabad where registered people were also getting anti-coronavirus vaccine doses. The district administration set up vaccination centres in those hospitals and localities include: Allied Hospital, District Head Quarters Hospital, Government General Hospital G.M Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital Jaranwala, Social Security Hospital Madina Town and Wapda Hospital. - APP

Trade deficit keeps on widening: FPCCI Business Panel

Mian Anjum Nisar stated that Pakistan's trade deficit keeps on widening despite a much-trumpeted increase in exports, which were, in fact, not sufficient to match the huge surge in imports

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the country's trade deficit has increased by almost 30% to \$28 billion during 11 months (July-May) 2020-21, the FPCCI's Businessmen Panel has asked the authorities to focus on further accelerating exports, besides keeping some check on unbridled imports of luxury items. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel Chairman Mian Anjum Nisar warned that the pace of growth in imports is projected to increase further in the coming months following the abolishment of regulatory duty on imports of raw materials and semi-finished products.

He observed that the economic managers will have to chalk-out a long term plan for

import substitution and increasing exports so that Pakistan could become self reliant. He also emphasized the need for adoption of international best practices for priority sectors and consultations with international experts to achieve success.

He stressed upon the need to enhance inter-ministerial coordination and public-private partnership for increasing exports. He said the low exports volume and rising trade deficit were chronic issues which should be resolved permanently. He said exportable items should be produced in accordance with the international demand to fully exploit the benefit of GSP-Plus status.

He said that several industries and sectors were neglected in past. He said decisions should be made in national interest, keeping aside the personal agenda.

Mian Anjum Nisar stated that Pakistan's trade deficit keeps on widening despite a much-trumpeted increase in exports, which were, in fact, not sufficient to match the huge surge in imports.

He said that the economic managers were boasting of their performance on the plea of current account balance, and observed that with a view to achieve consistency in current account surplus for a long period without

compromising industrial growth the government will have to focus on increasing the exports and put the business and trade issues on priority, otherwise, the economic problems and balance of payment could further disturb with the growing trade deficit, he warned. The chairman of the BMP, the ruling group of the FPCCI, said that the situation is in control due to sustained increase in remittances.

The FPCCI former president said the government has to formulate long-term and consistent policies for the revival of industry and considerable improvement in exports, as contrary to regional countries, Pakistan's exports have remained stagnant during the past 40 years, and unless attention was paid to all factors that hamper industrial and exports growth, the country might not be able to achieve desired results.



Briefs

Zainab Alert Application to combat child abuse

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights in collaboration with Pakistan Citizens Portal launched "Zainab Alert App" nationwide to combat child abuse issue on war footing to address this grave problem, an official of MoHR has said.

Talking to APP here, he said that the Zainab alert app was launched on Citizen's portal and relevant regional and district levels for combating emergency and recovery of missing or abducted children. The basic purpose of this App is to initiate a quick response as soon as a complaint is lodged. It has connected the DPOs to the system and the complaint directly reaches to the concerned DPO.

The App keeps a track of the missing child case and all the process taking place from preliminary examination to verification, registration of FIR and investigation. However, a Mobile App with same purpose and nature was already launched and working on Sindh level inside the CPLC office, he added. He said, "We always see duplication of services and notice that same nature of activities are undertaken at different places by different people". It not only consumes time but also the efforts, he added. - APP

Smoke emitting vehicles goes unchecked

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Smoke-emitting vehicles in the city are causing serious air pollution that is detrimental to the health of the citizens.

Most of the public transport drivers besides emitting dark smoke from their unmaintained vehicles are also found demonstrating their racing skills.

Auto-rickshaws, old buses and mini-buses, and coaches were mainly becoming a serious environmental hazard in Rawalpindi by generating pollution during peak hours particularly in the evening as the city was engulfed with a blanket of smoke screens. Uzma Shaheen an environmental sciences student said it was also observed that traffic police drive to curb outdated vehicles with poor maintenance to move on the city's roads has so far remained unfruitful in producing any desirable results.

An official of the Traffic Police said that the traffic police continued drive against the smoke-emitting vehicles by imposing heavy fines and confiscated vehicles on the violation. He, however, added that since this was the responsibility of traffic police to ensure hazard and noise-free traffic in the city, the traffic police would certainly tackle the issue as per the law.

WPP to curb inaccurate measuring of petrol

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A watch and ward policy (WPP) is crucial to curb sale of petrol with inaccurate measuring at fuel stations as intermittent inspections by Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration could not yield positive results and this unfair practice goes unabated. The motorists, desirous to some respite, have alleged some petrol pumps in Federal Capital who were fleecing them to mint extra bucks.

"My car's fuel tank is 50 liter according to manual but I have been paying for 60 liters to get it fully filled," a motorist at a fuel station near Golra Sharif told APP on Sunday. Azhar, another motorist at a fuel station in Tiramri, a sub-urban area of Islamabad, said that short fuel measuring was one of the most common frauds as there were multiple tricks opted by petrol pumps staff to hoodwink the customers. He claimed that a short-stop trick was very common which was used by most of the fueling stations.

Central Asian ambassadors visit picturesque Swat Valley

Sardar Waqar said that it was a great honor for him to host such a distinguished group, representatives of the many govts from many parts of the world with which Pakistan has strong ties, including in the area of development cooperation

STAFF REPORT

SWAT/ISLAMABAD: Five ambassadors from Central Asian Republics visited Swat and attended a luncheon hosted by National Commissioner for Boys Scouts Association, Sardar Waqar Shahzad Advocate, at his residence at Kanju. The Ambassadors included the Dean of diplomatic corps, Ali Alizada, Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Yezhan Kistadin Ambassador of Kazakhstan, Erik Beishembiev Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic, Ismatolu Naseruddin Ambassador of Tajikistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Waqar said that it was a great honor for him to host such a distinguished group, representatives of the many governments from many parts of the world with which Pakistan has strong ties, including in the area of development cooperation. Today I am indeed honored and privileged to receive you here at my home. On behalf of the loving & hospitable people of Swat, I welcome Your Excellences. Swat was described as Udaya (the garden) in ancient



Hindu epics. Alexander the Great crossed the Swat River with part of his army in 327BC. He fought and won some of his major battles at Barikot and Udegram and

stormed their battlements, before crossing over the plains of the five rivers. In Greek accounts these towns have been identified as Ora and Bazira.

We are one the most peaceful, religious, peace loving and hospitable people who spread nothing but love. I therefore look forward to working



closely with you and your governments in addressing both challenges and opportunities in the future for the people of Pakistan and people in gen-

eral of Swat specifically. Thank you for your presence and honoring me and my family to provide us an opportunity to have you here, Shahzad added.

CDA directs completion of PWD underpass



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has directed speedy completion of the two ongoing development projects on Islamabad Expressway. An official of CDA told APP that currently, work on the PWD underpass and expansion of Korang Bridge was in progress and as per their set deadlines the underpass would be completed in July and expansion of the bridge in December this year.

The civic agency had written a letter to Wapda and SNG-PL to shift their pipelines of 16 inches from the sites for ensuring timely completion of the projects, he added. He said "The CDA is making all out efforts to complete the ongoing projects despite the third wave of coronavirus pandemic."

He said special attention was being paid on restoration of road infrastructure, construction of new roads, avenues, ways and bridges. "Two more lanes will be added to the expressway from Koral till T. Chowk," he said. The pace of ongoing work on the PWD underpass had been increased, he added.

Envoy assures to play role for promoting Pak-Dutch trade

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Suljuk Mustansar Tarar, Pakistan's Ambassador-designate to Netherlands said that the current government was focusing on trade diplomacy to promote Pakistan's trade and exports with foreign countries and assured that he would play a role in cooperation with the private sector for promoting Pakistan's trade with Netherlands. He expressed these views while interacting with the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Suljuk Mustansar Tarar said that though it was still uncertain how the European economies including Netherlands would shape up after Covid-19 pandemic, his focus would be to diversify Pakistan's trade and ex-



ports with the Netherlands. For this purpose, he would share trade leads with the Ministry of Commerce and chambers of commerce & industry so that the business community of Pakistan could take advantage of available business opportunities in the Nether-

lands. He said that he would also encourage investors of the Netherlands to explore Pakistan for JVs and investment. He said that extra efforts were needed to increase Pakistan's export base and the private sector has to play an enhanced role to achieve this

goal. He also shared his plans to find out new opportunities for Pakistan's private sector in the Netherlands so that with joint efforts, exports of Pakistan could be further enhanced.

Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the Prime Minister Imran Khan was passionate about promoting Pakistan's trade and exports and stressed that relevant ministries and Pakistani missions should adopt a proactive approach to support the private sector in realizing actual export potential of Pakistan. He said that Pakistan's bilateral trade with Netherlands was just around USD 1 billion, which was not reflective of the real potential of both countries and Pakistan's embassy in Netherlands should identify new opportunities for exports promotion.

Raja Umer assumes charge as AIOU new Registrar

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has appointed Raja Umar Younis as the new Registrar of the university. Raja Umar Younis assumed the charge of the office of Registrar of Allama Iqbal Open University after Executive Council, the supreme statutory body of the university, formally endorsed decision of the Selection Board in which Raja Umar Younis along with some other officers and academicians were appointed. Representatives of Academic Staff Association (ASA), Officers' Welfare Association (OWA) and Employees Welfare Association (EWA) of the university congratulated Raja Umar on assuming the charge of his new office and assured him of their full cooperation. They expressed the hope that Raja Umar would strive hard to ensure progress of AIOU as well as welfare of its employees.

The Deans of all four academic faculties of the university as well as principal officers have also felicitated Raja Umar on becoming registrar of AIOU and expressed their confidence on the recruitment policies of Prof Dr Zia UL-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIOU to uphold principles of merit and transparency. Raja Umar, also assured that Registrar Office will extend maximum cooperation for the mutual benefits of AIOU and its employees.

