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Legendary actor Dilip Kumar passes away at age of 98

Detailed News On Page-01

Korea keen to sign FTA with Pakistan: Envoy

Detailed News On Page-08



Babar retains top spot in ICC ODI rankings

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Shahzain Bugti appointed SAPM

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: Jamhoori

Watan Party (JWP) chief and MNA Shah-zain Bugti has been appointed as Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Reconciliation and Harmony in Balochistan, a notification said Wednesday. "The Prime Minister [...] has been pleased to appoint Nawabzada Shah-zain Bugti MNA, as Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Reconciliation and Harmony in Balochistan, with immediate effect. He shall hold the status of Federal Minister," a notification said.

Gwadar Free Zone creates 1200 jobs

ISLAMABAD: Chairman

China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Asim Saleem Bajwa Wednesday said the Gwadar Free Zone Phase-I was fully operational now that had so far created over 1200 jobs. Talking to media persons here, the chairman said that the development of Gwadar port and industrial zones would have a massive impact on the local as well as national economy. He said COVID-19 was a big challenge for the CPEC from which "we have successfully come out and now it will develop with even higher pace". - APP

Zardari says Nawaz got better treatment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a thinly veiled assertion that he is being treated unfairly due to his ethnicity, former president Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday remarked that PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif's domicile was "better" than his. Speaking outside the Islamabad High Court (IHC), where he had appeared for a bail hearing against his wishes, Zardari was asked to give his opinion on whether the laws were different for him and the PML-N leader. To this, he simply said, "Mian Sahab's domicile is better than mine".

NCOOC shows concern over Covid surge

The NCOOC issued special instructions for Eidul Azha to ascertain that the number of cases does not escalate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOOC) on Wednesday held a meeting to express concern over the growing number of COVID-19 cases in the country and directed provinces to ensure the strict implementation of the coronavirus standard operating procedures on the occasion of Eid ul Adha. The meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, while all provincial chief secretaries attended the meeting through video links. During the meeting, a discussion related to the violations of the SOPs in different sectors also took place. After being briefed about the situation, the minister instructed the provinces to ensure the strict implementation of the SOPs. He also directed the provinces to ramp up their coronavirus vaccination drives. The NCOOC also issued special instructions for the occasion of Eidul Azha to ascertain that the number of COVID-19 cases does not escalate. Meanwhile, Umar told the attendees that the western border of the country has been closed since June 17 due to the worrying coronavirus situation arising in Afghanistan. He added that the government is making arrangements to bring back Pakistanis who have been stranded in Afghanistan. The NCOOC also said that individuals who have been vaccinated would be required to quarantine for 10 days if they test positive for COVID-19.

Positivity ratio spikes over 3%

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Wednesday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 34,013 with 1,517 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 877 people recovering from the disease during last 24 hours. Seventeen corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 16 of whom were under treatment in the hospitals and one of them perished in their respective homes or quarantine facilities, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOOC). Most of the deaths occurred in Sindh and followed by Punjab. Out of the total 17 deaths occurred, 10 of them died were under treatment on ventilators. There were 1,941 COVID-19 infected patients under treatment in critical condition were admitted in various COVID-19 dedicated healthcare facilities of the country during past 24 hours. National COVID-19 positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 3.27%. The COVID-19 positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed.

PTI govt put economy in right direction: Fawad

The minister said that the current accounts deficit had been brought down to zero

ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Wednesday said the economy had been put in the right direction during three-year of Pakistan Tehrik Insaf (PTI) govern-

ment, which was definitely a landmark achievement. Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Industries and Production Makhdoom Khusr-o Bakhtiar, he said the Prime Minister had the vision to ensure economic stability in the country and added the government prudent policies had started

yielding positive results. Fawad said a significant improvement in the agriculture and textile sector had been registered during the past two years and added record production of 4 major crops of wheat, rice, maize, and sugarcane had been witnessed in the country.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain addressing a press conference along with Makhdoom Khusr-o Bakhtiar. - DNA



DOHA: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa calls on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid Bin Mohammed Al Attiyah. - DNA

COAS, Qatari Deputy PM discuss Afghan peace

Qatari dignitaries appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace and stability in the region

STAFF REPORT

OIC SG underscores principled stance on IIOJK: FO

SAIFULLAH

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has said that Pakistan and Qatar shared great history of cordial relations and a deep spirit of brotherhood, which are being transformed into an enduring partnership, a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. The military's media wing said General Qamar, who is on a two-day official visit to Qatar, called on Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for Defence Affairs Dr Khalid Bin Mohammed Al Attiyah and Chief of Staff Qatar Armed Forces of the State

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office spokesperson Wednesday said that during a recent meeting between Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Secretary General and the Indian ambassador to Saudi Arabia, the former had underscored the organization's principled position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Responding to media queries regarding a meeting

Continued on Page 06

of Qatar Lieutenant General of mutual interest, defence, (Pilot) Ghanim Bin Shaheen security cooperation and regional and geo-political environment were discussed, During the meetings matters

according to the ISPR. On the occasion, the COAS said that both countries share the great history of cordial relations and a deep spirit of brotherhood, which are being transformed into an enduring partnership. He also appreciated the role of Qatar in the Afghan peace process. The ISPR said that Qatari dignitaries also appreciated Pakistan's continuous efforts for peace and stability in the region and pledged to keep working for better relations between the two brotherly countries. Both sides underscored the importance of further enhancing the cooperation in all fields, it further said.

India involved in hybrid warfare: President

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi says India is involved in hybrid warfare against Pakistan by using the soil of Afghanistan and supporting militancy and terrorism in the country. He made these remarks while addressing the participants of 7th National Workshop on Balochistan. The President said India is hatching conspiracies against Pakistan to destabilize it by funding militant organizations to carry out terrorist activities. He added that India would not succeed in her evil designs as the Armed Forces of the country are fully capable to overcome the security challenges, particularly the 5th Generation War.

Legendary Dilip Kumar dies aged 98



NEWS DESK

MUMBAI: Dilip Kumar, one of India's earliest and most famous film actors, has died in Mumbai at the age of 98. A veritable legend, Kumar acted in more than 65 films over nearly five decades, playing roles that ranged from the iconic to the endearing. He was admitted to hospital on 30 June after he complained of breathlessness. He had been frequently ill for months.

Kumar is survived by his wife, Saira Banu, a Bollywood actress herself. The couple have no children. His burial took place at 17:00 local time with state honours. Prime Minister Imran Khan, Federal Minister Chaudhry Fawad Hussain and PTI Senator Faisal Javed Khan expressed grief and sorrow over the demise of popular Bollywood actor Dilip Kumar. "Saddened to learn of Dilip Kumar's passing," the premier tweeted. "I can never forget his generosity in giving his time to help raise funds for SKMTH when the project launched. This is the most difficult time - to raise the first 10% of the funds and his appearance in Pakistan and London helped raise huge amounts."

Pak ranked among best Covid responders

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has congratulated National Command and Operation Center, Ehsaas Team and State Bank of Pakistan for effective response to Covid-19 pandemic. In a tweet on Wednesday, he also thanked God Almighty for His mercy during difficult times. The Prime Minister also shared Economist Magazine's normalcy index which declares Pakistan best performing countries for handling Covid-19. With a score of 84.4, Pakistan ranks third amongst fifty countries tracked by the Economist Magazine for return to pre-pandemic life. Neighboring India has a score of 46.5, ranking it near the bottom in 48th position.

Inside...

Industrialization can resolve over-population problems - Page 02

Sania joins UN's forum on sustainable development - Page 03

Second Phase of CPEC to focus on industry and agriculture - Page 04

The CPC's 100 years of human transformation - Page 05

Italy beat Spain on penalties in epic Euro 2020 semi-final - Page 06

Pakistan, Azerbaijan set up economic co-op chamber - Page 07

Chingiz Aitmatov's stories book launched in Pakistan - Page 08

Taliban battles its way into key Afghan city

Afghanistan's Defence Minister Bismillah Mohammadi said government forces were in a "very sensitive military situation", adding that "the war is raging" with the Taliban

NEWS DESK

KABUL: The Taliban launched a major assault on a provincial capital in Afghanistan on Wednesday, the first since the US military began its final drawdown of troops from the country. Fierce fighting erupted in the western city of Qala-i-Naw, the capital of Badghis, with the Taliban seizing police headquarters and offices of the country's spy agency. Afghanistan's Defence Minister Bismillah Mohammadi said government forces were in a "very sensitive military situation", adding that "the war is raging" with the Taliban. The onslaught came just hours after Washington announced US forces on the ground had completed more than 90% of their withdrawal from Afghanistan, and as the Kabul government held talks with Taliban representatives in neighbouring Iran.

Afghan situation to hit Pakistan, warns PPP

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: PPP vice president Senator Sherry Rehman has warned that the situation in Afghanistan could badly affect Pakistan. Talking to reporters on the rapidly evolving situation in Afghanistan, she noted that Pakistan had the highest stakes in Afghan peace, but the geopolitics of escalating violence next door indicated that peace might be much further than imagined. She said that in this scenario clear and focused policymaking at home would have far-reaching benefits for security and economic stability of the country. "Clarity and consensus are needed for any foreign policy to be successful, especially if policy agendas are focused on protecting a country's interests and people, which involves managing competing interests and ideas," she said.

The Taliban have waged a dizzying campaign across Afghanistan since US and NATO forces announced the final withdraw-

al from the country in early May, seizing dozens of rural districts and stirring fears that the government is in crisis.

"The enemy has entered the city, all the districts have fallen," Badghis governor Hessemuddin Shams told reporters in a text message. Badghis provincial council chief Abdul Aziz Bek confirmed the assault, saying some security officials had surrendered to the Taliban. "The provincial council officials have fled to an army camp in the city. Fighting continues in the city," added Badghis provincial council member Zia Gul Habibi. She said the Taliban had entered the city's police headquarters and the local office of the country's spy agency, the National Directorate of Security. In a separate video message sent to reporters, Shams attempted to calm the residents of the city, even as he appeared armed with a rifle with gunfire rattling in the distance. "My message is please keep your calm. I assure you that we will, all of us, together defend the city," he said.

Zahoor Agha new Governor Balouchistan

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Syed Zahoor Agha has been appointed as the new Governor of Balouchistan province, according to a President House statement. He will take place of Amanullah Khan. Earlier, Justice (ret'd) Amanullah Khan has resigned as Balochistan governor. He submitted his resignation letter to President Arif Alvi on Wednesday. It is being reported that he has resigned on the advice of PM Imran Khan.



Briefs

Ambassador of Belarus calls on Governor KP

DNA

NATHIAGALI: Ambassador of Belarus A. Metelitsa Wednesday called on Governor KPK Shah Farman at Governor House Nathiagali and discussed the matters of mutual understanding. According to the details, in the meeting matters regarding financial cooperation for economic growth and investment opportunities in various sectors also came under discussion. Ambassador Belarus A. Metelitsa said that they wanted to strengthen bilateral ties, diplomatic relations with Pakistan. Governor KP Shah Farman informed the ambassador about the quality of Olive, honey, precious stones and said that there was a vast potential for investment in these fields.

Bangash express grief over death of Dilip Kumar

DNA

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant for Information and Higher Education Kamran Bangash and nephew of Dilip Kumar, Senator Mohsin Aziz on Wednesday expressed grief and sorrow over sad demise of son of Peshawar and Bollywood legend Yousuf Khan also known as Dilip Kumar. In his condolence message, Kamran Bangash said the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the government were equally grieved over the death of Dilip Kumar and expressed solidarity with the bereaved family in this hour of tragedy. Bangash said that Dilip Kumar had great love and affection for his ancestral city Peshawar, adding that the city of Peshawar would always remember him and he would live in hearts and minds of people forever. The legendary star Dilip Kumar died at the age of 98. He had been admitted at hospital on June 6 after experiencing breathlessness, confirmed by his spokesperson Faisal Farooqi on his twitter account. Meanwhile, the nephew of Dilip Kumar, Senator Mohsin Aziz also expressed condolence over the sad demise and prayed eternal peace for the departed soul. He said Dilip Kumar was a very loving, decent and educated personality.

US Embassy, KU join hands for Lincoln Corner

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy here on Wednesday signed a Letter of Intent (LOI) with the Karakoram International University (KIU) to establish a Lincoln Corner in Gilgit. According to U.S. Embassy, the Lincoln Corners are partnerships between the U.S. Mission to Pakistan and eminent Pakistani institutions like universities, public libraries, and cultural centers. They connect Pakistani youth and emerging leaders to the United States through educational and thematic programs and peer-reviewed collections of information resources related to American culture, history, and international relations. Lincoln Corners events are hosted in person and online and are free and open to the public. Ray Castillo, Minister Counselor for Public Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, and Professor Dr. Attaullah Shah, Vice Chancellor of KIU, signed the letter during a virtual ceremony.

12 held with contraband

FAISALABAD: Police claimed on Wednesday to have arrested 12 criminals and recovered drugs and illegal weapons from their possession. The police arrested 5 drug pushers and recovered 2.3 kg hashish and 8 litres liquor from their possession. In a crackdown against illegal weapons, police arrested 2 persons and recovered a pistol and a number of bullets from them. The police also held 5 gamblers with stake money of Rs 3,700. Further investigation was underway. - APP



PESHAWAR: Ambassador of Belarus A. Metelitsa calls on Governor KPK Shah Farman at Governor House Nathiagali and discussed the matters of mutual understanding. - DNA

Industrialization can resolve over-population problems

Regional Director NUML Azhar Hayat also underlined the importance of industry-academia linkages and said that employers could pick the best and competent students for their absorption in their unit on the basis of their performance

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed said on Wednesday that rapid industrialization was the only readily available option to resolve the problems of burgeoning population. After signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National University of Modern

Languages (NUML), he said the FCCI had played its dynamic role in strengthening the process of industrialization, however to sustain it, industry-academia collaboration was vital. He said the colonization process of M3 Industrial Estate was in full swing where auto, pharmaceutical and mobile phone assembly plants were also being established in addition to hi-tech units. He said that educational insti-

tutes must improve their technical courses to ensure skilled manpower for these new units. He further said the first Special Economic Zone under CPEC was also being established in Faisalabad which would have the latest and state-of-the-art industrial units, and maximum of

their products would be exported to earn precious foreign exchange. He said the provision of skilled manpower was a major challenge, for which, industry-academia liaison was imperative. He said that the Higher Education Commission (HEC) had issued a clear directive that no BS level degree could be issued without completion of internship by the student concerned.

He assured that he would accommodate maximum internees from NUML University by placing them in their related field. Regional Director NUML Azhar Hayat also underlined the importance of industry-academia linkages and said that employers could pick the best and competent students for their absorption in their unit on the basis of their performance during their internship period directly under their supervision.

He said that indiscriminate operation against encroachments will continue in all localities of the district and those re-erecting encroachments will face stern action. - APP



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visiting corona mobile vaccination camp at clock tower chowk. - DNA

HC stresses to enhance Pakistan-Bangla cooperation

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Bangladesh Business Council may be created to give a quantum jump to bilateral trade and to ensure durable peace in this region, said Mr. Imran Ahmad Siddiqui, Pakistani High Commissioner in Bangladesh. He was addressing an international webinar on "Pakistan Bangladesh Economic Relations: Future of Cooperation". It was also attended by Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed, President Faisalabad

Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), Mr. Suleman Khan, Commercial Counselor, Pakistan Embassy in Dhaka, Mr. Sadrul Hassan, Special Correspondent UNB Dhaka, Mr. Manzur Rashid, Business Director, ACI Chemicals, Mr. Nabeel Essa, Director Tasho Enterprises Limited Dhaka and Ms. Shaista Riaz, Research Associate at Pakistan House. The High Commissioner pointed out that Pakistan and Bangladesh share many commonalities while Pakistani professionals have played a major role in the

development of Bangladeshi textile and garment industry on solid and sustained basis. He said that we must reactivate the dormant organizations like the joint economic commission. He said that the business community can accomplish this task with his entrepreneur's skills and hence it must play its role in the best interest of the country and nation. He also stressed the need to bring private sectors of both countries closer to materialize the dream of enhanced cooperation. He said that Bangladesh economy has at-

tained a position to invest in other countries and Pakistan should be their first choice for this purpose. The Pakistani high commissioner explained in detail the massive opportunities offered by CPEC and said that it is time for Bangladesh to exploit these opportunities for its own benefit. He said that Bangladesh could also have access to the regional countries to enhance the export of its surplus produce. He said that many countries have differences but they are doing business in their greater interest.

Mobile vaccination centre set up at Clock Tower Chowk

DNA

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of District Administration the Corona Mobile Vaccination Camp has been set up at Chowk Clock Tower for the convenience of traders, shopkeepers and buyers from where vaccines can be administered free of cost to prevent corona. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visited the vaccination camp and observed the process of vaccinated citizens. He also presented flowers as a goodwill gesture to the vaccinated citizens. Additional Deputy Commissioner General Khurram Pervez, CEO Health Dr. Mushtaq Sipra, Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari, DHO Dr. Bilal Ahmed, Focal Person Dr. Junaid, Incharge

District Control Room Muhammad Sadiq and representatives of trade associations were also present. The Deputy Commissioner checked the utility services available in the camp and said that drinking water should be available at all times and fans should be functional. He asked the health department team to provide speedy services to the people. He said that apart from vaccination centers in the district, mobile camps are being set up at various public places so that more and more citizens can be vaccinated and stay safe from epidemics like Corona. He appealed to the citizens not to listen to rumors but to protect themselves and their family members must be vaccinated against corona because precaution and vaccination is the only solution to prevent corona.

Substandard food items, several shops sealed

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFSA) on Wednesday seized 650 kilograms of unhygienic 'miss brand' ice cream from a vehicle during a blockade in Shankar area of Mardan and imposed heavy fines on the owners. In Bakhshali Bazaar Mardan, two bakery units were sealed for violating hygiene rules and using substandard items. The action was taken on the instructions of Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety Authority Shah Rukh Ali Khan. During the inspection under the supervision of Assistant Director Muhammad Abbas, several grocery stores, kabab shops and hotels in Shankar and Rustam were inspected and issued improvement notices to them. In Mayar bazaar Mardan, three general stores were sealed for overdue items and violation of hygiene rules. - DNA

110 illegal constructions demolished

PESHAWAR: District administration and Irrigation Department in a joint operation demolished 110 illegal constructions on Warsak Canal in Mathani area on Wednesday. The joint anti-encroachment operation was conducted under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner (AC), Dr. Adil Ayub and officers of Irrigation Department against encroachments established on Warsak Canal from Sarband to Zangali. A heavy contingent of police was also deployed to prevent any untoward incident. According to Deputy Commissioner (DC) Peshawar, Khalid Mahmood said that mafias behind these constructions were issued several notices for voluntarily removal of their encroachments. But they never agreed, which prompted administration for operation against them. He said that indiscriminate operation against encroachments will continue in all localities of the district and those re-erecting encroachments will face stern action. - APP

Automotive market to double in the next 5 years

DNA

KARACHI: Master Changan Motors Limited is disrupting the automotive industry with the vision of Future Forward Forever. The company conducted its first Vendor Conference - the first ever conducted by any new entrant in Pakistan's automotive industry. The company anticipates the automotive market demand to grow twice as much from 300,000 units to 650,000 units in the next 5 years as a result of rapid digital transformations in Pakistan's economy coupled with a growing young population.

The recent population trend shows around 10 million young males are expected to become independent earners in just half a decade. The expected outcome of this population change is a speedy growth in the automotive sector that will most likely create a demand of another 350,000 units and at least 10,000 jobs by 2023 in the industry. Master Changan Motors Limited is a Joint Venture with the Chinese state-owned company, 'Changan Automobile' - number 1 automobile brand in Chinese domestic market. Their investment has crossed over \$136 Million, the biggest investment by a Chinese OEM in Pakistan's history. The company has taken multiple actions to cater to the anticipated growth in the auto market. On 20th May'2021, Master Changan Motors Limited inaugurated second shift operations to double their production capacity. Now their plant capacity has increased from 30,000 units to 50,000 units per annum (more than 66% increase) in a short span of time. In addition to that, the company is aggressively working to achieve its localization targets and for that today they conducted a Vendor Meeting at their state-of-the-art plant at Karachi.

Another dies of coronavirus in Faisalabad

FAISALABAD: Another patient died of COVID-19 while three others were tested positive in the district during the last 24 hours. A spokesperson for the health department said on Wednesday that 724 coronavirus tests were conducted in public and private sector labs during the same period. He said that total active cases in Faisalabad were reduced to 140 while recoveries were recorded at 20,442. He said that 339 beds were allocated at the Allied Hospital, 133 at the DHQ Hospital and 150 at Government General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad for COVID-19 patients. At present, 37 patients were under treatment at the Allied Hospital and 9 at DHQ Hospital. He further said that 88 confirmed patients were isolated at their homes in the district. - APP

KP Govt completes preparations for LB polls: Akbar Ayub

PESHAWAR: KP Minister for Local Government, Elections and Parliamentary Affairs Akbar Ayub Khan Wednesday said that the provincial government has completed preparations for the local body elections. The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) will announce polls in the entire province including the merged districts by October 15 this year. He expressed these views while addressing a tribal jirga during one-day official visit to Orakzai District after inaugurating a newly constructed causeway on the river and nullah in Kasha area of Central Orakzai. Syed Ghazan Jamal, Member Provincial Assembly from the area, Deputy Commissioner Orakzai Muhammad Khalid, CEO SRSP Masoodul Mulik and tribal leaders Maulana Ashraf and Maulana Hifzur Rehman also addressed the jirga who appreciated the initiatives and policies of the provincial government for the development of the merged areas and highlighted some local issues. The bridge has been completed by Sarhad Rural Support Program (SRSP) on behalf of provincial government at a cost of Rs. 44.3 million. - DNA



SAWAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Special Assistant for Information and Higher Education, Kamran Bangash presides over a high-level meeting on new degree colleges in Swat District. - DNA

Briefs

Men arrested for 'sexually assaulting' woman

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A court on Tuesday remanded three men arrested for allegedly raping, assaulting and blackmailing a woman in Islamabad in police custody for two days.

The police produced Usman Mirza, Hafiz Atta, and Farhan before Judicial Magistrate Waqar Gondal and requested their physical remand for investigation. The court granted a two-day physical remand of the accused persons and directed the police to produce them before the court on completion of their physical remand along with a progress report. The men were arrested last night after videos of the violence went viral on social media. The incident occurred two months back, when Usman allegedly along with his two other accomplices barged into an apartment in the E-11 sector of Islamabad and shot an obscene video of a girl.

The suspects continued to blackmail her and her husband with the video and demanded money in return and warned to make it viral in case of non-compliance. The police took prompt action and arrested the suspects after the videos went viral on social media.

The Islamabad police later shared the news of Usman's arrest saying that while utilizing all their resources, they have apprehended a suspect allegedly threatening a couple in a video within hours.

NAPHDA to introduce free online form submission facility

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Naya Pakistan Housing & Development Authority would introduce free online form submission facility for citizens to get themselves registered in 2nd phase to own their own houses.

Talking to private news channel, Spokesperson NAPHDA Asim Shaukat Ali on Wednesday said that all deserving people would get affordable houses on merit under this scheme. He said around 20 lakh applications were received so far in first phase where almost 18 lakh candidates' applications were considered eligible.

He said that the government was making the application process more convenient through giving facility of online application portal so that maximum number of citizens can get easy access to the form submission facility. In second phase the process of Naya Pakistan housing scheme would be digitalized. He explained that the houses were being constructed for low income groups and salaried people in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, KPK, Sindh and other small towns of the country.

Over 0.8m Covid-19 doses administered in Rwp

RAWALPINDI: As many as 810,581 people including 31,881 health workers and 778,700 senior citizens have jabbed themselves so far against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) from 23 centres operating across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10. According to data shared by the district health authority here Wednesday, 33 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, with thirteen belonged to Rawal Town, eight from Potohar town, four from Rawalpindi Cantt, two from Kahutta, five from Taxila and one from Gujjar Khan.

"Presently 38 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 11 in Holy Family Hospital, 5 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 13 in Institute of Urology and 9 in Fauji Foundation Hospital," the health authority report said. District Health Authority updated that three patients had died due to this deadly disease during the last 24 hours. - APP

Sania joins UN's forum on sustainable development

Dr. Sania highlighted that the Pandemic has unearthed an opportunity to recast the role of the welfare state, which needs to be a major part of the re-commitment to agenda 2030

DNA

ISLAMABAD/NEW YORK: Dr. Sania Nishtar was invited to speak at UN's high-level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development. The session on, "The SDGs in time of crises: A sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 as an opportunity to realise the SDGs" had a town hall format to accommodate many high-level speakers given the importance of topic and various dimensions that needed to be covered for a sustainable, inclusive and resilient recovery from COVID-19 pandemic. This session was convened by ECOSOC, under the Presidency of Pakistan. (Ambassador Munir Akram is the current president of ECOSOC) Bringing Pakistan's perspective to the table, Dr. Sania highlighted that the Pandemic has unearthed an opportunity to recast the role of the welfare state, which needs

to be a major part of the re-commitment to agenda 2030. "In Pakistan, we believe the social protection of today is the human capital, the resilience, and the economic inclusion of tomorrow. Investing in social protection is both a response to current needs as well as preparedness for and insurance against future crises. We are humbled that through Pakistan's social protection program, Ehsaas—led by our Prime Minister—strong acceleration towards this goal is underway" she said.