PANAH, Chromatic Trust hold briefing on drug abuse

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Society for Protection of Rights of the Child (SPARC), Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) and Chromatic Trust held a briefing session on World International Day against Drug Abuse and illicit trafficking at National Press Club Islamabad on Saturday. The day is celebrated to eliminate drug misuse and addressing the structural causes that fuel the illegal drug trade.

Khalil Ahmed, Program Manager, SPARC said Smoking cigarettes is doorway towards drugs. Already, in Pakistan the number of smokers has reached up to 29 million with 1200 children who start smoking every day. It is a gateway

that creates changes in the brain that make a young-adult more vulnerable to the effects of other drugs. Since Pakistan is selling the least expensive cigarettes there is a high prevalence of smoking.

He further added in recent year's government has raised the tax on all essential items, but there has been no net increase in tobacco taxation from the past 03 years on the contrary the health cost has increased upto 615 billion (1.6 % of GDP) Pakistan Institute of Development Economics data. Shariq Mahmood Khan, Project Director Chromatic mentioned that therevenue from tobacco is 110 billion, whereas the health costs due to loss of productivity and tobacco-related illness

are much high. Yearly, 166,000 people die due to tobacco consumption because of a leading root of escapable deaths worldwide. Why is the government not initiating measures to ensure the implementation of all relevant laws to enhance tax on cigarettes to boost its revenue and reduce health costs? Tobacco-product excise taxes are most significant for attaining the health objective of reduced tobacco consumption.

Ms. Seemal Mazhar, Communication Officer SPARC stated smoking in your late teens and early 20s creates changes in the brain and body that can make young people more apt to experiment with other addictive substances. A study of university students, published in early 2020, found that

smokers had higher levels of depression symptoms. Tobacco-product excise taxes are most significant for attaining the health objective of reduced tobacco consumption.

The theme of this year's International Day against Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking is to share facts on drugs to save lives, highlighting the importance of consolidating the indication base and raising awareness so that the community, governments, civil society, families, and youth can make informed decisions towards a healthy life.

Pakistan must start from controlling tobacco consumption by imposing tobacco taxes to keep it out of reach of children because children are reconsidered as replacement smokers.

Contribution of PAEC Agri-Scientists acknowledged

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

Similarly, for the achievements in the same fields, Muhammad Kashif Riaz Khan from PAEC Young Scientist Award, said a The final award, Outstanding to joint winners, Manzoor Sajjad Haider, Hafiz Mumtaz of NIAB Faisalabad. These the form of certificates jointly IAEA, Rafael Mariano Grossi and Agriculture Organization. These awards to PAEC are testament to the technical acuity research work being carried



Cop poisoned to death

ISLAMABAD: A Punjab police cop was poisoned to death in Islamabad as authorities registered a case against unidentified suspects in the murder case.

According to a case filed at the Lohi Bher police station on the complaint of the victim's brother Tariq Mahmood, sub-inspector Arshad Mahmood was poisoned to death. He was brought to the PIMS hospital where he succumbed to death during medical treatment, the FIR said adding that Arshad Mahmood was posted as a sub-inspector in Jhelum police. - DNA

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Briefs

AIOU performs all activities online during pandemic

DNA

ISLAMABAD: "Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is performing all academic activities online during the COVID-19 pandemic which is not only unprecedented in the educational scenario of the country but also unique of its own kind", these views were expressed by Prof Dr Zia Ul Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIOU while addressing the speakers and the participants of the second session of international webinar on 'COVID-19 And Higher Education' jointly organized by Academies and Societies of Sciences Association (AAS-SA) and Pakistan Academy of Sciences (PAS). He, further, added that AIOU is handling all academic activities online including submission of assignments, organizing course workshops as well as holding online examinations. Moreover, process of digitalization of the university's key academic, administrative and financial operations will be fully automated by the end of July, 2021 through the technical support provided by Oracle Corporation which will not only enhance quality standards of educating imparted but would also be enabling in performing various university operations effectively ensuring both efficiency and transparency. AIOU is a unique example of its own kind in the entire Asian region which is fully automated to provide educational facilities of all kinds to its students at their doorsteps ranging from submitting online admission application to award of degree.

Air University committed to fight against drug abuse

ISLAMABAD: Air University, in connection with the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (World Drug Day), has organized an awareness session to strengthen action and cooperation in achieving the goal of a world free of drug abuse. The event was opened with a highly influential documentary created by a brilliant team of Fazaia Medical College in collaboration with Air Media Club. The documentary depicted the adverse impact of drug addiction on the life of a young man and unacceptance of society for such person and eventually leading to death by suicide. Dr. Uzma Masroor, the President of Pakistan Association of Clinical Psychologist, Islamabad Chapter, in her keynote address, talked on different psychological effects of drugs and how to overcome the conditions of stress and anxiety. "Each year, individuals like yourself, entire communities, and various organizations all over the world join in on this global observance, to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent for society," said Dr Uzma, who is also Chair Department of Humanities, Education and Psychology, Air University and a certified trainer of Hypnosis, NGH-USA and NLP, NF-NLP, USA. On the occasion, Air University Thespian Society presented a powerful & impressive mime performance on the influence of drugs and how they lead to a ruined life and also how someone can cure up from this cancer.

Motorway Police hold session at Aghosh College Murree

The team gave a detailed presentation and arranged comprehensive interactive session with students on use of roads by drivers, riders and pedestrian



KHAMAY ABBASI

MURREE: Atif Ghafoor Bhatti and Ghulam Zia ud Din Senior Patrol Officers from Road Safety Wing, National Highways and Motorway Police, Islamabad

visited Aghosh College Murree for briefing session on Road Safety for young Aghoshians. The team gave a detailed presentation and arranged comprehensive interactive session with students on use of roads by drivers, riders and pedestrian. The students expressed keen interest in knowing various road safety rules.



The visiting team distributed gifts among students for their response and interest in the entire activity. Principal Aghosh College Murree thanked the visitors for arranging road safety session at ACM and vowed for further collaboration in future.

The visitors had a tour of campus and appreciated efforts put in by Al-Khidmat Foundation Pakistan and Management of Aghosh College Murree for providing excellent learning and residential environment for young Aghoshians.

PM urges people to take part in plantation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday urged all the people, especially youth, to actively take part in the country's biggest tree plantation campaign. On his twitter handle, the prime minister apparently referred to the upcoming monsoon tree plantation drive in the country under his government's much ambitious Ten Billion Tree Tsunami project and Green and Clean Pakistan initiative.

The prime minister stressed that the countrymen have to accelerate their efforts to plant maximum saplings during the campaign.

"I want all Pakistanis, (especially) our youth, to gear up for the biggest tree planting campaign in our history. We have a lot of catching up to do," he posted on his twitter account along with a graph showing numbers of trees per person around different countries of the world. The prime minister also posted an analytical data graph along with his tweet, according to which the world has 422 trees for every person but in Pakistan, this ratio stands around five trees per person.

A study in the journal of 'Nature' reported close to 3.04 trillion trees on earth. According to another data compiled by different international research bodies, about 50% of these trees in the world are present in the five biggest countries, while two-thirds were in just ten countries, leaving just 1990 billion trees for the rest of the world. 'Tree wealth', referred as an ecological term, can also be measured in terms of the most significant number of trees per person.

CDA to build walk through museum on Pakistan Monument

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) will build a walk through museum on Pakistan Monument, aimed at inspiring new generations from the sacrifices rendered by forefathers in the creation of Pakistan.

Photographic images from Pakistan movement would be displayed around the walk through, providing children and residents of federal capital an opportunity to see the country's history in a unique style, CDA spokesman told APP. A flag monument site would be developed in open space adjacent to the Monument and converted into an outdoor museum with no walls and ceiling, he added.

In this regard, he said modern technology would be employed to display 3D images carved out on the pillars. These will be renderings of actual events depicted in actual photographs.

The authority has sought services of renowned artist Aftab changeazi who has the credit in projects like National Heritage Museum, Folk Heritage, National Monument Museum, Army Museum Rawalpindi, Army Museum Lahore and Senate Museum.

The spokesman said the landscaping and parking of the project would be carried out by environment wing of CDA. The work on the project was likely to commence in August this year, he added. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Students taking part in a walk organized in connection with World Drug Day. ANF and UNODC jointly organized the walk. - DNA

ICCI delegation visits PIMS to pay tribute to the injured Policemen

President, ICCI, said on the occasion that the business community and citizens of Islamabad pay tribute to the bravery of Muhammad Saqlain as well as to the Islamabad Police who risked their lives to fail robbery Incident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Saqlain, a soldier who set a perfect example of duty, bravery and self-sacrifice of a police force who was shot by dacoits during a robbery attempt in Islamabad yesterday. He continued to fight the dacoits despite having five shots of bullet. And not only he thwart the robbery but he also managed to arrested the robbers. Islamabad's civil society, businessmen and senior police officials visited the injured Muhammad Saqlain, who was undergoing treatment at PIMS Hospital, and paid rich tributes to him for his bravery. President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Sardar Yasir Ilyas, Secretary General of United Business Group Pakistan Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce Police Committee Saif-ur-Rehman Chaudhry Nadeem-uddin, Sardar Tahir, Chaudhry

Khalid, Chaudhry Zahid Rafique, Babar chaudhry were present on the occasion. Malik Mohsin Khalid, Ashraf Farzand and SSP Operation Dr. Mustafa Tanveer, SSP Investigation Ata-ur-Rehman, Additional SP Farhat Abbas Kazmi, SP Special Branch Zubair Sheikh, SP City Rana Abdul Wahab and SP Umar Khan were also present.