The session was moderated by Achim Steiner, Administrator of UNDP. The session brought together Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, UNDESA; Senator Dr. Sania Nishtar, Prime Minister of Pakistan's Special Assistant on Social Protection and Poverty Alleviation; Lord Tariq Ahmad, Minister of State for the Commonwealth and United Nations, United Kingdom; Henri-



etta H. Fore, Executive Director UNICEF; Sigrid Kaag, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Netherlands; s. Marsha Caddle, Minister of Economic Affairs and Investment of Barbados; Rola Dashti, Executive Secretary of ESCWA; Ndagijimana Uzziel, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda; Isaac Alfie, Director of the Office of Planning and Budget of Uruguay; Sofia Sprechmann Sineiro, Secretary General of Care Inter-

national; Dominic Waughray, Managing Director, Centre for Global Public Goods, Member of Managing Board, World Economic Forum; and Jomo Kwame Sundaram, Visiting Senior Fellow at Khazannah Research Institute, Visiting Fellow at the Initiative for Policy Dialogue, Columbia University.

Referring to Ehsaas Emergency Cash, she shared three lessons with the international audience. "First, our experience has taught us that data innovations, delivery systems, and a commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability are crucial to address the long-standing fault lines that have plagued public sector delivery. Today, Pakistan's reform hinges on these attributes. Secondly, gaps in financial and digital literacy must be addressed to bridge the digital divide and it is with this in view that we have built financial inclusion into the overall design of expanded social protection" she said further adding "Third,

we must protect human capital from negative coping strategies that are inevitable as a result of the pandemic—and in this regard, Pakistan is amongst the first few countries that acted concretely".

Building on the report of the Secretary General on, "Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals" and the relevant General Assembly and ECOSOC meetings related to COVID-19 pandemic, the session took stock of the SDGs' overall progress taking into account the impact of the pandemic and the experiences and responses of countries at various development levels. The session focused on exchange of experiences on policies and integrated approaches that are being implemented to address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic, while ensuring that recovery from pandemic is sustainable and resilient, putting countries back on track to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Police granted 2 days remand of 3 accused

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A judicial magistrate of Islamabad on Wednesday granted the police a two-day physical remand of three accused involved in an incident of torturing and blackmailing a girl. The police station Golra produced the three accused including Usman Mirza, Hafiz Atta and Farhan before the court in the above case. The police requested the magistrate for physical remand of the three accused which was granted by him. The court directed the police to present the accused on next hearing after ending of their remand time.

AIOU Gilgit RC foundation stone to be laid

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) would be laid foundation stone of its Gilgit regional office on Thursday.

According to AIOU, Federal Education Minister, Shafiqat Mehmood, has been invited as the chief guest while Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum will preside over the ceremony. Construction site of regional office is located near FC Headquarters, Joshil Khari. Currently, the office of regional campus is located in a rented building. Raja Umer Younis, Registrar, AIOU, Director General Regional Service, Inam Ullah Shaikh, RD, Gilgit and students are also attending the ceremony.

It is pertinent to mention here that VC, AIOU has been taking keen interest in expanding educational network of the university as well as constructing model study centers, equipped with latest technology, in underdeveloped regions of all four provinces of the country including AJK which lack basic educational facilities of quality standards.

Computer laboratories are also being established in these model study centers to facilitate people of the underprivileged areas. Land for the construction of regional offices has been either donated by the district governments or acquired on minimum rates. This initiative is a testimony of the VC, AIOU's vision of providing quality educational services to underprivileged and marginalized segments of the society so that they may attain social and economic empowerment. With the construction of Gilgit regional campus, the number of university's constructed buildings will rise to 28 and 11 of these buildings have been constructed during the tenure of Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, VC, AIOU.

Smokers more exposed to fatal diseases

ISLAMABAD: General Secretary Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) Sana Ullah Ghuman said that people who are addicted to smoking are more likely to be exposed to the dangerous diseases. Sana Ullah Ghuman said in a statement that, tobacco use affects heart, cancer, post-diabetes, impaired blood flow to the kidneys, legs and feet, impaired vision with nerve weakness.

"We must take practical steps to prevent it and protect the health of the nation", he said. Sana Ullah Ghuman said, according to the report of the American Lungs Association, people who smoke are more likely to die prematurely. The American Lungs Association has made some startling revelations in its report that smoking harms every part of human body, including heart, which causes blockages and narrowing of arteries. When blood vessels are affected, the chances of stroke increase. People who smoke on a daily basis are more likely to die from lung cancer than from other types of cancer as smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. It is responsible for 87 percent of deaths from lung cancer. Smoking makes pregnancy difficult in women and also affects the health of the baby, including the mother. - APP

NAB an effective deterrent against corruption: NA Speaker

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was rendering national service through creating deterrence against corruption in the country. Talking to National Accountability Bureau Chairman (NAB), Justice (r) Javed Iqbal at Parliament House, Wednesday, the Speaker opined that effective measures always help eliminate the menace of corruption from society. Speaker said that the incumbent government believes in the promotion of transparency and accountability in the governance system. He said that corruption was a major challenge faced by the nation. It was the collective responsibility of all segments of society to discourage corrupt practices and support the government's efforts to eradicate corruption from the country. Chairman presented NAB Annual Report 2020 to National Assembly Speaker and briefed him about his organization's performance which had recovered Rs. 323.29 billion during 2020. He informed that NAB received 24,706 complaints and disposed-off 30,405 complaints including under-process complaints from the previous year. NAB processed 878 complaints verifications, besides conducting 369 inquiries, 175 investigations and filed 136 references before the Accountability Courts during the past year. He apprised that the overall success ratio of prosecution was 66 percent during the year 2020. He apprised that reputed National and international organizations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, PILDAT and Mishaal Pakistan have appreciated the defests of NAB in eradication of corruption specially to aware people about the ill effects of corruption. Appreciating the performance of NAB, the Speaker said that the organization had done a commendable job by waging a war against corrupt elements and recovering Rs. 323.29 Billion during 2020. He lauded the efforts of the Chairman NAB for his personal indulgence for recovery of billions of hard earned money of effectees of housing societies and money laundering.



ISLAMABAD: Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Maliki, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia called on Shafiqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training & National Heritage. - APP

CTP check over speeding; 1530 challan issued

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) have issued 1530 challan slips on over speeding and imposed fines amounting to more than Rs 520,050 on the rules violators during last month. According to Incharge Camera Squad, Hafiz Iftikhar, the squad on the directive of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi Rai Mazhar Iqbal, launched a campaign to check over speeding on various roads of the district and took action in accordance with the law against the violators. He informed that the squad was conducting operations to check over speeding through speed cameras on main roads particularly old Airport Road, New Airport Road, and in other sectors including Taxila, Kalar Syedan, and Meharabad. He said that the operations of the camera squad had helped to control the road accidents considerably in the district. The Traffic officials were directed to take strict action against the violators without any discrimination, he said adding, CTP were making all-out efforts to control over speeding and violation of traffic rules aimed at minimizing road traffic accidents. The CTP Education Squad was also making efforts to create awareness among road users about road safety laws. He advised the road users to obey traffic rules and cooperate with Traffic Wardens in order to reach their destinations safely. - DNA

CCP initiates enquiry against Foodpanda

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has initiated an enquiry against the online food delivery service platform/aggregator, Foodpanda, to investigate its alleged abuse of dominant position and a possible violation of Sections 3 (Abuse of Dominant Position) and Section 4 (Prohibited Agreement of the Competition Act, 2010, in the market of online food delivery platforms. The enquiry committee will also review and place before the Commission, its findings, whether the exemption

granted (for loyalty Agreements) to Foodpanda in April 2019 for the period of three years is impeding competition in any manner in light of the concerns highlighted by various market players.

The CCP has initiated the enquiry under Section 37 of the Act on the formal complaints filed by Foodpanda's competitor, M/s Cheetay Logistics Pakistan Limited on 4 May 2021, and the All Pakistan Restaurant Association (APRA) on 10 June 2021. Formerly, a complaint was also filed by another online food aggregator, Careem Networks Pakistan (Private) Limited, pertaining to the exemption granted to

the same aggregator in 2019

Upon receiving the said complaints, the CCP's Cartel and Trade Abuse Department conducted a preliminary fact-finding exercise and found that Foodpanda seems to have a dominant position in the market of online food delivery platforms with a considerable amount of admitted volume of 100,000 per day food orders from different restaurants/outlets/food chains across Pakistan. Regarding the alleged abuse of the dominant position, the concerns inter alia include; charging exorbitant commissions, offering fidelity rebates, discriminatory practices.



ISLAMABAD: Nepal ambassador receives Dr Palitha Mahipala, WHO Head of Mission in Pakistan at the Embassy. They discussed the Covid-19 situation and other health issues. - DNA

ICCI greets Amir's appointment as Chairman CDA

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that after a long time, CDA under the leadership of Amir Ali Ahmed has become proactive for uplifting the infrastructure in the city including commercial and industrial areas by carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths and restoration of streetlights

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) along with delegation visited CDA Headquarters and congratulated Amir Ali Ahmed on his permanent appointment as Chairman CDA. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group, Abdul Rauf Alam Convener ICCI CDA Committee, Tariq Sadiq, Zafar Bakhtawari, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Khalid Iqbal Malik, Shakeel Munir, Rana Qaiser Shehzad, Javed Iqbal, Omair Khattak and others were in the delegation.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that after a long time, CDA under the leadership of Amir Ali Ahmed has become proactive for uplifting the infrastructure in the city including commercial and industrial areas by carpeting of roads, repair of footpaths and restoration



of streetlights. Therefore, his permanent appointment as Chairman CDA would give more confidence to the business community and the residents for better development works in Islamabad. He said it was for the first time that Chairman CDA along with President ICCI had paid visits to various markets to see the needs of development works and subsequent to these visits, CDA

has taken initiatives to address the highlighted issues, which was commendable. The ICCI President said that still many issues of the business community needed the close attention of Chairman CDA for redress. He stressed that CDA should streamline the lease renewal process of commercial and industrial plots as the business community was facing great inconvenience due to its current

difficult procedure while making it easier would facilitate the business and investment activities. He said that CDA should expedite the construction of multi-storey parking plazas in markets to address the longstanding issue of parking. He said that the process of issuing completion certificates of commercial and industrial buildings should also be further streamlined. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder and others also expressed best wishes for the Chairman CDA and hoped that he would continue to work with ICCI for resolving key issues of the business community. Speaking at the occasion, Amir Ali Ahmed, Chairman CDA thanked ICCI delegation for visiting to congratulate him. He said that the business community was playing key role in the economic development and CDA would take all possible measures to address their outstanding issues and to complete the remaining development works in commercial and industrial areas.

Briefs

IHC summons
PMC in
inspection
case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday served notices to the respondents including Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) in a case challenging the mechanism of inspections and grading of private medical and dental colleges.

Justice Aamer Farooq of IHC heard the case filed by the Pakistan Association of Private Medical & Dental Institutions (PAMI) regarding the above matter.

The petitioner's lawyer Ashtar Ousaf contended that the PMC had issued two notifications regarding inspections and grading of private medical institutions. The grading of medical educational institutions would come under the mechanism of Higher Education Commission (HEC).

He said that the mechanism which was being used by the PMC currently had already been suspended as the IHC had suspended the PMC Ordinance 2019. The PMC couldn't apply the suspended laws for inspections of colleges, Ashtar Ousaf added, and prayed the court to suspend the notification of medical education regulatory body.

SECP
licensed 3
new housing
finance firms

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) Wednesday licensed three new Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) during the fiscal year ended June 30, 2021.

SECP believed that a revitalized HFC sector will contribute in catering the huge demand of affordable housing finance in the country. The newly licensed HFCs included Pakistan Housing Finance Company Limited, Trellis Housing Finance Company Limited and Asaan Khar Finance Limited. Prior to that, there has been no licensed HFC in existence, for the past one decade, said a press release issued here.

While cognizant of the huge gap in affordable housing finance space, the SECP in collaboration with Pakistan Mortgage Refinance Company and the World Bank Group lead off a comprehensive awareness campaign to highlight the opportunities for potential new entrants. A number of webinars were conducted to impart information on regulatory framework and legal requirements to form HFCs. The SECP also guide prospective investors on available funding mechanism for housing finance companies and assisted them in preparing workable HFC business models.

Stamp on
coated
degrees
prohibited

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC) has instructed the students to ensure that their educational documents are not laminated/plastic coated, so that the stamps are properly affixed by HEC on their degrees/ transcripts and the documents are not damaged. The official sources told APP that HEC had issued instructions regarding attestation of laminated documents in which it is clearly stated that the documents are not laminated.

"HEC verifies the degrees awarded by the recognized universities. As per the instructions available on our website, the applicants are required to communicate through email on individual basis during the process of online application" they added. The applicants are therefore advised to follow these instructions i.e. the HEC web portal is meant for attestation of degrees awarded by recognized Universities/Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs) of Pakistan. Degrees awarded by foreign Universities/Degree Awarding Institutes (DAIs) are not attested by HEC. — APP

Second Phase of CPEC to focus
on industry and agriculture

Shah Mahmood talked of the cooperation between both countries especially during the coronavirus pandemic as China has so far donated Pakistan 3.5 million doses of vaccine

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: In commemoration of 70 years of Pakistan-China relations, the Pakistan-China Institute (PCI) arranged a conference titled, "Pakistan-China at 70: A Unique Bilateral Partnership". The conference brought together China and Pakistan's key government officials, academicians, journalists, students, and civil society members under one roof.

During the opening session, Chairman of Pakistan-China Institute, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed extended his heartfelt felicitations to the people of Pakistan and China for being fraternal and time-tested brothers who have always enjoyed neighborly relations. He highlighted how China has changed the destiny of one-fifth of humanity by lifting 800 million people out of poverty. This was followed by Keynote Addresses by Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, and Wang Yi, State Councillor and Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China. Foreign Minister Qureshi talked about Pakistan-China friendship which he said is rooted in the heart of cooperation between the two countries. He talked of the cooperation between both countries especially during the coronavirus pandemic as China has so far donated Pakistan 3.5 million doses of vaccine, and said that Pakistan has always supported Chinese core interests. Pakistan also stood with the Chinese stance on making vaccine a global public good. He apprised the audience that the shared future of Pakistan and China is to compile infrastructure, knowledge and make it about the people. He talked about the educational cooperation between the two countries which will also ensure cultural collaboration as well.

In his video address Chinese Foreign Minister and State Counselor, Wang Yi highlighted that China and Pakistan are all weather friends who understand and respect each other despite so-



cial and cultural differences.

After the opening session, first session on A Model State to State Partnership-Historical context was held. Ambassador Sha Zukang expressed sincere gratitude to Pakistan. He apprised that China and Pakistan should focus on the CPEC and must focus that the job is well done. He said that CPEC is a two-way project of the BRI, which is inculcating new experience and expertise in both countries.

Lt General (Retd.) Talat Masood highlighted how in the aftermath of 1965 war, China gave military assistance to Pakistan. Trailing through history, he said that as the two countries celebrate 70 years of their relationship, their shared future is bright and rests primarily on Pakistan's own domestic matters.

Mr. Muhammad Jehanzeb Khan, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission talked about how China is a great friend that has given Pakistan the opportunity to develop. He said it is remarkable how two culturally-diverse countries are able to maintain such a close relationship.

The second Session, was themed "People to People Connectivity- The foundation of Pakistan-China friendship". Mr. Shakeel Ramay, Advisor, Asian Institute of Eco civilization Research & Development moderated the dis-

ussion. Mr. Mustafa Hyder Sayed, Executive Director, PCI labeled people-to-people connectivity pivotal to Pakistan-China relations. He highlighted the role of PCI in enabling youth exchanges, bilateral discussions, and opening up dialogue on the dynamic relationship shared by both countries. Ms. Ambreen Shah, Vice President Legal & Corporate Affairs, China Power Hub, Generation Company (Pvt) Limited said that in her experience, the Chinese people are very positive, progressive and humble. She said the Chinese value feedback and input, and do not carry out any gender discrimination, keeping respect and loyalty as the main ethos of their work. She also said that in China women hold key positions in companies as Chinese reward hard work.

Ambassador Khalid remarks were followed by Professor Dr. Atta-ur-Rehman, Chairman of PM Task Force on Science and Technology who said that Pakistan and China are collaborating on COVID research, and also working for educational exchanges. Professor Wang Wen, Executive Dean, Chongyang Institute, Renmin University addressed the audience virtually and highlighted how the process of China's development is an outcome of the Pakistan-China relationship. Ai Ping, Vice Chairman of Chinese Government Association of

Friendship with Foreign Countries said that friendship between people of China and Pakistan remains close as the two celebrate 70 years of bilateral relationship. He also said that CPEC is the flagship project of the BRI, and this corridor has helped Pakistani people build infrastructure and meet energy needs; adding that 46 projects have been completed with investment of around 30 billion dollars so far, while more are under way.

Lieutenant General (Retd.) Yaseen Malik highlighted how China is the only country in the region which has no historic baggage for Afghans. Therefore, he said that the China-Afghan relationship is likely to flourish once things stabilize in Afghanistan. Vice Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee of National People's Congress, Former Minister of Population and Family Planning, Dr. Zhao Baige said that the BRI upholds the concept of a better future for all mankind. During the fourth session, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: The Way Forward, Mr. Mustafa Hyder Sayed moderated the discussion between Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, President & CEO, Habib Bank Limited, Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor for Commerce, Textile, Industry and Production, and Investment of Pakistan to the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Mr. Yang Jianduo, Chairman of All Pakistan Chinese Enterprises Association, and Chief Representative of Power China talked about how Pakistan and China have to work together for the promotion of Business to Business cooperation, and ensure a better connectivity between the two countries.

Muhammad Aurangzeb said that two branches of Habib Bank Limited are located in China with 15,000 Chinese accounts.

Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor to Prime Minister for Commerce, Textile, Industry and Production, and Investment talked about how 8 new honorary investment counselors have expressed interest in investing in Pakistan and are also willing to work pro bono and help relationship between Pakistan business people and Chinese.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Youth Affairs, and Chairman Kamyab Jawan Program, Usman Dar with State Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib, in a meeting at Prime Minister Office. — DNA

Public urged to
lodge complaints
against profiteers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi on Wednesday asked public to cooperate with the government in efforts against profiteering and lodge complaints about exorbitant prices at 'complaint centres' at district levels.

Elements involved in such crimes should be identified and punished according to relevant laws aimed at discouraging such acts, he said this while speaking to a private news channel. He said that the profiteers were the culprits of society as well as of the law,

adding, that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking all possible measures to provide relief to the people. He asked the representatives of the city governments, deputy commissioners, DIGs, of police and ACs not only to register complaints but also make sincere efforts for their permanent solution.

Maulana Ashrafi asked the people to file complaints against the shopkeepers who were involved in the profiteering and hoarding. He said the PM had already directed authority concerned to keep a vigil eye on the hoarders and profiteers, besides launching a crackdown on them.

NAB an effective deterrence
against corruption

The Speaker opined that effective measures always help eliminate the menace of corruption from society

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser has said that National Accountability Bureau (NAB) was rendering national service through creating deterrence against corruption in the country.

Talking to National Accountability Bureau Chairman (NAB), Justice (r) Javed Iqbal at Parliament House, Wednesday, the Speaker opined that effective measures always help eliminate the menace of corruption from society.

Speaker said that the incumbent government believes

in the promotion of transparency and accountability in the governance system. He said that corruption was a major challenge faced by the nation. It was the collective responsibility of all segments of society to discourage corrupt practices and support the government's efforts to eradicate corruption from the country.

Chairman presented NAB Annual Report 2020 to National Assembly Speaker and briefed him about his organization's performance which had recovered Rs. 323.29 billion during 2020. He informed that NAB received 24,706 complaints and disposed-off 30,405

complaints including under-process complaints from the previous year. NAB processed 878 complaints verifications, besides conducting 369 inquiries, 175 investigations and filed 136 references before the Accountability Courts during the past year.

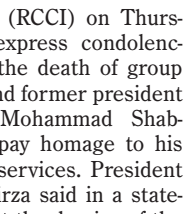
He apprised that the overall success ratio of prosecution was 66 percent during the year 2020. He apprised that reputed National and international organizations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, PILDAT and Mishaal Pakistan had appreciated the defrosts of NAB in eradication of cor-

ruption especially to aware people about the ill effects of corruption. Appreciating the performance of NAB, the Speaker said that the organization had done a commendable job by waging a war against corrupt elements and recovering Rs. 323.29 Billion during 2020. He lauded the efforts of the Chairman NAB for his personal indulgence for recovery of billions of hard earned money of affectees of housing societies and money laundering. He assured the Chairman of his complete support in strengthening the organization to weed out corruption from the society.

Condolence
meeting
for late
M. Shabbir

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A condolence meeting will be held at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) on Thursday to express condolences over the death of group leader and former president Sheikh Mohammad Shabbir and pay homage to his life and services. President Nasir Mirza said in a statement that the demise of the late Sheikh Shabbir was a great loss. His services to the Chamber will always be remembered.

Online
showcase
of arts
continues

ISLAMABAD: Despite the deadly COVID-19 contagion prevailing in the country, various cultural organizations including art galleries of the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi have continued their efforts to compile and share artistic pieces virtually observing social distancing to slow down the disease spread.

Executive Director National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage- Lok Virsa Talha Ali told APP that the pandemic forced many cultural institutions to adopt Information Technology based innovative solutions to reach their audience.

He said that during the first wave of COVID-19 many cultural programmes were postponed that put a huge economic blow on the artists. Talha Ali said it was difficult situation where virtual programmes had kept us connected with artists and their creative works.

He said that art had a significant role in uniting the society, provide comfort, inspire creativity and ease stress among masses that was prevailing in these troubling times.

He said Lok Virsa would continue to compile and share virtual arts and cultural experiences, such as online dance classes, live streamed concerts, creative activities for kids, and virtual gallery tours.

"Most of these opportunities are for free and public must avail them," he underlined.

The Theater Wallay official said the art world has been extremely hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last year and a half. The cinemas and theatres have been in darkness and concert halls silent due to lockdown that left many jobless and destitute. — APP

ADC visits
Wah hospital
for inspection

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Finance and Planning, Maleeha Jamal on Wednesday paid a visit to Wah General Hospital and inspected facilities being provided to the patients.

She interacted with the patients and directed the officials to provide the maximum facilities to the patients reaching the hospital. The ADC directed the Medical Superintendent of the Hospital to ensure the smooth functioning of the air conditioner and fans at the hospital keeping in view the scorching heat. Maleeha also checked the attendance register and medicine record at the hospital. She also took a round of the Hospital's emergency, operation theatre and OPD and directed the officials to ensure the implementation of Coronavirus SOPs and social distancing in the OPDs.

2 pc job
quota for
PWDs to be
allocated

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Human Rights has endeavored to ensure implementation of two percent job quota for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in government as well as private organizations.

Director General Ministry of Human Rights, Arashd while talking to APP on Wednesday a national policy for ensuring the proposed job quota for PWDs has been finalized which would be implemented in true letter and spirit.

He said PWDs have equal rights like other citizens of the country, adding that MOHR was striving hard provision of their rights without any discrimination. He further added that the ICT Rights for the Person with Disabilities Act 2020 has been passed and a DGSE app has also been launched for the welfare of PWDs and protection of their rights.

He further added that the national committee for implementation of CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) reconstituted and medical assessment board for registration and verification for PWDs had been done by the Ministry. He said under the ministry a helpline 1099 and portal were also facilitating vulnerable segments of society. — APP

ECP to make electoral process inclusive: CEC

He said that today's ceremony is proof that the ECP was working very hard to enhance the political empowerment of women

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner (CEC), Sikandar Sultan Raja on Wednesday said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) was committed to provide equal opportunities to every segment of the society and trying to make the electoral process more inclusive as per Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan. He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of the fourth phase of the joint campaign for women's National Identity Card (NIC) and

voters' registration of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) which was held here at ECP Secretariat. He said that today's ceremony is proof that the ECP was working very hard to enhance the political empowerment of women. He appreciated the role of NADRA and ECP's development partners, civil society and media for assisting the ECP in its efforts to increase female NIC and voter registration and to mitigate the gender gap in electoral rolls. Secretary ECP, Dr Akhter Nazir



said that following its strategic plan, the ECP was trying to lessen the gender gap in the electoral rolls. ADG Gender Affairs, Ms. Night Siddique in her briefing said that since the launch of the ECP-NADRA Joint campaign on female NIC and voter registration in 2017 and as a result of three phases of the said

campaign, female NIC and voter registration increased manifold. In comparison to the electoral rolls published in October 2020, the gender gap had further gone down from 12.41 million to 12.37 percent in the electoral rolls published in April 2021.

The fourth phase of the campaign was the continuation of ECP's efforts to mitigate the gender gap in electoral rolls, she added. Chairperson NADRA, Tariq Malik appreciated the efforts of the ECP for women NIC and voter registration and assured that NADRA would keep providing its assis-

tance to the ECP in this regard. He said that NADRA was targeting those 80 districts where the gender gap in NIC and voter lists was 10 percent or more. NADRA would soon be establishing 66 Registration Centers at the Tehsil level, moreover, NADRA had marked Friday as 'Women Registration Day', he added.

In the ceremony, CEC handed over NICs to three women who got registered for the very first time with NADRA. In the end, CEC also inspected the Mobile Registration Van (MRV) of NADRA in the premises of the ECP which had all female staff.