Sardar Yasir Ilyas, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, said on the occasion that the business community and citizens of Islamabad pay tribute to the bravery of Muhammad Saqlain as well as to the Islamabad Police who risked their lives to fail robbery Incident. Zafar Bakhtawari, former president of the Islamabad

Chamber of Commerce and secretary general of the United Business Group, acknowledged Muhammad Saqlain's bravery and sense of duty on the occasion and said that Muhammad Saqlain should be given the Civil Award of highest police performance. In order to promote the spirit of protection of life and property of the citizens. Saif-ur-Rehman, chairman of the police committee of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that Muhammad Saqlain would be invited to Chamber of Commerce after his recovery. SSP Operation Dr. Mustafa Tanveer praised the policeman on the occasion and urged him to ensure the provision of the best medical facilities and said that the young man has made the entire Islamabad Police proud. SSP Investigation Ata-ur-Rehman said that there would be no slackness and negligence in bringing the accused involved in the robbery to justice and the dacoit would be punished exemplary. Additional SP Farhat Abbas Kazmi thanked the citizens and said that their arrival at the hospital had raised our spirits and we would perform our duties more bravely for the protection of life and property of the people in future.

Veteran actress Khurshheed Shahid dies

ISLAMABAD: Veteran actress and celebrated radio presenter Begum Khurshheed Shahid and mother of actor Salman Shahid passed away on Sunday. She was 95. Her funeral prayers will be offered at 4 pm today (Sunday) at Defence Phase-II, Block-T. She was ill for the last couple of months. She did her first PTV play 'Rus Malai', which was a comedy, and then she started working regularly in dramas; there's a long list of PTV classics like Fehmida Ki Kahani Ustani Rahat Ki Zabani.

Actress Khurshheed was born in 1931 and passed away on 27 June 2021. Begum Khurshheed is one such distinguished artist who stands out as the pioneers of PTV. Bold and graceful, she always spoke her mind. According to reports, she was in grade six when a Congress leader, Aruna Asif Ali, who used to hunt for young talent came to her school and her classmates told the leader about Khurshheed's singing and acting talent and she was later selected for musical performance. - DNA

'B3W too late to challenge BRI, CPEC'

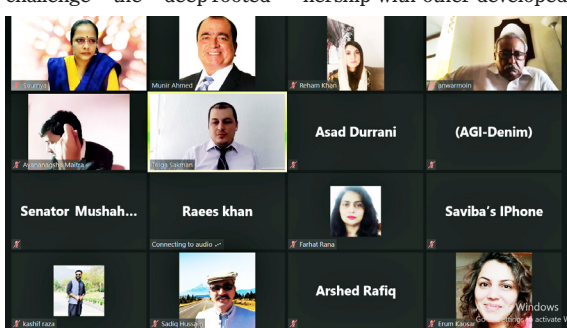
DNA

ISLAMABAD - Speaking at a webinar on Saturday, the experts said the US is making its utmost efforts to ignite a new cold war in the region and this time against China. The Build Back Better World (B3W) is apparently a copycat project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) that has engaged 140 countries by now. They said the B3W partnership of G-7 countries would take longtime to mature any outline of actual interventions. In the circumstances, the B3W seems to be merely a political propaganda against China. Devcom-Pakistan and DTN organized the webinar on Saturday on the subject, "Biden's G-7 B3W and emerging situation in the region". The panelists included chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defense Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, for-

mer chief ISI and geopolitical analyst Lt. Gen. Retd Muhammad Asad Durani, political activist and geopolitical commentator Reham Khan, geopolitical researcher Soumya Awasthi and chairman Centre for Diplomatic and Political Affairs Tolga Sakman. Geopolitical commentator and Devcom-Pakistan Executive Director Munir Ahmed hosted and moderated the webinar. While introducing the subject, Munir Ahmed said, "B3W is an apparent tool to challenge the deep-rooted

BRI for obvious reasons. As described, B3W will be global in scope, from Latin America and the Caribbean to Africa to the Indo-Pacific. Different G7 partners will have different geographic orientations, but the sum of the initiative will cover low- and middle-income countries across the world." Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed the US has lost its credibility over the years. No one is willing to trust whatever plans the US offer in partnership with other developed

countries. At the moment, the US is withdrawing from Afghanistan as a defeated country, and without any settled accord among stakeholders. The rise of the Taliban has increased the security concerns for the region. In this situation, no country is willing to trust G7 and the US. Pakistan has already refused the US for air-bases. The new Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has already strongly condemned the US approach towards Iran. He said the B3W will not be able to take off as a challenge to the BRI. Only India is expected to join it being the US ally against China despite its many economic interests associated with neighbouring China. The Indian expert Soumya Awasthi said the B3W is expected to have more transparent and accountable mechanisms being a multipartite initiative to challenge BRI.



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Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Fuel shortage

THE Lahore High Court finally passed its judgement against two Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) for inducing artificial fuel shortages last year, June of 2020. It further gave the government three weeks to hold the OMCs accountable and propose laws to prevent such an incident from happening again in the future. The onus is now on the government to adhere to the directives of the court diligently and within the given deadline.

Despite a global reduction in costs, fuel in Pakistan was distributed with a higher price tag. Upon investigation, it was discovered that petroleum imports had not been enhanced in accordance with the amount given by the Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC).

After colluding with one another, OMCs were able to manipulate the market and make hefty profits. Matters were made worse when instances of OMCs hoarding fuel at the distribution level were reported. Each contributed towards illegal gains being made at the expense of the masses. This is something that the government must act against, especially with the backing of the LHC.

Setting up a committee to investigate the issue further would be beneficial as it would allow for focused action to take place, aiding the government in holding the culprits accountable. Furthermore, it would also allow them to collect the necessary information needed, through audits, to recover the unlawful gains made. Perhaps a surveillance strategy can also be adopted to ensure that regulations are strictly enforced to eliminate the occurrences of violations. It is vital that the government deals with the matter with the seriousness that it requires and introduces new laws that prevent such malpractice from happening.

On its own, it should also enhance our store capacity for petroleum products to prevent shortages in the future. However, our primary focus must be on bringing the relevant OMCs to justice and recovering their unlawful gains.

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

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

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



Are we to blame?

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE news of accidents claiming precious lives and loss of property are shared in print, electronic and social media. People drive recklessly and experience tragedy. Similarly, driving on the wrong side of the road is also a norm that people follow without caution. We have the power to do what is right and refrain from illegal, immoral, and illogical activities. Another case in point is stealing electricity through "kunda connection" which is illegal and a dangerous activity indeed.

People living in the metropolitan cities of Pakistan must consider following the rules in every walk of life. Precaution is not given heed and safety measures are not followed. Just imagine a wagon or a car hastily crossing the railway line despite the signals indicating the arrival of a train. Within seconds, the lives of those on the train and in the wagon are changed forever. Even in the cities such as Karachi and Lahore, daredevil teenagers ride their motorcycles while performing stunts.

This causes distraction for other drivers while the teenagers put their life at a risk. Accidents and mishaps occur because of human negligence. We tend to show haste, ignore precaution, and work without giving heed to the consequences of our actions. Western societies follow the principle of "safety first."

They use all measures to protect themselves those that protect others as well. A simple example seen in our society is a person changing a flat tire of a car. He lays stones at a distance to indicate that there is a blockade ahead. This can cause injury to someone walking on foot or someone riding. A motorcycle too can lose balance when coming in contact with the stones. People need to be careful when they are on the road, whether walking or driving. Precaution at home, office, and on the road is a must and should be pursued under all circumstances.

Gen Bajwa visit to Baku and military cooperation

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Pakistan has been assisting Azerbaijan in terms of military, naval and air force training in Pakistan. Both the countries have been in serious negotiations for the sale of JF-17 Thunder with Azerbaijan which is now at advance stage. Both countries have been extending their expertise in modern warfare which proved terminal in the 2nd War of Karbakah

AFTER the visit of Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa prospects of further strengthening of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan have been further brightened. His visit would be game changer in their bilateral relations in the days to come. It hopes that bilateral relations would be further strengthened in diverse sectors of economy, politics, investments, food & energy cooperation, military cooperation, joint drills, training and last but not least naval & air

force cooperation.

If we analyze the historic composition, nature and chemistry of bilateral relations between two brotherly countries, Pakistan and Azerbaijan we come to know that both sides being strategic allies share common historic, cultural and religious values. The relationship between the two countries has covered economic, defence, political and diplomatic cooperation since Azerbaijan's independence.

Due to rapidly changing socio-economic, geopolitical and geostrategic conflicting realities in the region and beyond military and defence cooperation between Azerbaijan-Pakistan is getting momentum and has been signified by continuous dialogue in the form of high-level meetings, workgroups and other similar interactions between the respective bodies and institutions of both states. It has reached to skies after the successful visit of COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa visit to Baku.

Being prominent regional expert of Azerbaijan & CIS I must say that Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey Trilateral Strategic Dialogue/Partnership have provided strong foundations of bilateral & trilateral cooperation among these countries.

On its part, Pakistan has been assisting Azerbaijan in terms of military, naval and air force training in Pakistan. Both the countries have been in serious negotiations for the sale of JF-17 Thunder with Azerbaijan which is now at advance stage. Both countries have been extending their expertise in modern warfare which proved terminal in the 2nd War of Karbakah.

Now let us analyze the most recent visit of Chief of the Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa to Azerbaijan during which he said both countries share common values based on rich cultural, religious and historical affinities and have tremendous geo-strategic significance and potential for mutually beneficial and enhanced cooperation at all forums. Actually this visit has vividly reflected the indispensable attributes of trustworthy relations between two countries based on mutual respect, pure brotherhood and above and guarantorship of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

His meetings with Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and Minister for Defence Col Gen Hasanov Zakir Asgar Oglu in Baku have now further strengthened scope, horizon and canvas of bilateral relations. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest, regional security situation, including recent developments in the Afghan peace process, and bilateral defence and security cooperation in various fields were thoroughly discussed which actually provided future road map for further strengthening of bilateral

relations between the two countries.

In this context, the meeting with Hasanov the defence Minister Zakir Hasanov facilitated an agreement on the joint use of mountain training centers, mountain training of military personnel. Moreover, Gen Bajwa desired to further enhance bilateral military cooperation and regional partnership between the two countries has now opened a new window of opportunity for future cooperation between two sides.