Refugee dilemma

WITH the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan now in freefall, Pakistan will be forced to make some difficult decisions going forward if it is to insulate itself from the fallout. One of those decisions is with regards to the refugee influx which seems inevitable based on current trends. Yesterday, it was announced that Pakistan is not in favour of opening its border to refugees, and will instead be seeking to emulate the Iranian model if the situation worsens in the future. Such an arrangement would involve the establishment of settlements along the border which would be subjected to strict control and monitoring, prohibiting the entry of refugees into the mainland.

In Iran's case, the model has worked quite well considering how there were around 800,000 Afghan refugees who were residing in villages set up by Tehran along the border areas with Afghanistan in the 1980's. Because of this arrangement, the refugees were prevented from settling in cities and towns. It is encouraging to see that Pakistan is thinking proactively about this issue and is even planning on sending a high-level team consisting of officials from the interior ministry, security establishment and other relevant departments to Iran to better understand the implementation of the model.

The issue of refugees is complicated and is indeed a humanitarian one. However, while acknowledging the humanitarian dimensions of this dilemma, there are several other factors that need to be considered. Senior government officials have rightly pointed out that Pakistan needs to take into account its economic and political situation and security concerns before taking any decision.

The refugee crisis is real and poses a serious burden not only in terms of hosting refugees, but also managing their constant cross-border movement. This dual burden will intensify significantly as the violence increases in Afghanistan. An influx of refugees will also place a significant strain on our economy because a younger educated generation of Afghans will flee towards Pakistan in search of stability and livelihood. This will result in a highly competitive environment when Pakistan is already struggling to deal with its youth cohort. All these factors illustrate that the humanitarian aspect cannot be viewed in isolation. There is no easy decision here that can please everyone.

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Looming drought

ILL the 1950s, Pakistan was a water-abundant country with the capacity to provide enough food to its people through adequate food resources grown along its agricultural belt. This has changed. According to the World Food Programme and the Borgen Project, in research carried out over the last three years, only three percent of Pakistan's population has access to clean water and 20 percent are food-deprived or lack sufficient food to sustain themselves.

So, how did Pakistan reach the situation. Partially the problem is a global one, with only three percent of the global population having access to fresh water – and much of this water stored in freezing glaciers which are unusable. Pakistan had a sufficient supply of water but the pollution of groundwater through agricultural waste, industrial effluents, and the similar pollution of water stored in lakes, streams and other freshwater supplies has led to a situation where fewer people have access to safe water to drink or for daily use.

Climate change has led to consistent droughts in Pakistan, with less rain experienced in the provinces of Sindh and Balochistan over the last 50 years, as compared to the past. This has brought successive droughts and the lack of food to these regions. In 2019, a lack of rain followed by floods created a shortage of food in Sindh and also in other parts of the country. The problem is aggravated by the fact that, while Pakistan produces enough food for its population, it exports much of these supplies leaving too little for its own population. Today it is ranked by the WWF as a water-stressed country, among one of the 10 countries in the world which suffer the worst water shortages and water supplies.

By 2025, it is estimated that it will move into the range of countries which are water-scarce. The impact of this is visible among the people, with poor distribution of water and food resources also clearly apparent. Twenty percent of people are malnourished, nearly 30 percent of children suffer stunting. We have to look after our people and provide them with the basics of life. And nothing after all can be more basic than food to eat, and water to drink.

The CPC's 100 years of human transformation

Munir Ahmed



We shall objectively analyze the elements behind the success of a country that has been burdened by over-population. A half of its total population was under the poverty-line just a decade back. The US think tank Statista mentions that 49.8 percent of the China population was below the poverty-line in 2000 and there is no one by 2020.[1] It simply seems like a miracle

CONGRATULATIONS to the Communist Party of China (CPC) for completing a century of progressive leadership for successive growth on July 1, 2021. The CPC emerged in very crucial days of Chinese history to liberate the natives from the socio-economic sufferings. The CPC slogan of social equality and economic parity well attracted the natives to fight a civil war against the Kuomintang – the Nationalist Party of China (NPC), and then the Japanese invasion during World War II. Before having complete control over China, the CPC has to fight once again the NPC. The CPC's role had become crucial after declaring China's independence on October 1, 1949 while the civil war was still on. The CPC took up a war-torn country to make it the second largest economy in the world in less than 70 years. China will beat the US once a fair ranking is done. The Chinese economy kept moving even last year despite the Covid-19 spread while many countries could not sustain the pressure.

We shall objectively analyze the elements behind the success of a country that has been burdened by over-population. A half of its total population was under the poverty-line just a decade back. The US think tank Statista mentions that 49.8 percent of the China population was below the poverty-line in 2000 and there is no one by 2020.[1] It simply seems like a miracle. But, China has shown that an astounding vision by the political party, a phenomenal leadership, a consistent pro-people political regime and its policies can make it happen in a short span of time. The CPC is commendable for providing all three to China.

'One party – One vision' has successfully transformed China from an undirected and idle mob to a globally techno-efficient nation and second largest economy on the map. We have seen China overshadow the "developed democratic countries" even on the diplomatic fronts and UN forums for affording capital and human resources

to promote peace in the regions suffering from conflicts. We cannot undermine China's role in voicing the needful right of peace and development for Palestine and Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K).

The brains in a political party can help the leadership develop and pursue an initiative of the century such as "One Belt – One Road" that has been renamed as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). As of January 2021, some 140 countries have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China.[2] It shows the world's trust on China's model of connectivity, infrastructure development and networking for economic growth. The BRI is a brainchild of President Xi Jinping who is blamed for "consolidated control over the party" – the CPC since he assumed power in 2012. President Xi's critics mention that he has created a path for his indefinite rule as China's legislative body ended the limit of presidential term under his "authoritative control".

It may be a bad practice in terms of present popularly defined democratic norms but his "authoritative control", if so, has delivered the best to China and its global positioning in eight years. His only one achievement is fairly sufficient to defend his "authoritative control" and that is getting a half of the population of his country out of poverty.

Back in Pakistan, the dictatorial president Ayub Khan's era is considered to be the best in terms of development and diplomacy. Even the three times prime minister, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif was also blamed for directing his cabinet and colleagues to find out ways to complete certain tasks in the given time period. Many believed that he had "control" over the party. Even today, he is blamed for running party decisions from the UK.

The CPC is blamed for "monopoly" in the Chinese politics since the Mao Zedong-led party defeated nationalist rivals and founded the People's Republic in 1949. Far less people know that

eight other political parties including Nationalists Party China (NPC) also exist in the country but their vote bank is negligible as compared to the ruling party. Only the CPC members are more than ninety million.[3]

In its centennial celebrations, the CPC also faces a raft of challenges. The utmost is the "economic war" with the US that has taken it very seriously. President Biden's launching of the Build Back Better World (B3W) at the G-7 summit recently shows the concerns and worries of the only superpower. It's too late for him to do so. The CPC's China has gone far ahead in the BRI initiative.

China has been blamed for environmental degradation and transboundary pollution by the developed industrial world – the world's top polluters including the US. China has remained firm on its global commitments under the Paris Agreement 2015 to combat the challenges of climate change while the US backed out during the Trump's administration. The CPC 90 million members are leading environmental campaigns within China. China being an all-weather friend has always supported Pakistan in the odd hours. Recent loans to sustain the IMF, and huge investments in Pakistan under the CPEC regime are a few in the long list of favours. We need to learn from the CPC that has stayed true to its original aspiration and mission of pursuing the wellbeing of the Chinese people and rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. And, the way it united the Chinese people and led them in an arduous and tireless struggle that brought about fundamental changes in the destiny and future of the Chinese people individually and as a nation.

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Prekarious Afghan situation

Zubair Ahmad



With the foreign troops withdrawal, violence and chaos is spurting. Pro-government nationalist movements have also raised weapons to fight along with government forces against Taliban. Whereas, Taliban are seizing key districts in Afghanistan as government forces flee. Their march through northern Afghanistan gained momentum overnight with the capture of several districts

US and Nato troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan is underway after a two decades of long war what many political commentators and experts call as 'an unwinnable war', that costed estimated lives of 241,000 people as a direct result of the war. In the wake of 9/11 attacks, US ventured into Afghanistan to extirpate al-Qaeda-mastermind of the September 11, 2001 attacks- and called it 'war on terror'. Of aforementioned deaths, 71,344 were innocent civilians. US itself had to invest dollars in trillions. Pakistan had to bear the burden of millions of immigrants who fled their country to escape war. After the Doha agreement, newly elected US President Joe Biden announced a complete withdrawal of US forces from Afghanistan. The exiting process is underway. But, due to the failure of the Afghan stakeholders, especially Taliban and Afghan government, to reach to a political power-sharing settlement, stability and peace in war-torn country is bleak post US exit. Taliban has always been reluctant to accept the Afghan government and called it a puppet of US. Whereas, Kabul is also not willing to compromise their power. Kabul is wooing the local warlords and anti-Taliban nationalists to help cope up with insurgents. This resulted a failure of all stakeholders to reach to a democratic power-sharing rapprochement.

With the foreign troops withdrawal, violence and chaos is spurting. Pro-government nationalist movements have also raised weapons to fight along with government forces against Taliban. Whereas, Taliban are seizing key districts in Afghanistan as government forces flee. Their march through northern Afghanistan gained momentum overnight with the capture of several districts from fleeing Afghan forces. After the Biden's announcement, Taliban's most significant gains have been in the northern half of the country, which is known as a traditional stronghold of the US-allied strongmen who helped defeat them in 2001. Afghan forces who earlier depended on US-Nato forces to fight against insurgents are now becoming weaker and fleeing and surrendering is what they have options left. According to some

reports, even the majority of the districts were left to Taliban without any fight.

Conflict and violence is looming across the country given such developments. Most shockingly, the fall of the Panjwai district in the southern province of Kandahar comes just two days after US and NATO forces vacated their main 'Bagram airbase' near Kabul, from where they led operations for 20 years against the Taliban and its al-Qaeda allies.

Taliban have captured the district police headquarters and governor's office building. Now questions arises is : how will the US protect its collaborators in Afghanistan? Thousands of Afghans who assisted the US are concerned for their safety as US forces prepare to withdraw. According to US perspective war is coming to an end, thereafter leaving those Afghans feeling more threatened by the prospect of Taliban attacks with exit approaches.

US has offered a Special Immigration Visa for which as many as 18,000 applicants with at least 50,000 family members have been waiting for their documents to be prepared. But approvals have been slow and a recent coronavirus outbreak at the US embassy in Kabul has delayed them even further. So, it remains to be seen that will they have a future in the US or will they continue to live under the threat of the Taliban.

As Taliban made huge advances across the country, Afghan President Ashraf Ghani begins to visit to US. There are fears that already-demoralized Afghan security forces will be swiftly overrun when the remaining American troops withdraw.

The Taliban has claimed to control more than 80 of the country's 421 districts and captured Afghanistan's main Tajikistan border crossing. President Ghani has appointed a new armed forces chief and defense minister in recent days, but experts say it is never going to help.

As far as political situation is concerned, insiders and officials paint a portrait of Ghani as increasingly friendless, out of touch and isolated in the presidential palace in the heart of the heavily bunkered Green Zone.

Ghani is pressing Taliban to accept a role in some sort of interim unity government until elections can be held. But the Taliban, emboldened by their battlefield gains, appears to have little interest in further negotiations and are intent on taking full control and restoring Afghanistan to an emirate ruled by religious elders on Islamic principles.

Given this situation and the scenes we are watching now resemble those witnessed after the USSR withdrawal and also the US withdrawal from Vietnam decades ago. This time around, a grim situation and real risk is imminently looming in Afghanistan with many experts indicating towards a full-blown civil war and chaos than ever before. And this, of course, will inevitably impact the entire region, including Pakistan. From security challenges to exodus of immigrants to rise of violence will be some fallouts in Pakistan if Afghan implodes again. Given this, Pakistan has closed off its borders with Afghanistan, making it clear it does not wish to be involved in further conflict and chaos. This is a great position adopted by Pakistan given the degree to which Pakistan has suffered as a result of its involvement in Afghanistan in the past, in support of US and in support of anti-USSR groups in the country.

The US has completely failed during its two decades' presence in Afghanistan and now since it is exiting, it has no clear strategy to make sure a stability in this country. Rather, US is leaving it in a more precarious situation leaving country on a brink of civil war. Though, US President Biden has spoken up offering some 'hovering' support from the air, he also gave a statement saying, the Afghans have to defend themselves on their own. This clearly smacks of US indifference towards the catastrophe and disaster looming Afghanistan post its complete withdrawal.

Given the fact that Afghanistan's implode will have repercussions more than ever before to the world entirely, this should be the point of concern for all engaged in Afghanistan and the world powers on priority bases to avoid civil war.

The writer is a staff member

Briefs

Rashid becomes Afghan captain

WEB DESK

KABUL: Leg-spinner Rashid Khan has been appointed as Afghanistan's captain for T20I format, the board announced on Wednesday. Taking to Twitter, Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) announced that Rashid will lead the Men's team in T20I with Najibullah Zadran being appointed his deputy. ACB's chairman Farhan Yousefzai approved the appointment on both posts. Rashid's first assignment as T20I captain will be the tour of Sri Lanka in July-August. He will also captain Afghanistan in this year's T20 World Cup, scheduled in UAE and Oman from October 17 to November 14. Afghanistan is placed in Group B in the event alongside England, India, South Africa and two other teams who will qualify from the Qualifiers.

Federer knocked out by Hubert

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Roger Federer's bid for a ninth Wimbledon title lay in tatters after he was stunned in straight sets by Hubert Hurkacz in the quarter-finals. The Swiss lost 6-3 7-6 (7-4) 6-0 to the 14th seeded Pole, who reached his first Grand Slam semi-final. It is the first time 20-time major champion Federer has lost a set to love at the All England Club. Hurkacz will play Matteo Berrettini or Felix Auger-Aliassime for a place in Sunday's final. "It's super special for me," said Hurkacz, only the second Polish man to reach the semi-finals at a Grand Slam. "Playing here and the special things [Federer] has done here, it's a dream come true." Hurkacz, who was six when Federer won his first title at SW19, is the first player to win a set to love against the Swiss since Rafael Nadal in the 2008 French Open final. Federer, at 39 years and 337 days, had been bidding to become the oldest man to reach the Wimbledon semi-finals in the Open era. But defeat marked his first straight-set loss at Wimbledon in 19 years.

PTI govt...

From Page 01 He said agricultural and industrial sectors had been revived due to the prudent policies of the present government and added both major sectors were adversely affected due to flawed policies of the previous regime. The minister said that the current accounts deficit had been brought down to zero and prices of the daily use items had also witnessed downward trends. He said that the latest good news for the people was the reduced prices of cars under new auto policy and the initiative had been taken keeping in view problems of middle and lower-middle classes. He pointed out that a special scheme was being launched for those who would purchase cars for the first time. Responding to questions of media persons, he said that Finance Minister Shaukat Fareen had proceeded abroad for medical checkup and he would be back on Monday. To a question about the Prime Minister's offer of consultations to the opposition for electoral reforms, he said the government had put forward 49 points and it was awaiting the response from the PPP and PML-N on the issue. He said that Prime Minister Imran Khan would address election rallies in Azad Kashmir as the chairman of Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf and added if chairman PTI, did not address public rallies, would the owners of media houses do the same.

Italy beat Spain on penalties in epic Euro 2020 semi-final

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: Italy qualified for the final of the European Championships after beating Spain in a dramatic penalty shoot out at Wembley after 120 minutes football had ended 1-1. Although Spain keeper Unai Simon saved the first Italian penalty taken by Manuel Locatelli, Dani Olmo fired over for the Spanish and Alvaro Morata saw his spot kick saved before Jorginho calmly slotted home to send the Italians into the final. It was harsh on the Spanish, who played arguably their best football of the tournament and should have won the game in 90 minutes. The only change made by Italy coach Roberto Mancini ahead of the game, was to bring Emerson in at left back for the injured Leonardo Spinazzola, while Luis Enrique brought Eric Garcia for Pau Torres in defense, while Dani Olmo and Mikel Oyarzabal replaced Alvaro Morata and Pablo Sarabia, who has a muscle injury. The Spain coach was clearly looking for greater mobility and a high line of pressure against an organized Italian defense and after an even opening five minutes, Spain took control by swamping Jorginho and Verratti with their midfield pressure. Oyarzabal wasted the first chance to open the scoring when he mis-controlled Pedri's pass when clean through on goal. Ferran Torres then shot wide and



Del Olmo saw a shot well saved by Gianluigi Donnarumma, while Italy had a chance only for Barella to be crowded out with Spain keeper Unai Simon out of his ground. Italy had controlled the ball in their earlier games and were clearly uncomfortable against Spain's pace and aggression. They failed to manage a single shot until Unai palmed away Emerson's effort in the 45th minute, while the Spanish will have

been disappointed at not working Donnarumma more despite their dominance. The second half started as the first ended with Di Lorenzo putting Olmo's cross out for a corner with Torres waiting to pounce, before Sergio Busquets fired just over after a pass from Oyarzabal. At the other end Unai got down well to save from Chiesa after a rare Italy break, before Oyarzabal's effort went straight at Don-

narumma from outside of the area. Chiesa put Italy ahead with a curling shot into the corner of the net in the 60th minute after Eric Garcia allowed him to cut inside and pick his spot. Luis Enrique reacted quickly with Alvaro Morata and Gerard Moreno quickly on the pitch, but things looked to be going Italy's way as they took the pace out of the game until the 80th minute when Morata collected the ball in midfield,

exchanged passes with Olmo and scored with a low finish. In extra time the impressive Olmo almost surprised everyone with a low free kick, with the ball ping around the area before bouncing out. Donnarumma then punched clear as Morata threatened to pounce. The second period of extra time saw little in the way of chances and the game went into the dramatic penalty shoot-out.

Kazakhstan eye participation in Karabakh reconstruction



DNA

BAKU: Baku and Nur-Sultan have discussed Kazakhstan's involvement in reconstruction of Azerbaijan's territories liberated from the Armenian occupation in last year's war. The possibility of Kazakh companies' participation in

reconstruction work was discussed during the meeting held between Economy Minister Mikayil Jabbarov and Kazakhstan's Ambassador Serzhan Abydkarimov on July 6. During the meeting, Jabbarov emphasized the high level of relations between the two countries, underlined the successful continuation of cooperation in

various economic areas. Jabbarov noted that a number of documents envisaged for the development of economic cooperation are being discussed between the parties and work is underway to expand mutual trade. Moreover, it was noted that the Azerbaijan Trade House opened in Kazakhstan in May. In addition, the parties

Messi thrilled as Copa America glory draws nearer

WEB DESK

BRASILIA: Lionel Messi said Tuesday that he is more "thrilled than ever" at the prospect of winning an elusive international trophy after helping Argentina beat Colombia on penalties to reach the Copa America final. Aston Villa goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez saved three spot-kicks in the shoot-out as the Albiceleste set up a clash with hosts Brazil in Saturday's decider at the Maracana stadium. "It was a tough game but we deserved it," Messi said in an interview with Argentine



television after the match. "At times it became difficult because of the way they defended. But we have [Emiliano Martinez] who is a phenomenon. We knew he was going to make those saves. We know what he is capable of and we trusted him."

Novak Djokovic beats Marton to reach Wimbledon semi

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: World No. 1 Novak Djokovic continued his serene progress through The Championships draw on Wednesday by recording the 100th grass-court win of his career (100-18) for a place in the Wimbledon semi-finals. The Serbian superstar, who is seeking to capture a 20th Grand Slam crown and draw level with all-time leaders Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, got off to a fast start against Marton Fucsovics of Hungary on Centre Court, but ultimately needed to work his way to a 6-3, 6-4, 6-4 victory over two hours and 17



minutes. "It was a solid performance and I started off really well, particularly in the first five games of the set," said Djokovic. "One break of serve in the second and third sets was enough today and I'd like to give credit to Marton for fighting so hard."

Djokovic has now won 32 of 35 matches this season, which includes securing the first two major trophies of the year at the Australian Open (d. Medvedev) and at Roland Garros (d. Tsitsipas). He also lifted the Belgrade Open crown (d. Molcan) prior to

the clay-court major in Paris. The 34-year-old will continue his quest to become the fifth man in the sport's history to win the first three Grand Slam of the year - after Jack Crawford (1933), Don Budge (1938), Lew Hoad (1956) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) - in his 10th Wimbledon semi-final on Friday. Djokovic, a five-time Wimbledon champion, will next challenge Canadian 10th seed Denis Shapovalov, who beat 25th seed Karen Khachanov of Russia 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4 on No. 1 Court. He leads 22-year-old Shapovalov 6-0 in their ATP Head2Head series, including a 7-5, 7-5 win at the ATP Cup in February.

Argentina sink Colombia to reach final

SPORTS DESK

BRASILIA: Emiliano Martinez saved three penalty attempts as Argentina progressed to the Copa America final with a 3-2 shootout victory over Colombia here on Tuesday. The Aston Villa goalkeeper guessed correctly to deny Davinson Sanchez, Yerry Mina and Edwin Cardona in a dramatic climax to their semifinal at Brasilia's Mane Garrincha stadium. Earlier, Lautaro Martinez combined with Lionel Messi to net his third goal of the tournament before Luis Diaz equalized from a tight angle just after the hour mark. The result sets up a tantalizing final between Argentina and Brazil and Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium on Saturday. It will be the first time that South American football's biggest rivals have met in the final of the continental tournament since 2007, when Brazil won 3-0 in the Venezuelan city of Maracai-bo. "It has been a hard road to get



here and now we have to enjoy it," Argentina manager Lionel Scaloni said at the post-match press conference. "The players have been focused on this for almost 60 days

and continue to push forward. "I believe we are deserving finalists. We are now going to face our eternal rival. The two strongest teams in South America will be up

against each other and we hope that people enjoy it." Argentina took the initiative from the outset in Brazil's capital, with Messi dribbling past three defend-

ers before chipping a pass to Martinez, whose header flew just wide. The pair's growing chemistry was on display again three minutes later and this time Martinez made Colombia pay, hammering a powerful finish into the bottom left corner after Messi turned smartly and spotted the Inter Milan striker alone 12 yards out. The goal spurred Colombia into action but Juan Cuadrado's fierce shot was saved by Martinez before Wilmar Barrios and Yerry Mina were denied by the woodwork. Colombia continued to foray forward early in the second half and they were back on level terms when Diaz made a driving run into the box before somehow finding the target from the byline while off balance. Martinez missed the chance to put Argentina ahead when he hesitated and had his shot blocked by Mina after fine work by Di Maria. Messi then saw his shot rebound off the post after another Di Maria pass as the game went to penalties.

N. America hit by warmest June on record

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: North America witnessed its hottest June on record battered by a deadly heatwave searing parts of the region, according to the European Union's climate monitoring service. The EU said on Wednesday that its findings illustrate the effects of global warming. Record-breaking heat scorched from the southwest to the northwest of the United States and into Canada, where the all-time record of daily temperature was broken three days in a row in British Columbia. The region was 1.2 degrees Celsius (2.2 degrees Fahrenheit) above the 1991-2020 average in June, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S). "These heatwaves are not happening in a vacuum. They are happening in a global climate environment that is warming and which makes them more likely to occur," said C3S climate scientist Julien Nicolas. Globally, June 2021 joins the same month in 2018 as the fourth warmest June. C3S produces monthly reports on air temperature, sea ice and the water cycle.

Malaysia reports 7,097 new cases

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's Health Ministry reported 7,097 new confirmed cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, bringing the total tally to 799,790. Health Ministry Director-General Noor Hisham Abdullah said in a press statement that 26 of the new cases are imported and 7,071 are locally transmitted. An additional 91 deaths from COVID-19 were recorded in the Southeast Asian country, bringing the overall death toll to 5,768. An additional 4,863 recovered patients were discharged from hospitals in the country, bringing the total number of recoveries from the pandemic to 719,678 or 90 percent of all cases. Currently of the 74,344 active cases, 948 are being held in intensive care and 441 of them are in need of assisted breathing, showed the official data. - APP

OIC SG underscores...

From Page 01 between the OIC Secretary General and the Indian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Spokesperson stated: The meeting between the OIC Secretary General and the Ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia on 5 July 2021 at the OIC's General Secretariat in Jeddah took place in the context of the mandate afforded by Resolution 10/47-Pol of the 47th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. The Secretary General underscored the OIC's principled position on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute during the meeting. The OIC CFM in Niamey in November 2020 categorically rejected India's unilateral actions since 5 August 2019. It also demanded that India rescind its illegal actions and respect the inalienable right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination, as promised by numerous UNSC resolutions. The OIC resolutions, inter alia, call on the Secretary General to dispatch a Fact-Finding Mission to IOJK to ascertain the situation on ground and report its findings to the next CFM. The CFM resolutions also call on the Secretary General to take up the matter with the Indian authorities. India has consistently ignored OIC resolutions and evaded its responsibility of protecting the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people. This is the first time that the principled position of the 57 OIC members states has been duly conveyed to India. India should review its policies in IOJK and fully implement UNSC and OIC Resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The Jammu and Kashmir dispute has been amongst the longest standing issues on the OIC's agenda. Indian illegal and unilateral actions in IOJK and the continued violation of human rights of the Kashmiri people have been a top priority of the OIC. Pakistan appreciates OIC's consistent and longstanding support for the Kashmir cause and legitimate rights of the people of IOJK.