In this regard, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev highlighted the strategic importance of Pak-Azerbaijan military cooperation which has now been further strengthened with the visit of Gen Bajwa. The president desired to expand mutual military cooperation in the coming years and plan joint military exercises and other initiatives to strengthen our partnership even more.

Interestingly, Azerbaijan State Border Service Head Elchin Guliyev and Pakistan Army Chief of Staff Qamar Javed Bajwa discussed cooperation in the border protection sphere. Pakistan's readiness to share its experience in establishing necessary infrastructures to guard the borders liberated from the occupation and clear territories of mines has now further cemented utility and strategic orientation of bilateral relations between two countries.

On his part, State Border Service Head Elchin Guliyev appreciated Azerbaijani-Pakistani cooperation in all spheres, including the border security.

For the further strengthening of bilateral military cooperation, in the near past there has been series of high official exchanges organized between two countries. Pakistan Chiefs of Air Forces, Naval and General Nadeem Raz paid personal visit to Baku and extended their experiences and expertise for the befitting propositions of resettlement, redevelopment, reinvestments, and reconstruction of all the newly liberated areas of Karabakh Region. Most recently Azerbaijan Naval Commander visited Pakistan and met with Naval and armed Forces chiefs and discussed matters of mutual interest pertaining to regional peace and stability which has now further strengthened scope, domain and prospects of air force and naval cooperation between two the two countries.

Even Director General of FWO paid visit to Baku and explored various avenues of mutual cooperation in infrastructural projects, cleaning of deadly landmines and prospective cooperation in gold mining. It hopes that after this visit numerous joint projects will be commenced between the two countries which would provide win-win proposition.

In the past, Pakistan and Azerbaijan signed the "Bilateral Military Cooperation Agreement" which consequently geared up military cooperation between two countries.

If we look at the existing military relations we conclude that Azerbaijan and Pakistan hold relatively similar weaponry and military vehicle systems which would be common bench mark to proceed further. It is suggested that proposed military cooperation may also include regular military exercises between the comparable services of both armed forces. Exchange of valuable strategic information as well as common approaches towards the territorial armed conflict postures can be a natural extension in improving bilateral relations in defence.

On its part, Azerbaijan has been expressing interest in importing the JF-17 multi-role fighters from Pakistan since 2007 which has not yet been metalized due to various complex and complicated reasons. Israel X-Factor and legal issues are one of the two main hurdles between the military cooperation between two countries. There is an immense potential of joint ventures in the production of war drones, unmanned fighter jets, submarines, missile technology and light arms which should be initiated as soon as possible.

It is, therefore, important for Pakistan to seriously move forward on imports of military equipment (fighter aircraft, tanks or rockets) to Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan's Istiglal anti-material rifles and other small arms are also ideal for use in mountainous and tough terrains. Pakistan should consider including them in its basket given their competitive price, high quality and efficiency.

The two countries should also extend cooperation in the area of arms trade and develop a framework of sales of small arms and heavy military equipment according to the needs of each state in order to address the specific needs of the security sector. This framework can include bartering of arms based on "preferred customer" program, thus, reducing budgetary expenditures.

Serious efforts have already been started to build "Trade House" in both the countries which will be instrumental to showcase diverse furnished commodities, industrial items, and contact desk and information centers of both the countries. Hopefully, it will further accelerate inflows of foreign direct investments (FDIs), brightening the scope of joint ventures (JVs), speed-up scale of innovations and exchange of expertise for the rapid development of business activities and pace of trade & commerce. It would be start of new era of commercial diplomacy between the two countries.

WWIII unavoidable; if geographic issues not settled

Muhammad Akhter Aslam



Pakistan has a long history for supporting Palestine. A key reason for this being the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the world's third holiest place in Islam. Pakistan is a staunch supporter of the proposal for the creation of an independent Palestinian state

ARTICLE 1 of the UN Charter states the purpose of its formation. It was constituted in order, "To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace".

Although this organization proved its existence by resolving many burning questions. Contradictory to that, yet it needs its effective role in some cases, Indian illegally occupation over Jammu and Kashmir and Israeli Occupation on Palestine, As Kashmir and Palestine are two oldest cases on table of the UN that await final resolution.

Pakistan has a long history for supporting Palestine. A key reason for this being the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, the world's third holiest place in Islam. Pakistan is a staunch supporter of the proposal for the creation of an independent Palestinian state. Pakistan, frequently provides various forms of unconditional humanitarian aid to the Palestinians.

Before 1945, "there was no existence... Nothing of any sort by the name of 'Israel' in Palestine". And what has been happening since then is demographic terrorism, the worst form of terrorism. Palestinians are begin subjected to ethnic cleansing by Israeli occupied forces, they are killing all group age people including innocent children. Recently, in May 2021, Israeli forces once again started state sponsored terrorism on Palestinians, later on, the tension spread

to the Gaza Strip, with Israel launching airstrikes that killed at least 277 Palestinians, including 66 children and 39 women.

On the other hand in IIOJK case Pakistan, being Islamic state, always supports Kashmir for their right of self-determination. "Since 1948, the UN is guarantor to give their due rights". In addition; Kashmiris have all the cultural, geographic and religious explanations that connect them with Pakistan.

Pakistan has been constantly reminding the international community, and the prosperous world, that Kashmir issue is a trouble spot for a reason that India, Pakistan, China, and Russia are nuclear powers and anything can challenge the peace. Since, August 5, 2019, around eight million people in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir have been not only treated in an unjust manner, they are being bulldozed of their identity. India trampling all international norms and values from that day to till date.

In recent times, Indian troops killed many Kashmiri youth. Indian illegally occupied military forces continued bloodshed, cordon and search operations, night raids and arrests in nook and corner of the Valley. Presently, fascist Modi regime continue to imposing harsh restrictions on the people of IIOJK, and the unwarranted restraints on the rights to free speech, free media and persistent crackdown on people have rather intensified in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In Palestine case, due to spiritual affiliation how long Muslim world will tolerate? It is well-known fact that Israel, a sworn friend and key ally of US in the Middle East, may pave the way for the third world war at any time. Israel's relations with its immediate neighbors are not pleasant. It's aggressive

and warmongering posture on Palestinian Muslims is, certainly, bound to ignite befitting response from the Muslim world at any time. And if this happens, America, while keeping up its ritual of interventionism, might come to rescue Israel. This very situation, thus, may lead to beginning of WWIII.

International community must have to think that "Why did the League of Nations fail miserably?" It is well-known to everyone that First World War resulted in devastating consequences; therefore, to maintain world peace, first ever international organization, League of Nations, was established in 1920. Beginning of the Second World War put an end to the peace treaty.

From above discussion, it would not be wrong to say that world war III unavoidable if Palestine, Kashmir issues not settled. The time to act on Palestine and Kashmir is now, and tangible actions need to be taken immediately by the UN, whose "credibility is at stake". Expectations are massive. Coming generation, future is at stake, so world community needs to play conclusively positive role to protect this universe and this entire world through peaceful means. International community can raise voices for all human rights but if they maintain silence on the Indian occupation of Kashmir and the Israeli occupation of Palestine, then they don't really stand for humanity. Furthermore, the impacts of these regional issues are expected beyond the regional territories. World Politics should learn lessons from history and should take collective measure to guarantee Kashmir and Palestine Rights.

Injustice anywhere is threat to justice everywhere!
-The Writer is student of M.Phil Criminology at SU Jamshoro

Briefs

People of Kashmir 'will not follow a puppet regime'

FROM PAGE 01
this was PPP's policy. Hitting out at Prime Minister Imran Khan, Bilawal said that "he promised to the people of Kashmir he would be their ambassador but instead became a lawyer for Kulbushan".
The PPP chairman, strongly objecting to the passing of The International Court of Justice (Review and Re-consideration) Bill, 2020 in the National Assembly, claimed that the parliament was not taken into confidence before the bill was passed.
In record day for Pakistan's parliament, which 21 govt bills were passed? "If Imran Khan wishes to give Kulbushan an NRO, he can go ahead. But PPP will never be your partner in crime," he said to the government.
In further criticism of the government, Bilawal said that the people of Pakistan "are being made to bear the burden of the government's failures and its slogan for 'change'." He said that whereas occupied Kashmir is ruled by Modi, where Kashmiris are fighting Modi's oppression, the "people of Azad Kashmir are facing Imran Khan's inflation tsunami". Imran Khan may remain silent, but the people of Kashmir will not," the PPP chairman said. "If there is a historic attack on occupied Kashmir, then Imran Khan says what should I do?" Bilawal went on to say, in a barrage of statements condemning the prime minister.

Bilawal oblivious to PPP position in AJK: Fawad

FROM PAGE 01
AJK Legislative Assembly on PPP tickets. In a tweet, he said the speech of Bilawal Zardari has clearly revealed the reality that he (Bilawal) does not know about his party's position in AJK. He recalled that Bilawal Zardari and Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Ms Maryam Nawaz had run their respective parties' election campaigns crazily in the last elections of Gilgit-Baltistan. However it was revealed subsequently that not even one third among the total aspirants were contesting the elections on the tickets of both PPP and PML-N at that time. It was a "slip of the tongue" when Prime Minister Imran Khan called slain al-Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden a martyr, clarified Federal Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry Saturday. Chaudhry, speaking to a private news channel, said Pakistan considers Osama Bin Laden a militant and the al-Qaeda as a terrorist outfit. Meanwhile, State Minister for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Sunday said that the Kashmiri people will reject the 'banarsi thug' like Bilawal in the upcoming general elections. While reacting to PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto's speech, in which he dubbed Imran Khan a puppet prime minister, Farrukh Habib said that Bilawal used to make claims for victory during the election campaign of Gilgit Baltistan but their candidates forfeited security deposits. He further said the same would happen in the upcoming AJK elections. "The defeat is waiting for you in the Kashmir elections. The nation knows how you were making tall claims before the Gilgit Baltistan election but you had bitten the dust when results came out," he said.
The minister said that Bilawal Bhutto was the heir of Asif Ali Zardari's corruption, adding that the people of Kashmir knew that Imran Khan was their true ambassador and savior. Criticizing the PPP and Bilawal Bhutto, he said, "You and your party know nothing other than corruption." Farrukh said that PTI's position was much better than other parties in Kashmir and after the election, they would form a government there. He said that the track record showed that wherever Bilawal and Maryam Nawaz went, the PTI got record vote for there. He said that the people of Pakistan, Gilgit Baltistan and AJK considered the PTI a true public party.