Briefs

Myanmar junta committing 'crimes'

GENEVA: Myanmar's military has carried out crimes against humanity since seizing power in February, a top UN rights expert said Wednesday, urging the international community to do more to halt the abuses. Speaking before the UN Human Rights Council, special rapporteur on the rights situation in Myanmar, Thomas Andrews, decried the "widespread, systematic attacks against the people" since the coup five months ago. Myanmar has experienced mass protests and a brutal military response since the February 1 coup which ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi. "The junta's military forces have murdered approximately 900 people, forcibly displaced hundreds of thousands, tortured many, including torturing people in custody to death, disappeared untold numbers; and arbitrarily detained nearly 6,000." Some of the acts, he said, "amount to crimes against humanity", lamenting the fact that more had not been done to rein in the violations. "The international community is failing the people of Myanmar," he said. Andrews said the military had cut off food, water and medicine to those displaced by its attacks on villages. It had "taken family members hostage when its forces are unable to find those with outstanding arrest warrants," recently arresting a four-year-old child, he added. - APP

KSA supports Egypt, Sudan 'water rights'

AGENCIES

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has thrown its weight behind Egypt and Sudan in their bitter dispute with Ethiopia over a massive hydropower dam built by the latter on the Blue Nile, the Nile River's main tributary. The Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) is the source of an almost decade-long diplomatic standoff between Ethiopia and downstream nations Egypt and Sudan. Ethiopia says the project is essential to its development, but the governments in Cairo and Khartoum fear it could restrict their citizens' water access. On Tuesday, a day after Ethiopia began filling the dam's reservoir, Saudi Arabia's state news agency SPA said the kingdom supported Egypt and Sudan in "preserving their legitimate water rights", as well as their efforts "to contain this crisis and their demands to solve it in accordance with the rules of international law". "The kingdom calls on the international community to intensify efforts to find a clear mechanism to start negotiations between the three countries to get out of this crisis," it said. It came as reports said Tunisia had submitted a draft resolution to the UN Security Council, calling on Ethiopia to cease filling the GERD's reservoir. The 15-member body is likely to discuss the dispute on Thursday.

Qatar to provide aid for Lebanese troops

AGENCIES

DOHA: Qatar has said it will provide the Lebanese armed forces with 70 tonnes of food a month as Lebanon seeks assistance in the face of its worst economic and political crisis in decades. Lebanon's army chief Joseph Aoun had appealed to world powers last month, during a meeting organised by France, for assistance for soldiers, whose wages have plunged in value as the Lebanese pound has crashed and inflation has soared. Qatar's donation was announced on Tuesday during a visit to Beirut by Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. "The support comes within the framework of the State of Qatar's constant endeavors to help resolve the political crisis in Lebanon, and its firm commitment to support the Republic of Lebanon and stand by the brotherly Lebanese people," Qatar's state news agency QNA reported.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan set up economic co-op chamber

Ambassador Bilal Hayee noted that the motivation behind the establishment of this Chamber came from the mutual vision and guidance of the leadership to forge a strong economic partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan

DNA

BAKU: Pakistan's Ambassador in Baku Bilal Hayee on Wednesday joined the senior officials of the Azerbaijani government and corporate leaders for the inauguration of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Economic Cooperation Chamber (PAKAZCHAM) at Hilton Baku Hotel. The ceremony commenced with the opening remarks by the Chairman of the Board of PAKAZCHAM AzerAkbarov and a presentation by the President of the Chamber Khurram Bhatti. Khurram Bhatti shared the comprehensive profile of existing Pakistan Azerbaijan economic ties and highlighted the huge potential for further enhancing the bilateral cooperation particularly in areas such as agriculture, industry, IT, and tourism. Khurram Bhatti explained that the Chamber would provide a permanent platform to the business entities in Pakistan and Azerbaijan for mutually beneficial commercial interactions and expanding the bilateral trade and investment regime. The Deputy Minister of Economy ElnurAliyev, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs ElnurMammadov as well as representative



of Azerbaijan Export and Investment Promotion Foundation (AZ-PROMO) also made remarks during the event and reiterated the commitment of the Azerbaijani leadership to deepen economic partnership with Pakistan. They lauded Pakistan's consistent support to Azerbaijan during its legitimate campaign to liberate the occupied territories. Inviting the Pakistani investors and businessmen to come to Azerbaijan, the Azerbaijani officials conveyed their interest of having a Preferential Trade

Agreement with Pakistan in order to boost the bilateral trade. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Bilal Hayee noted that the motivation behind the establishment of this Chamber came from the mutual vision and guidance of the leadership to forge a strong economic partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. Ambassador Bilal Hayee hoped that the Chamber would play an active role in bringing the business communities on both sides closer for strengthening economic relations between

the two brotherly countries. The ambassador highlighted the key areas for potential engagement including energy, agricultural products, surgical instruments, and pharmaceutical products. The tourism and Information Technology sectors also offered immense opportunities to both sides. Ambassador Bilal Hayee encouraged the business entities in Pakistan and Azerbaijan to become members of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Economic Cooperation Chamber to make it an effective and robust organization for the

mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. The event was a live webcast for business representatives in Pakistan. The PAKAZCHAM is a not-for-profit legal entity registered with the Ministry of Justice of Azerbaijan. Founders of the Chamber include some prominent Pakistani as well as Azerbaijani nationals. The Chamber will be based in Baku with a permanent office and staff. After the inauguration, membership of the Chamber has been opened to corporate and business entities of Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

China-Pakistan medical Corridor getting importance

DNA

BEIJING: "Against the backdrop of COVID-19 sweeping the world, the importance and significance of the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor has become increasingly prominent," a leader in charge of foreign affairs, Chinese Medical Association (CMA), said in an exclusive interview with Gwadar Pro. The Pakistani Medical Association (PMA) and CMA have jointly initiated an important mechanism, China-Pakistan Medical Corridor, to deepen bilateral medical cooperation and improve the health level of the Pakistani and Chinese people. Founded in 1915, CMA is a national, academic and non-profit social organization formed by Chinese medical practitioners. After a 100-year development, CMA now has nearly 700,000 members, 89 spe-

cialized branches and 478 professional groups. It has also participated in 42 international and regional medical organizations. The spokesman of CMA believed that because of COVID-19 pandemic, it's time to speak out for deeper medical cooperation between the two countries. "China-Pakistan friendship is unique around the world and throughout history. CPEC is an important approach for the two countries to achieve common development. The planning and layout of CPEC have covered all regions of Pakistan, so as to benefit all the people of Pakistan," he added. CMA and PMA are the organizers, coordinators and builders of the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor. In January 2016, the 1st China-Pakistan Medical Conference was held in Karachi in the presence of former president, Mam-

noonHussain. 32 experts and nearly 2,000 representatives from 14 branches of the CMA attended the meeting, which was a great success and a good start for the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor. Since the mechanism was launched, a number of events have been held to improve bilateral medical field covering the fields of obstetrics and gynecology, CPEC is an important approach for the two countries to achieve common development. The planning and layout of CPEC have covered all regions of Pakistan, so as to benefit all the people of Pakistan," he added. CMA and PMA are the organizers, coordinators and builders of the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor. In January 2016, the 1st China-Pakistan Medical Conference was held in Karachi in the presence of former president, Mam-

noonHussain. 32 experts and nearly 2,000 representatives from 14 branches of the CMA attended the meeting, which was a great success and a good start for the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor. Since the mechanism was launched, a number of events have been held to improve bilateral medical field covering the fields of obstetrics and gynecology, CPEC is an important approach for the two countries to achieve common development. The planning and layout of CPEC have covered all regions of Pakistan, so as to benefit all the people of Pakistan," he added. CMA and PMA are the organizers, coordinators and builders of the China-Pakistan Medical Corridor. In January 2016, the 1st China-Pakistan Medical Conference was held in Karachi in the presence of former president, Mam-

Peace in Afghanistan guarantees stability for all of Central Asia

TASHKENT: on the initiative of the United Nations Center for Preventive Diplomacy, virtual negotiations were held between the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. The meeting noted the importance of consolidating regional efforts to peacefully resolve the Afghan crisis, restore the country's economy, and respect the principle of the leading role of the Afghan people in the development of the political process in the country. The attention was focused on the importance of joint counteraction to the threats of international terrorism, the development by the countries of Central Asia of effective steps in this direction. The sides expressed their support for the further development and expansion of political, economic, cultural and humanitarian ties between Afghanistan and Central Asia. In this context, the broad involvement of Afghanistan in regional integration processes will contribute to the early establishment of a stable and long-term peace in the country. The key importance of the implementation on the territory of Afghanistan, with the assistance of the countries of the region, of various infrastructure projects in the energy, transport and communication spheres was stated. Separately, the importance of the upcoming this month in Tashkent International Conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness. Challenges and Opportunities". A thorough exchange of views also took place on the priority areas for providing Afghanistan with all possible assistance, including humanitarian assistance during a pandemic. - DNA

Rockets fired at airbase housing US troops in Iraq

AGENCIES

BAGHDAD: At least 14 rockets have hit an airbase in western Iraq that is housing US and other international forces, slightly wounding at least two people, according to the United States-led military coalition in the country. US Army Colonel Wayne Marotto, spokesman for the international operation, said in a Twitter post on Wednesday the rockets had landed on Ain al-Asad base in Anbar province and its perimeter. "Two personnel sustained minor injuries. Damage still being assessed," he said in a later Twitter post, updating an initial statement of

three minor injuries. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Wednesday's attack. The US accuses Iranian-backed militia groups of launching regular rocket attacks against its troops in Iraq. Some 2,500 US soldiers are deployed in Iraq as part of an international coalition to fight the ISIL (ISIS) armed group. They have been targeted almost 50 times this year. The latest incident came two days after at least three rockets landed on Ain al-Asad, without causing casualties. Iraqi military sources quoted by Reuters news agency said a rocket launcher fixed on the back of a mini-truck was used in Wednesday's attack and was found on nearby farmland.



VIENNA: Pakistan ambassador to Austria Aftab Ahmad Khokhar hosted Amb Brigitta Blaha, President, Austria Pakistan Society and its members at Pakistan House. The Embassy of Pakistan and the Society are partners in deepening and broadening relationship between the people and Governments of two countries in a diverse range of areas. - DNA

Uzbek President meets with President of UNGA

Volkan Bozkir, especially noted the growing authority of Uzbekistan in the international arena, primarily at the UN platform, as well as the wide support of the international community for the global and regional initiatives of the leader of our country

DNA

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan ShavkatMirziyoyev received the Chairman of the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly VolkanBozkir, who arrived in our country on a visit. An exchange of views took place on topical issues of the international and regional agenda, prospects for expanding multifaceted cooperation between Uzbekistan and the UN and its specialized agencies were discussed. The head of our state noted with satisfaction the high level of interaction between the country and the institutions and structures of the Organization in such priority areas as achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring global and regional security, countering new challenges and threats of our time, including overcoming the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. Uzbekistan, as a member of the UN Hu-



man Rights Council, actively promotes important initiatives and participates in the implementation of the global agenda in this area. In addition, in recent years, on the initiative of the Uzbek side, a number of special resolutions of the General As-

sembly have been developed and adopted on such key issues as strengthening cooperation in Central Asia, sustainable development and support of tourism in the region, education and religious tolerance, creating a zone of environmental innova-

Baku reports fire on border with Armenia

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Ministry of Emergency Situations on July 7 reported fire on the Gazakh direction of the border with Armenia. It was revealed that the fire started in Armenia and spread to Azerbaijani territory, the ministry said, adding that relevant units of the ministry were immediately involved in extinguishing the fire. The fire on the territory of the Gazakh district's Aslanbayli and Gaymagly villages was localized and extinguished by the morning of July 7, the ministry said. The fire has caused the burning of dry grass and bushes on an area of about 180 hectares. On the same day, fire broke out in Gazakh'sFarahli village bordering Armenia, causing the burning of five hectares of dry grass and shrubs. The fire was localized and extinguished by the ministry's fire brigades.

Presidential grant launched in Uzbekistan for youth

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: A Presidential Resolution "On measures to further support talented youth who entered the higher educational institutions of the Republic" was adopted. According to the resolution, from the 2021/2022 academic year, a grant from the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was introduced for 200 young people who scored the highest scores in entrance exams (test tests, professional (creative) exam, written exam) in full-time undergraduate studies at a state university. The distribution of the quota for the Presidential grant by field of education is approved annually by the state commission for admission to educational institutions. The last applicant in the Presidential Grant quota for a specific field of education and all citizens who score the same will be eligible for the Presidential Grant. Points awarded to the points of applicants in the preferential category in the form of additional points for admission to higher educational institutions are not taken into account when determining candidates for the Presidential Grant. Applicants for the Presidential Grant are accepted on the basis of a government grant. The winners of the Presidential Grant will be determined on a competitive basis from among the applicants for this grant, who in the first year studied all subjects with excellent marks, achieved success in the spiritual, educational and research spheres. The winning students are awarded a Presidential State Scholarship based on the results of the competition. At the same time, the stipend established for the President's grant is paid monthly from the beginning of the second-year academic year. In this regard, the scholarship awarded on general terms is not paid.