Thousands flee fighting between govt, Taliban

Rahmatullah Hamnawa, a journalist based in Kunduz, told media he was forced to move his family from one area of the city to another amid the conflict

AGENCIES

KABUL: About 5,000 Afghan families have fled their homes in Kunduz after days of fighting between Taliban fighters and government forces, officials said on Saturday, as the deadline looms for US-led troops to withdraw. Heavy fighting has also been reported in the provinces of Kandahar and Baghlan, where the Afghan forces claimed to have retaken areas from Taliban control but the armed group still held on to parts of Pul-e-Khumri area in central Baghlan, according to local media.

The Taliban has taken control of dozens of districts since US-led NATO foreign forces started their final withdrawal in May. The Afghan group, which has been waging an armed rebellion since it was toppled from power in a 2001 US-led invasion, continues to surround Kunduz city. The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but has now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan. Ghulam Sakhi Rasouli, director of the Kunduz Refugees and Repatriation Department, told AFP news agency about 5,000 families had

been displaced by the fighting, up to 2,000 of which had fled to Kabul and other provinces. Rahmatullah Hamnawa, a journalist based in Kunduz, told Al Jazeera he was forced to move his family from one area of the city to another amid the conflict. "We hear gunfire and fighting all night," he said, adding that it has been at least a week since the fighting flared in parts of the city and the nearby areas. "People fleeing Kunduz have been forced to take a circuitous route through Samangan province to Mazar-e-Sharif, about 110km (68 miles) away to the south-

west. The shorter road is unsafe and dotted with checkpoints and mines," Hamnawa said. "But even the Samangan province, which used to be one of the safest in the country, is no longer free from violence. Hence a three-hour journey via Samangan can take up to seven hours now, if not more." Many people took refuge in a school in the city and had been provided with food and other relief items, Kunduz provincial council member Ghulam Rabbani said. Video footage taken by AFP showed dozens of people, many of them women and children, sitting inside tents set

up in a school compound. "We are six families living together here for three days ... you can see my children are sitting on the ground," Juma Khan, who fled with his family, said. "We have still not received any help. A team came today to survey some families but after a few minutes they left," said Akhtar Mohammad, who has also taken refuge in the school. Another 8,000 families have been displaced across the Kunduz province following a month of sporadic clashes between the Taliban and government forces, Rasouli said. He said authorities were unable to provide relief items to all the dis-

placed families across the province. Kunduz city's public health director Ehsanullah Fazli said that since the fighting erupted more than a week ago, 29 civilians have been killed and 225 wounded. On Tuesday Taliban fighters also captured Shir Khan Bandar, Afghanistan's main border crossing with Tajikistan, in one of their most significant gains in recent months. The Taliban has released videos showing them in possession of US-made humvees and Afghan police and military equipment after seizing control of multiple districts.

Qureshi slams FATF's decision

FROM PAGE 01
shown compliance on 26 out of 27 points of the action plan from the anti-money laundering watchdog. He further rejected that the PTI government is responsible for the inclusion of Pakistan on the FATF grey list and said that it was during PML-N's tenure when the country was added to the list. "Rather during our tenure, we amended 14 laws and introduced some new ones to show compliance on FATF action plan," Shah Mahmood Qureshi said. Speaking on South Punjab issues, Shah Mahmood Qureshi said that a piece of land has been identified for the Bahawalpur secretariat and after the South Punjab secretariat in Multan, its foundation would also be laid by the incumbent government. "We have identified a 30-acre land in Bahawalpur for a secretariat and soon its foundation will be laid," he said.

The foreign minister said that establishment of a GOR and a secretariat will be established on 63-acre land that has been transferred for the purpose. He said that Rs189 billion has been earmarked for South Punjab uplift projects and they would ensure at the money is spent on the projects announced. "We have fulfilled our promise of a separate development plan for South Punjab and will ensure that every single penny of it would be spent by the end of the fiscal year," the PTI vice chairman said adding that being the top party leader he is responsible for ensuring enforcement of PTI's political agenda. Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan is not diplomatically isolated rather engaged with different parts of the world including Europe, the Muslim world, the US, Russia and the African continent to strengthen its relations. Responding to the points of the opposition members, he said India's designs to push Pakistan into diplomatic isolation have failed.

NAB seeks access to tax record of politicians

FROM PAGE 01
The "request" for bringing these amendments in the Income Tax Ordinance with effect from the year 2001 is made at a time when the bureaucracy has already been complaining about overdoing by NAB. The opposition parties too have lodged protests over what they call "witch-hunting" by NAB. NAB has asked to end immunity in sharing of local and offshore tax records of politically exposed persons including the members of parliament, bureaucracy, public servants and people in service of Pakistan, the holders of public office and their spouses and children, the documents showed.

Egypt's Sisi arrives in Iraq for 1st visit

FOREIGN DESK
BAGHDAD: Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi arrived in the Iraqi capital Baghdad on Sunday for the first visit by an Egyptian leader to Iraq in three decades. Sisi was welcomed at Baghdad International Airport by Iraqi President Barham Saleh, according to Iraq's official news agency. During his visit, Sisi will take part in a tripartite summit with Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi and Jordan's King Abdullah II to discuss ways to boost cooperation between the three countries, the Egyptian Presidency said in a statement. Sunday's summit is the fourth of the leaders of the three Mideast countries since 2019. Iraq, Egypt, and Jordan have signed a host of agreements meant to bolster cooperation in the fields of energy, commerce, and investment.



LUND CITY: Pakistan ambassador to Sweden Dr. Zahoor Ahmad, Trade Councilor Ghulam Mustafa and Dr. Taimoor Abbas visited IDEON Science Park situated in Lund city, where they met Mia Rolf, CEO of IDEON Science Park Lund. In the meeting ambassador and the team discussed future cooperation possibilities between Sweden and Pakistan, in the field of science and technology, especially to facilitate startups, investment opportunities into new ventures in both countries as well as exchange programs, internships and industrial thesis that can be done remotely. - DNA

Anam Amin is all set for WI challenge

SAINT JOHN'S: Anam Amin made her debut for Pakistan in T20Is in 2014 and since has been a regular feature in the national side because of her exploits with the ball. Her ability to deliver results with the new ball by making inroads early on make her a potent weapon for any captain and when Pakistan begin their tour with the first of the three T20Is at the picturesque Sir Vivian Richards Stadium, Javeria Khan the left-arm orthodox Anam has been Pakistan's most successful bowler against the West Indies - taking 13 wickets at a phenomenal 10.53 runs per dismissal. Her strike rate of 12.4 is against any opposition. Her best bowling in T20Is has also been against West Indies when she took four wickets for 16 runs at Chennai in an ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2016 fixture. Such was her brilliance with the ball that despite her team losing the contest, Anam was awarded the player of the match award. While captains at both international and domestic levels have relied heavily to deliver the results, the 28-year-old becomes even more threatening when her side is defending a total. In the matches Pakistan have successfully defended scores, Anam has taken 19 wickets at 11.57, has struck every 17th ball and given only 4.07 runs an over. These numbers are more than eight runs, five balls and 1.33 runs better, respectively, compared to her overall T20I career. Anam re-entered the top-ten of the ICC Women's T20I Player Rankings following the South Africa T20I series in which she took four wickets at 16.50 and was the leading wicket-taker from her side. The 28-year-old is looking forward to taking on the West Indies. - DNA



UAE to host int'l 'Ninety-90 Bash' format cricket league

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates is all set to host new format of international cricket league 'Ninety-90 Bash' stirring huge expectations and sensation in the cricket frenzy nations. Chairman of the Emirates Cricket Board and UAE Minister of Tolerance, Co-existence Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan had formally approved hosting of new international cricket league in the country. In this regard, an agreement was signed between Sharjah based Century Events and Sports FZC and the ECB at the official signing ceremony, held in Abu Dhabi, said a press release on Sunday. On the occasion, Sheikh Nahyan Mubarak al Nahyan, Khalid Zarooni, Vice-Chairman of Emirates Cricket Board (ECB), Salman Iqbal, Chairman of the ARY Group, Aref Al Awani, General-Secretary of Abu Dhabi Sports Council, along with Abdul Rehman Bukhatir, Khalaf Bukhatir of Bukhatir Group and Imran Chaudhry, Managing Director, Cinergie Group of Companies were present. - DNA



LAHORE: Deputy Governor of Province of Uzbekistan in a meeting with Governor Punjab Ch. Sarwar, during his recent visit to Pakistan. - DNA

HC reaches out to community in Birmingham

DNA

BIRMINGHAM: As part of his efforts to reach out to the community and explore avenues of multifaceted cooperation between Pakistan and the UK, High Commissioner Moazzam Ahmad Khan is currently visiting Birmingham and Wales. On the second day of his visit, the High Commissioner held detailed meetings with the Mayor of West Midlands Combined Authority, the Lord Mayor of Birmingham, MP from Birmingham, local councillors, officer bearers of Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, leading businessmen, CEO of Edgbaston Stadium, Senior Management of Birmingham City University and media persons. In his virtual meeting with Mr. Andy Street, the Mayor of West Midlands Combined Authority, the High Commissioner discussed issues of mutual interest including matters relating to Pakistani diaspora. While appreciating the close association of the Mayor with Pakistani diaspora in the West Midlands, the High Commissioner underscored the importance of further strengthening the bond through more avenues in the post Covid

period. He also extended an invitation to the mayor for a visit to Pakistan. In his talk with MP Khalid Mehmood and Mike Olley, Executive Director of Westside Business Improvement District (BID), the High Commissioner discussed possibilities of further fortifying the strong multifaceted relations between the two countries. The High Commissioner noted that the presence of a



large Pakistani diaspora provides a strong base for special and strong bilateral relations. He also spoke on matters of business improvement with the Executive Director. In his interaction with Mr. Muhammad Afzal, Lord Mayor of Birmingham, local Councillors and Mr. Stuart Cain, CEO of Edgbaston stadium, the High Commissioner discussed matters pertaining to youth, tourism and trade.