MSF halts work in parts of Tigray

ADDIS ABABA: Medical charity Doctors Without Borders said Wednesday it is halting work in some parts of Ethiopia's war-torn Tigray region after the "brutal murder" of three of its staff last month. "MSF announces the suspension of its activities in Abi Adi, Adigrat and Axum, in central and eastern Tigray. MSF teams in other areas of Tigray will continue cautiously to provide assistance to people in urgent need," the group, known by its French acronym MSF, said in a statement. It also called for an "immediate investigation" into the killings. At least 12 aid workers have been killed in Tigray since fighting broke out last November between the Ethiopian military and forces loyal to the region's former ruling party, the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). MSF announced on June 25 that one Spanish and two Ethiopian employees had been killed, although details of the attack including who was responsible remain unknown. MSF named the Spanish victim as 35-year-old aid coordinator Maria Hernandez from Madrid. - APP

Briefs

'China glad to see new progress in Gwadar Port'

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Expressing happiness over the new progress made in the development of Gwadar, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Zhao Lijian has said that with concerted efforts, the Gwadar Port will achieve further progress, become a regional trading hub and industrial cooperation base and play a greater role in promoting regional development and prosperity.

"We are pleased to see the new progress made in Gwadar Port development," he said during his regular briefing in response to a question about Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Gwadar Port in which he inaugurated several development projects to promote economic activities.

"While I was posted in Pakistan, I visited Gwadar Port six times, and got quite attached to the project. It is a business cooperation project between China and Pakistan based on equality and mutual benefit," he added.

The spokesperson said that with the joint efforts made by both sides, the operational capability of the port area has fully resumed. Businesses and investment are coming into the free zone, and international transit trade continues to expand.

Reduced car prices to be implemented in two days

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Industries Khuro Bakhtiar said on Wednesday that new reduced car prices would be implemented in a few days to reflect the tax and duty cuts on automobiles in the budget for fiscal year 2022.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad with Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry on aspects of the new auto policy, the federal minister named several cars from different categories and the respective price reduction they would see.

"Implementation of new prices for all these cars will be done in a day or two," he said, adding that a notification in this regard would be issued soon. He said this would cause a sudden increase in demand in the automobile sector as well as an increase in car production. "I also want to deliver the good news that as we increase car production then around 300,000 new jobs will be provided in this [automobile] sector this year."

Government employees to get salary in advance

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Following the directions of Prime Minister Imran Khan, the finance ministry has ordered to release the salaries to the government employees before Eid ul Adha, citing well-informed sources said on Wednesday.

It has been learnt that the finance ministry has become active in the disbursement of salaries to the government employees before Eid ul Adha. The sources have claimed that the salaries will be disbursed latest by July 16. In this context, special directives have been given to the accountant general of Pakistan (AGP), while notification regarding early disbursement of salaries will be issued soon, said sources. On Tuesday, the Sindh government had also ordered disbursement of salaries and pensions for the current month on July 16.

In a notification issued by the provincial finance ministry, the concerned departments and authorities had been asked to ensure disbursement of salaries and pensions by July 16. Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has predicted that there will be no chance of sighting the new moon of Zilhaj 1442 AH on the evening of July 10 i.e. 29th of Ziqad (Saturday).

Chingiz Aitmatov's stories book launched in Pakistan

Ambassador Erik further said, he was glad to note that Kyrgyzstan enjoys excellent bilateral relations with Pakistan since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: A Book Launching Ceremony of Chingiz Aitmatov's selected stories "Jamila", "Farewell, Gyulsary" and "Spotted dog running by the edge of the sea" translated and published into Urdu by the Academy of Literature of Pakistan, at the initiative of the Pakistan in Islamabad. Erik Beishembiev, Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic in his speech noted that the Book Launching Ceremony of Chingiz Aitmatov's selected stories took place in the year of the 30th Anniversary of the Independence of the Kyrgyz Republic.

He spoke about the main stages of development of the Kyrgyz statehood, informed about the life path and rich literary heritage of Chingiz Aitmatov, whose works were translated into 176 languages. Embassy of the Kyrgyz Republic showed a documentary film about Chingiz Aitmatov and also organized a Photo Exhibition and a performance on a Kyrgyz song. The event was attended by writers, scientists, representatives of the diplomatic corps and the media.

Ambassador Erik further said, he was glad to note that Kyrgyzstan enjoys excellent bilateral relations with Pakistan since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992. During last 30 years our countries exchanged presidential visits twice, Kyrgyz Prime Ministers visited Pakistan twice, Pakistani Prime Ministers came to Kyrgyzstan four times, Speakers of the Kyrgyz parliament visited Pakistan twice and Ministers of Foreign Affairs of our countries exchanged visits.

In June 2019, the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan met his Kyrgyz counterpart on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in our capital Bishkek. During conversation, they reviewed bilateral relations and agreed to hold Joint Ministerial Commission and Bilateral Political Consultations, to comprehensively upgrade mutual cooperation in diverse fields and strengthen the land and air connectivity between the two countries, to enhance people-to-people contacts and boost tourism cooperation through friendly visa regimes. Prime Minister Imran Khan invited Kyrgyz President to visit Pakistan.

Cooperation in the field of education is developing actively. About 7,000 Pakistani students are studying in Kyrgyzstan mostly in medical universities. In February this year, Kyrgyz Minister of education and science A. Beishenaliev visited. Talking about trade the ambassador said, the existing trade volume between Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan is not up to the actual potential that exists and both countries should work towards increasing it. In order to promote trade and economic relations Intergovernmental Kyrgyz-Pakistani commission was established in 1994, which held its third meeting on 11-12 January 2017 in Islamabad. Now we are expecting the Pakistani delegation to come to my country for the next meeting of the commission.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic, Chairman Pakistan Academy of Letters, Iftikhar Arif and others on the occasion of book launching at PAL. - DNA



Haitian president assassinated at home

AGENCIES

PORT-AU-PRINCE: Haitian President Jovenel Moise was shot dead by unidentified attackers in his private residence overnight in a "barbaric act", the government said on Wednesday, stirring fears of escalating turmoil in the impoverished Caribbean nation. The assassination, which drew condemnation from Washington and neighboring Latin American countries, coincided with a spate of gang violence in Port-au-Prince in recent months fueled by a growing humanitarian crisis and political unrest.

The disorder has turned many districts of the capital into no-go zones. Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph said in televised remarks after chairing a cabinet meeting that the government had declared a state of emergency amid the confusion over who would take over the reins of the country. "My compatriots, remain calm because the situation is under control," he said. The 53-year-old president's wife, Martine Moise, was also shot in the attack at around 1 a.m. local time (0500 GMT) at the couple's home in the hills above Port-au-Prince, Joseph said in a statement. She was receiving medical treatment. "A group of unidentified individuals, some of them speaking Spanish, attacked the private residence of the president of the republic and thus fatally wounded the head of state," he said. Joseph said the police and army had the security situation under control. The streets of the usually bustling capital of 1 million people were quiet and empty on Wednesday morning after the attack and intermittent gunfire overnight. "All measures are being taken to guarantee the continuity of the state and to protect the nation," Joseph said.



Bilawal slams PML-N's politics

DNA

POONCH: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Wednesday slammed PML-N and said the people who earlier believed in the politics of "do or die" have now shifted to the politics of "begging". Bilawal, addressing an election rally in Azad Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch area, claimed his political opponents say that if they have to "beg" to become the prime minister, they will do it.

The PPP chairman said if the Opposition decides to move a no-confidence motion against Prime Minister Imran Khan or Chief Minister Punjab Usman Buzdar, his party would support them. "But we will not become a part of a political alliance to eat halwa or nihari in the future," he said.

Bilawal said jiyalas would head towards Bani Gala - PM Imran Khan's residence - after achieving success in the upcoming Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections.

Korea keen to sign FTA with Pakistan: Envoy

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Korea H.E Suh Sangpyo has expressed his desire to sign a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with Pakistan, saying that a FTA is essential for the promotion of bilateral trade, so that the business community of both the countries can take advantage of the opportunities available in each other's countries and promote mutual trade and investment.

He made the remarks during a meeting with Sohail Nisar, Chairman, Pakistan-Korea Business Council FPCCI, in Islamabad to discuss trade relations and finding new trade routes.

Korean Ambassador further said that for a FTA, it was necessary for the Pakistani business community to request its government to continue talks with the Korean government in this

regard, so that the Korean embassy can play its role. "The business community of the two countries should show interest in the joint venture and make joint efforts to boost bilateral trade with Pakistan in various sectors of the economy", the Ambassador urged.

Korean Ambassador also suggested business-to-business meetings, exchange of high-level trade delegations and bilateral exhibitions, and was assured by the Korean embassy of his full support.

Sohail Nisar, Chairman, Pakistan-Korea Business Council FPCCI, briefed the Ambassador in detail about various areas related to bilateral trade in Pakistan and said that Pakistan is an attractive country in terms of trade and investment, which provides excellent and profitable business opportunities to foreign investors and traders. Therefore, Korean busi-

nessmen and investors must take advantage of these opportunities. "Business community of the two countries should increase interaction with each other and explore what items can be traded for increasing the bilateral trade between Pakistan and Korea, which will be beneficial and economic prosperity for both countries", he added.

Sohail endorsed the Korean Ambassador's proposals for B-to-B meetings, exhibitions and exchange of trade delegations, saying that their implementation would definitely increase the trade volume between Pakistan and Korea, and will boost exports also. Pakistan can also benefit from expertise in technology.

He also invited the Korean Ambassador to visit the FPCCI, which he accepted and assured that he would visit the FPCCI Karachi head office soon.

Trump says he is suing tech giants

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: Former U.S. President Donald Trump on Wednesday said he was filing lawsuits against Twitter Inc (TWTR.N), Facebook Inc (FB.O), and Alphabet Inc's Google (GOOGL.O), as well as their chief executives, alleging they silence conservative viewpoints.

Trump said he filed the lawsuits in federal court in Florida. He said he would seek class action status in the suits, which would seek restitution and punitive damages. He did not specify who the other members of the class were.

Trump lost his social media megaphone earlier this year after repeatedly falsely claiming that his election defeat was the result of widespread fraud - an assertion that was rejected by multiple courts, state election officials and members of his own administration. Hundreds of his supporters launched a deadly assault on the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6 after Trump repeated those false claims in a fiery speech near the White House.

KSA approves general emergency plan for Hajj

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia's interior minister has approved the general emergency plan for this year's Hajj. Prince Abdul Aziz bin Saud bin Naif, who is also the chairman of the Supreme Hajj Committee, signed off the plan for the annual pilgrimage, which for the second year has been limited to residents of the Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia has had to put in place precautionary measures to limit the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, limiting the event to 60,000 pilgrims this year. That number would have been above 2 million before the pandemic.

The Hajj operation is being implemented by a number of government agencies. Lt. Gen. Sulaiman bin Abdullah Al-Amro, director general of the Civil Defense, said that the authority had completed its preparations for the Hajj season, in line with the general emergency plan, Arab News reported.

The plan "was prepared to achieve the directives of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to provide the highest levels of security and safety for pilgrims, and is being implemented with their follow-up and support in Makkah, Madinah and the holy sites," Lt. Gen. Al-Amro said. He added that inspection tours have been intensified in all facilities and sites that have been prepared for the pilgrims' accommodations, and included all preventive and executive measures and providing the necessary services to maintain public safety. - APP

Ashrafi ask public to cooperate with govt

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative of the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony Maulana Tahir Ashrafi on Wednesday asked public to cooperate with the government in efforts against profiteering and lodge complaints about exorbitant prices at 'complaint centres' at district levels.

Elements involved in such crimes should be identified and punished according to relevant laws aimed at discouraging such acts, he said this while speaking to a private news channel.

He said that the profiteers were the culprits of society as well as of the law, adding, that the government under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was taking all possible measures to provide relief to the people.

He asked the representatives of the city governments, deputy commissioners, DIGs, of police and ACs not only to register complaints but also make sincere efforts for their permanent solution.

Maulana Ashrafi asked the people to file complaints against the shopkeepers who were involved in the profiteering and hoarding.

Pakistanis in UAE contributing significantly

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education, Professional Training and National Heritage Shafiqat Mahmood has said that Pakistanis in United Arab Emirates are contributing significantly to the progress of both countries.

Talking to Ambassador of United Arab Emirates to Pakistan Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday, he said UAE is the home to the second largest Pakistani community abroad.

They discussed various aspects of bilateral relations and pledged to further cement them. Both the dignitaries discussed ways to strengthen cooperation in the realm of education, culture and skill development.

Hamad Obaid Alzaabi appreciated the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Shafiqat Mahmood for the development and betterment of the education sector in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of United Arab Emirates (UAE) calls on federal minister for education, Shafiqat Mahmood. - DNA