Meeting with business community and the office bearers of Greater Birmingham Chamber of Commerce including Mandy Hayes, Ms. Anjum Khan, Nasir Awan and Stefanie Bowes remained very productive in terms of identifying tangible steps for enhancing bilateral commercial relations. While highlighting Pakistan's improved ranking in terms of ease of doing business, the existence of a huge market of 222 million people with large middle class, availability of English speaking economical skilled labour and business friendly legislative framework, the High Commissioner called upon the interlocutors to invest in and trade with Pakistan. Discussing the role of a large number of UK companies in sustaining the strong commercial linkages between the two countries, he shared with the office bearers of GBCC the recent positive indicators of bilateral trade and investments. The High Commissioner also visited Birmingham City University and discussed with Professor Dr. Hanifa Shah, Pro Vice Chancellor, Mr. Julian Bear, Deputy Vice Chancellor, and other senior faculty members, avenues and possibilities of enhancing cooperation in higher education and research.

Briefs

CPEC promotes co-op in medical industry

DNA

BEIJING: As Pakistan is a key partner in the current \$400 billion global medical device industries, some Chinese homegrown medical device companies are developing the market and seeking cooperation in Pakistan, and they say CPEC has promoted cooperation between the two countries in this area.

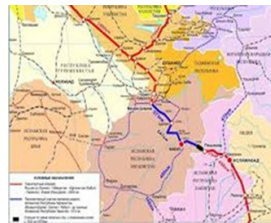
A Chinese medical enterprise Medcaptain Medical Technology Co. Ltd. (Medcaptain), founded in 2011 as an "Integrated Perioperative Solutions Provider" and dedicated to pursuing innovation in Medication Delivery, In-Vitro Diagnostics, Airway Management, and DVT Prevention, was one of these companies after entering Pakistani market for 6 years, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Serinna Tan, Director of Branding & International Marketing of Medcaptain said that CPEC has greatly contributed to medical cooperation since under this national strategy Chinese medical enterprises like them can enjoy better opportunities to communicate with Pakistan counterparts and bring their medical products to hospitals in need of such devices.

Q: Excellency, can you please brief us on current activities to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan and what kind of events will be held this summer to boost dynamically growing relations?

A: Thank you for your question, indeed the main important event convened recently on April 14, 2021 was the successful Online Summit at the highest level convened between the leaders of our brotherly countries. The outcomes of the April's Online Summit were highly and positively perceived as the fruitful candid and active virtual interaction between the Heads of Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

President of Uzbekistan H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev and H.E. PM of Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Imran Khan had held in depth analyses of the current state of the multifaceted relations as well as the ongoing implementation of intraregional cooperation.



The Road map, as effective monitoring tool was approved by the Government of Uzbekistan according to the agreements our two leaders which contains the particular dates, responsible persons for the implementation of the multifaceted projects and identified the detailed dimensions for the further expansion of the trade-economic, investment, transport, logistics education tourism and people to people contacts.

Our two governments, trade and commerce chambers, non-governmental organizations and private businessmen are working very hard to implement the agenda and agreed mutually beneficial projects between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. Indeed, forthcoming high level Visit of Hon PM of Pakistan H.E. Mr Imran Khan will be next important milestone in the history of our two countries as genuine continuation of the political dialogue as well as industrial cooperation, widening the inflow of the mutual investment, technical and scientific educational interaction.

The Ministry of the foreign affairs of Uzbekistan in active cooperation with Ministry of foreign trade and investments and other stake holders are in closest coordination and working very hard with Pakistany colleagues and their counterparts to prepare the substantial and result oriented



President of Uzbekistan

Visit of Hon H.E. PM of Islamic Republic of Pakistan H.E. Mr Imran Khan Prime Minister of Uzbekistan to Uzbekistan.

Two leaders of Uzbekistan and Pakistan also agreed that in nearest days ahead our foreign offices will hold 1st political consultations. Of course after this event two embassies Uzbekistan's in Islamabad and Pakistan's in Tashkent will actively engage and cooperate with the relevant ministries trade and commerce chambers, non-governmental organizations and private businessmen to prepare the fruitful agenda for our leaders during the forthcoming high-level event.

No doubt that the forthcoming high-level visit will be a



continuation of the active interaction of the leaders of the two countries to discuss on joint actions for cooperation in the areas of economic affairs, transport connectivity, defense, security, as well as a partnership in combating against the pandemic.

It's worth to mention that such active, open and candid interaction between the heads of Uzbekistan and Pakistan is of great importance not only for bilateral relations but also for intraregional connectivity.

Q: Excellency, we want to ask about the Project of the Century – the construction of the Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway line. Please brief us on significance of this project for all parties involved in it, as well as for the development of Uzbek-Pakistani relations and the Central Asian region in particular.

A: This significant trilateral project will provide a completely new transport and transit corridor Central and South Asian countries. It diversifies the transport flows of the region. Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar route with subsequent access to the ports of Karachi and Gwadar will allow us to significantly reduce export and import costs.

From the position of South Asian countries, commissioning of Trans-Afghan railway corridor to Pakistan direction will significantly reduce the delivery time of goods to/from Central Asia, the CIS and Europe.

For example, if the project would be fully implemented, the transportation of goods from Pakistan to Uzbekistan will have to spend not 35 days, but only 3-5 days. Instead of movement of almost a month, this will take less than a week. It means the reducing the cost of transporting goods, which means saving money. According to preliminary calculations, laying the route will reduce cost of transporting of one container by almost 3 times.

According to expert estimates, the cost of transporting goods from Tashkent to Karachi will be almost 1.5-2 times cheaper than the existing ones.

Continuing this logical chain, we can already predict that an increase in the profitability of transportation will automatically contribute to an increase in freight traffic and interregional trade.

The launch of Mazar-i-Sharif-Peshawar railway will also create a powerful platform for achieving inclusive economic development for Pakistan and will also contribute to the expansion of the transport and communication network within Afghanistan.

Q: Your Excellency please brief us on the development of trade and economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan and what areas can be considered the most promising in this area?



Furqat Didiqov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan

Adviser to Prime Minister of Pakistan for Commerce and Investment H.E. Abdul Razak Dawood effective measures are being taken by Pakistan side to speed up negotiation process on bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement.

According to Statistical Committee of Uzbekistan in 2020 bilateral trade with Pakistan exceeded \$123 million. In January-May 2021 the trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Pakistan amounted to 69.4 million (+26%).

Today, over 140 enterprises with Pakistan operate in Uzbekistan. Their activities are mainly related to trade, pharmaceuticals, textiles, paper, leather goods and food production.

In March 14-18 of this year the delegation of the Ministry of Transport of Uzbekistan headed by the Deputy Chairman of "Uzbekistan Railways" visited the Pakistani seaports in Karachi and Gwadar.



Prime Minister of Pakistan

Company TCS organized the first direct delivery of Pakistani cargo from Karachi directly to Tashkent in transit through Afghanistan. May Uzbek forwarding company "Asad Trans" in collaboration with Pakistan transport company "Best Trans Pvt. Ltd." for the first time realized a pilot logistic project on direct delivery of Uzbek export cargo from Tashkent directly to Faisalabad through the territory of Afghanistan.

According to the will of our leaders the activities Intergovernmental Commission for Trade and Economic Cooperation has been renewed and it was agreed that the next session of this Commission will be held in July 2021 in Tashkent.

Having said this let me point out that Uzbekistan considers Pakistan as a reliable and promising partner in the region of South Asia.



Taking into account the potential of our countries, as the trust and partnership expanded and mutually beneficial cooperation strengthened then in near future two sides may open the new page of the interaction based on the strategic partnership bonds and principles.

Q: As you know Excellence, our two countries are linked by close cultural and historical ties, the rich heritage of the Uzbek and Pakistani people is highly valued and revered in both countries. Please tell us about how cultural and humanitarian ties between Uzbekistan and Pakistan are developing today.

A: Pakistan is cradle of civilizations closely linked with Uzbekistan and Central Asia. We have a lot of sim-

ilarities are connected by one religion, single school of Islamic teaching, tasawwuf and fiqh, common centuries-old history associated with the Baburid dynasty, common traditions and values and even language.

There are more than 40 thousand identical words in the Uzbek language and the Urdu language. Many people in Pakistan can say: my roots are in Bukhara, Samarqand or Fergana and so on.

The Baburid dynasty left in Pakistan an invaluable historical and cultural heritage that contributed to the creation of a unique civilization in the region, including literature and art. And this is the solid foundation of unique, strong and friendly Pakistani-Uzbek relations.

In February of this year, we jointly organized an opening ceremony of the "Center for Baburid's Legacy" in Punjab University during of which held a contest among 70 students who presented their paintings dedicated to Baburid's dynasty in Pakistan etc.

It should also be said that the rich scientific and literary heritage of the Uzbek people is highly valued in Pakistan, great scientists and thinkers Abu Ali ibn Sino, Alisher Navoi, Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babur



and others are honored. In Uzbekistan operates "International Baburid's Foundation" who IA will work closely with the "Center for Baburid's Legacy" in Punjab University in order to promote the heritage of the Baburids in Pakistan as well as to organize joint conferences dedicated to the life and work of our great common ancestors.

Church bomb blast wounds two in eastern DR Congo

BENI: A makeshift bomb exploded inside a Catholic church in the city of Beni in DR Congo's conflict-plagued east on Sunday, injuring two women just an hour before a children's confirmation ceremony was due to be held. The attack marks the first time a Catholic building has been targeted in the region, which has declared a "state of siege" due to rising violence from the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) militia that is accused of killing thousands.

The head of police in Beni's town hall Narcisse Muteba Kashale told AFP that the explosion occurred at 6:00 am (0400 GMT), and that the homemade bomb was "set up for an ambush". Beni's vicar general Laurent Sondirya said two women were injured in the blast, which went off shortly before crowds were due to start gathering for the confirmation ceremony.

"They were targeting a large crowd because the ceremony would bring together children, their parents and the faithful," he told media. He added that the mass to "administer the sacrament of confirmation would not be postponed".

Erdogan lays foundation for Canal Istanbul

WEB DESK

ISTANBUL: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday laid the groundwork of the Canal Istanbul, which would connect the Black Sea and the Marmara Sea, Trend reports citing Xinhua.

Speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony, Erdogan said Canal Istanbul would significantly ease the heavy traffic of the 30-km-long Bosphorus Strait, one of the world's busiest waterways that divides the Asian and European parts of Istanbul. The Turkish leader noted that the high number of cargo ships passing through the strait each day with diverse loads poses a significant risk for the city.

"Projections show that the number of ships that will pass through the Bosphorus in 2050 will reach 78,000," he noted, adding that the safe passage capacity of the Bosphorus in a year is 25,000.

The ceremony was held on the shore of the Sazlidere dam, one of the main reservoirs that provide fresh water to the city. The dam area constitutes the first leg of the construction of the canal, which was first brought out by Erdogan in 2011.

Pakistani student gets Red Diploma from Belarus Varsity

Amb. Sajjad Haider Khan conveyed his deep appreciations for keeping the Pakistani flag high and expressed his good wishes for her continued successes in the future as well

DNA

MINSK: A special ceremony was held at the Belarusian State Medical University (BSMU) in Minsk for students that were granted the higher diploma, also known as the "Red"

diploma, for their excellent performances in studies. Minister of Health of the Republic of Belarus Dmitry Pivnevich was the Chief Guest on the occasion.

Miss Saba Javed, a Pakistani student was the only one to secure the "Red"

diploma in General Medicine from Among 202 graduates of The Medical Faculty for international students.

Spouses of the Ambassador Abida Sajjad and Second Secretary Amel Abdullah participated in the graduation ceremony.

Congratulating Saba Javed on her distinction, Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan conveyed his deep appreciations for keeping the Pakistani flag high and expressed his good wishes for her continued successes in the future as well.

Speaking on the occasion, Miss Saba Javed said that she felt very proud being a Pakistani student and achieving this distinguished position. I want this to be an inspiring and motivating factor for all the Pakistani students. She thanked His Excellency and Madam for their support during her stay in Minsk.

Saba Javed, is daughter of an employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, started her medicine studies at the university in 2015. Belarusian State Medical University is globally recognized, and the leading MBBS university in Belarus, which was established in 1921.

It is recognized by WHO, MCI, and many other international professional medical groups.



Indonesia sets record daily virus cases

JAKARTA: Indonesia set a new record for daily coronavirus cases on Sunday with more than 21,000, as hospitals are flooded with patients in Jakarta and other Covid-19 hotspots across Southeast Asia's hardest-hit nation.

The figure brings the country's tally for the pandemic to more than 2.1 million coronavirus cases with 57,138 deaths.

But the real number is believed to be much higher due to low testing rates for the deadly respiratory illness.

Indonesia's Covid-19 case rates have soared in recent weeks after millions travelled at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in May, and as authorities identified the presence of highly infectious newer virus strains.

"We predicted there would be a surge in the number of cases," said Covid-19 taskforce spokeswoman Siti Nadia Tarmizi. "The peak is expected in the next two to three weeks," she added. Fears are growing that Indonesia's creaky health system could collapse and there are reports of some overflowing hospitals being forced to turn patients away. - APP

Pak-Indonesia FTA stressed

Dr. June said that FTA between Pak-Indonesia will certainly be a great initiative

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo, President FPCCI, has expressed his admiration for H.E. Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat - Indonesian Consul General in Karachi - for his views on increasing the bilateral trade between the two countries.

Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat said that Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Pakistan and Indonesia will certainly be a great initiative and advised the businessmen and traders that they should enlist the products that have the potential to increase the bilateral trade. He also emphasized the need to explore the enormous possibilities that exist to cooperate and scale-up the cooperation in the IT sector.

Mian Nasser Hyatt Maggo said that he would love to see an FTA materialized between the two countries sooner than later. He suggested that the two countries have much in common and that makes them important for each other in terms of trade and economic cooperation. FPCCI Chief also expressed his willingness to initiate cooperation at a greater and more tangible level with Indonesian chambers. He said that eventually business communities of the two countries would have to come closer and broaden the trade and economic relations to make them sustainable and mutually-beneficial.



Mr. Abid Nisar - Chairman of Pakistan-Indonesia Business Council of FPCCI - thanked H.E. Dr. June Kuncoro Hadiningrat for visiting FPCCI and gracing the first meeting of the council. Mr. Abid Nisar highlighted the core issues that should be addressed for actualization of the potential of exponential growth in bilateral trade and also pointed out a few priority sectors to start with; based on his vast experience.

Briefs

Pakistan, Azerbaijan, Turkey to hold joint exercises

WEB DESK

BAKU: Joint exercises of special forces of Azerbaijan, Turkey and Pakistan are expected to be held in Azerbaijan in September, Azerbaijani Defense Minister Zakir Hasanov said in an interview with Real TV. "The corresponding decision has already been made. Azerbaijan, Turkish and Pakistani special forces are expected to hold exercises in Azerbaijan in September. Preparations are underway. Some groups of experts are already in Azerbaijan, inspecting the landfills. They highly appreciate our preparation," said the minister.

Govt allocates 500pc more budget for education

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has allocated funds amounting to Rs 28 billion for education sector in the budget 2021-22, which stand almost 500 percent higher than the PML-N regime's last year allocation. Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mehmood said that through this allocation, the education would see a true transformation. "The PML-N in its last year in government had spent Rs 4.7 billion in education sector, while the PTI government allocated Rs 28 billion for the current financial year that is 100 percent higher than its previous budget, and 500 percent higher than the allocation of the previous government's last year" he informed. He said that as far renovation of ICT schools was concerned, a flagship project amounting to Rs. 6.9 billion had been approved by CDWP for 180 educational institutions. PML-N, Shafqat said, had allocated Rs 80 billion for higher education in its last year, whereas the PTI government kept Rs 124 billion for the universities.

Flights from UK, Canada, China, Europe, Malaysia increased

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan has decided to increase the number of direct flights from the UK, Europe, Canada, China and Malaysia after a decline in number of the COVID-19 infections, according to the National Command and Operation Center. The flights coming from the UK, China, Malaysia, Europe and Canada will be increased by 40%. The arriving passengers will, however, have to undergo a mandatory COVID test before departing for Pakistan. The new air travel plan will come into effect from July 1. The country reported 23 deaths and 901 new cases in the past 24 hours. The virus has so far claimed 22,211 lives in Pakistan, while the number of total confirmed cases stands at 954,743. Federal Minister Asad Umar, who is also the head of Pakistan's COVID-control authority, warned Friday that the country could be hit by the fourth wave of the virus if the people stop being cautious. "In the absence of strong SOP enforcement and continued strong vaccination programme, the fourth wave could emerge in Pakistan in July," said Umar in a Twitter post after reviewing the "artificial intelligence based disease modeling analysis today in NCOCC. He advised people to follow the SOPs and get vaccinated."

Monal hosts farewell lunch for outgoing Azerbaijan envoy

CEO and founder Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal recognizes the services of the outgoing ambassador; Ambassador Alizada thanks the host for farewell party



ISLAMABAD: Spouses of ambassadors and high commissioners posing for a group photo along with the host Mrs. Aisha Luqman.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors of Korea, Tajikistan, Norway, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Poland, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Italy and Malaysia in a group photo with the host Luqman Ali Afzal.

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: CEO and Founder of Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal and his wife hosted a farewell lunch for the outgoing Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada. A large number of ambassadors and high commissioners attended the farewell lunch. Ambassador of Azerbaijan is leaving Pakistan after completing his five year term as ambassador. The CEO Monal recognized services of the outgoing ambassador and termed his stay in Pakistan a complete success. He said that during his tenure, the ambassador contributed a lot towards promotion and further strengthening of bilateral relations. During his time, he said, both Pakistan and Azerbaijan achieved a number of milestones in all fields. Ambassador of Azerbaijan Ali Alizada thanked the host for hosting such a sumptuous lunch and providing him and his wife with an opportunity of meeting with friends from the diplomatic community especially, Ambassadors of Romania, Korea, Tajikistan, Norway, Syria, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Azerbaijan, Poland, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Italy and Malaysia attended the reception.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Monal Luqman Ali Afzal presenting gift to Ambassador Ali Alizada.



ISLAMABAD: Mrs. Luqman presenting gift to wife of Ambassador of Azerbaijan.

Full coverage in the coming issue of CENTRELINE

Millions of vaccine doses to arrive next week

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan is expected to receive millions of doses of coronavirus vaccines starting next week, as per government officials. On either Monday or Tuesday, Pakistan is expected to receive 2.5mn doses of Moderna's mRNA 1273 Covid-19 vaccine through COVAX while another 100,000 doses of Russian vaccine Sputnik V are being acquired by Islamabad through bilateral purchase and are expected to reach the country by next week,

they said.

"Pakistan has also signed an agreement for the purchase of one million doses of Russian Sputnik V vaccine, whose 100,000 doses are also expected to reach Pakistan early next week," an official of the National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS,R&C) told a media house on Saturday. "We will also receive three million doses of Sinovac on June 29 so there will be millions of doses available to inoculate a large number of the population in the country in July," he added.

He revealed Pakistan will also receive over 12 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine and an unspecified number of Pfizer's mRNA vaccine in July, through COVAX. However, the official admitted that the official date has not been communicated to Pakistan as to when the vaccines will be provided to it. "We have conveyed the regulatory requirements to the COVAX regarding the use of Moderna's mRNA vaccine in Pakistan. According to the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), any

vaccine that has emergency use authorization by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) or European Medicine Agency (EMA) can be imported and used in Pakistan," the official said, adding that now they were waiting for flight details of the consignment. Pakistan would also get at least 1 million doses of Pfizer's mRNA vaccine by the end of July through COVAX, the official said adding besides, COVAX would also provide over 12 million doses of AstraZeneca's Bovishield vaccine either by the end of July or early August.

Israel expresses serious concerns on Iran deal

WASHINGTON: Israel has serious reservations about the Iran nuclear deal being put together in Vienna, new foreign minister Yair Lapid told his America counterpart, as he pledged to fix "the mistakes made" between the two countries over the past few years. In their first face-to-face meeting since Israel's new government was sworn in two weeks ago, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Lapid said they would also discuss Israel's normalization accords with Gulf Arab states. Blinken said he would also be raising the issue of humanitarian assistance into Gaza. Iran and the United States have been holding indirect talks on reviving the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and major powers that imposed restrictions on Tehran's nuclear activities in exchange for lifting international sanctions. Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, a nationalist atop of a cross-partisan coalition, has hewed to the opposition of his conservative predecessor, Benjamin Netanyahu, to the 2015 Iranian nuclear deal, whose caps on projects with bomb-making potential Israel deemed too lax. — Agencies

COMSTECH starts internship programs

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH (the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) has announced an internship program for the students and scholars who are citizens of Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) member states and already studying in Pakistani institutions. According to an official of COMSTECH, the internship program would provide opportunities to the scholars from OIC member states to have professional learning experience with special emphasis on work ethics, work discipline and teamwork. The interns will have the opportunity to work at the COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad for a period of 3-4 weeks. During this period, they will be involved in various capacity building and intra-OIC collaboration programs including workshop, exhibitions, seminars, conferences etc, the official said. MS /M. Phil/ Ph.D students or scholars who are citizens of OIC member states and currently studying in Pakistani Universities or institutions are eligible for applying for the training program. The consent of host supervisor will be required. — DNA

PN ship SAIF visits Kuwait

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship SAIF has visited Port Mina' ash Shuwaykh, Kuwait during Overseas Deployment. The ship was deployed to undertake Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP) in Gulf of Aden, North Arabian Sea and Gulf of Oman to contribute in international efforts to ensure maritime security in region, said a Pakistan Navy news release received here Sunday. Upon arrival at the port vicinity, the PNS SAIF was welcomed by a Kuwaiti Navy Ship. On reaching the harbour, the ship was warmly received by Ambassador of Pakistan in Kuwait Syed



Sajjad Haider and officials of Kuwaiti Naval Force. Commanding Officer of Pakistan Navy Ship called on civil and military lead-

ership of host country and discussed matter of bilateral relations and navy to navy collaboration. After the port visit, a Passage Exercise was conducted among Pakistan Navy and Kuwaiti Naval Force. Pakistan Navy has always remained committed in maintaining regional peace and stability in Indian Ocean Region. Continuous deployments of PN Ships and participation in bilateral exercises was a practical manifestation of PN resolve in maintaining stability and order in maritime domain, it added. Pakistan and Kuwait enjoy close diplomatic ties and cordial relations. — APP

Iron Brothers join hands to combat COVID-19

Ambassador Haque agreed with Lin, he said: "COVID-19 pandemic is the most formidable crisis humanity has been pitted against since World War-II

DNA

BEIJING: "It has been proofed by China's successful experience that the COVID-19 epidemic is preventable, controllable, and curable, Gwadar Pro reported on Sunday. However, the only way to defeat the virus is solidarity and cooperation of the international community, rather than politicization," Lin SongTian, President of the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries (CPAFFC), said at a donation ceremony. Pakistani ambassador to China, Mo'in ul Haque, President of China-Pakistan Friendship Association, Sha Zukang, and Vice president of CPAFFC, Li Xikui participated in the ceremony. To demonstrate Pak-China friendship and jointly fight against the pandemic, CPAFFC has collected medical materials worth CNY 3

million including 200 oxygen generators, 200,000 masks, and a large amount of oxygen cylinders and fountains of donation. On the donation ceremony 24th, CPAFFC handed them over to the Pakistani embassy to China. In the ceremony, besides expressing appreciation and good wishes, Lin said: "COVID-19 is a global challenge that we all face and the only way to defeat it is international cooperation and working together. However, it is regrettable that some Western countries have shown no regard for the safety of their own people, failed to fulfill their due responsibilities, and failed to give priority to fight against the epidemic. Instead, they have been busy creating a political virus, politicizing the epidemic, and trying to discredit China so as to shift the accountability of their own people." "In contrast, when Western countries politicize the epidemic to

smear China, the Pakistani government and people stand up for China's justice. At the same time, China has actively supported Pakistan to fight against the epidemic by donating a large number of materials and sharing experience. The concrete actions of the two countries have fully demonstrated the unbreakable friendship between China and Pakistan," Lin added. Ambassador Haque agreed with Lin, he said: "COVID-19 pandemic is the most formidable crisis humanity has been pitted against since World War-II. However, the pandemic could not surmount any challenge unsurmountable for Pakistan-China friendship. We are hopeful that with Chinese assistance and experience sharing, Pakistan would also replicate Chinese success in defeating the pandemic at home." Regarding those Western countries tracing the source of COVID-19 virus to smear China's reputation,

ambassador Haque said in an exclusive interview after the event that it is a scientific issue which was answered by WHO clearly. "It is a time for everybody to work together, show solidarity and cooperate to fight this pandemic, rather than political manipulation. I think, as China and many other countries have said, that we need more research through scientific cooperation. It is an issue which can only be solved by experts and researchers, instead of politicization," he said. Also, extending sincere gratitude to Chinese people who donated materials to Pakistan, Haque said: "this donation indeed would be immensely helpful in supporting Pakistan's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic." Yao Wenbin, the founder and CEO of Jiangsu Jumao X-Care Medical Equipment Company Ltd., which donated 200 oxygen generators

to Pakistan, delivered a speech at the ceremony saying that the company would like to support the Pakistani people to fight COVID-19 through donating its flagship product. "If needed, we are also willing to invest in Pakistan to build factories there, while selling oxygen concentrators at a favorable price," Yao added. Anhui Health Box Technology Co., Ltd. also donated its flagship product, 100,000 Non-Medical Copper-Oxide-Infused Coronavirus-Inactivation Face Masks. Its Chairman, Huang Yuhao announced that they are willing to contribute to the effort of pandemic prevention and control and safeguard each and every person's health. Except for the private sector, Sichuan Chengdu Municipal People's Association of Friendship with Foreign Countries (MPAFFC Chengdu) also delivered their concern to Pakistani people.

N. Koreans worry over 'emaciated' Kim Jong Un

AGENCIES

SEOUL: Everyone in North Korea is heartbroken over leader Kim Jong Un's apparent weight loss, said an unidentified resident of Pyongyang quoted on the country's tightly controlled state media, after watching recent video footage of Kim. The rare public comment on Kim's health came after foreign analysts noted in early June that the autocratic leader, who is believed to be 37, appeared to have lost a noticeable amount of weight. "Seeing respected general secretary (Kim Jong Un) looking emaciated breaks our people's heart so much," the man said in an interview aired by state broadcaster KRT on Friday. "Everyone is saying that their tears welled up," he said. In the clip, which Reuters could not independently verify, Pyongyang residents were seen watching a big screen on the street showing a concert attended by Kim and party officials after a plenary meeting of their Workers' Party of Korea (WPK). The broadcast did not provide any details on what had led to the weight loss.

Indonesia hits record daily virus infections

JAKARTA: Indonesia set a new record for daily coronavirus cases on Sunday with more than 21,000, as hospitals are flooded with patients in Jakarta and other Covid-19 hotspots across Southeast Asia's hardest-hit nation. The figure brings the country's tally for the pandemic to more than 2.1 million coronavirus cases with 57,138 deaths. But the real number is believed to be much higher due to low testing rates for the deadly respiratory illness. Indonesia's Covid-19 case rates have soared in recent weeks after millions travelled at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan in May, and as authorities identified the presence of highly infectious newer virus strains. "We predicted there would be a surge in the number of cases," said Covid-19 taskforce spokeswoman Siti Nadia Tarmizi. "The peak is expected in the next two to three weeks," she added. Fears are growing that Indonesia's creaky health system could collapse and there are reports of some overflowing hospitals being forced to turn patients away. — APP

Death toll in Florida collapse rises to 9

SURFSIDE: The death toll after the collapse of a Florida apartment tower has risen to nine, the local mayor said Sunday, more than three days after the building pancaked as residents slept. "We were able to recover four additional bodies in the rubble as well as additional human remains," Miami-Dade County mayor Daniella Levine Cava told reporters in Surfside, near Miami Beach. "As of today one victim passed away in the hospital and we've recovered eight more victims on site so I am confirming today that the death toll is at nine. "We've identified four of the victims and notified next of kin," she continued. More than 150 people remain unaccounted for. The search has been painstakingly slow, hampered in the early days by a fire burning deep in the debris mountain that officials have said they believe is now under control. Officials have stressed that there may yet be survivors buried in the rubble. Cava said that teams had cut a "deep trench" through the pile of twisted debris to assist in the search. "It's now 125 feet in length into the pile, it's 20 feet wide and 40 feet deep," she said, adding that it was "critical" to the search process, and that it was as a result of the trench that the additional bodies were recovered. — APP