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Briefs

Forces are leaving, not US: Zalmay

DNA

TASHKENT: The US and NATO forces are leaving Afghanistan but the US is not leaving the country and will remain engaged while supporting the peace process, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Zalmay Khalilzad said on Friday. "Forces are leaving but the US is not leaving Afghanistan. America will remain engaged. It will support the peace process and security forces of Afghanistan until peace is achieved," Khalilzad said answering queries at a press conference here. Khalilzad said a lot has been achieved over in the last 20 years. "First of all, Afghanistan itself is a very changed place as compared to the past years. Institutions that did not exist earlier exist in the country whether it is institutions of forces, politics, civil society and free press," he said.

Govt working on targeted subsidies

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Friday said the government was working on targeted subsidies to provide maximum relief to the downtrodden segments of society. The minister, in a tweet, said the government had given around Rs 30 billion subsidy through the Utility Stores Corporation (USC) from January 2020 to June 2021 to reduce the burden of its prices of essential items on the low income group people. The basic consumer items like wheat, flour, sugar and ghee were available at 15-18 per cent lower than the market rate at more than 4,900 USC outlets across the country, he added. Farrukh said the National Radio and Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) had been tasked to digitize some 4,000 Utility Stores to ensure provision of subsidized items to the people in a transparent manner.

Holiday Notice

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

- Editor

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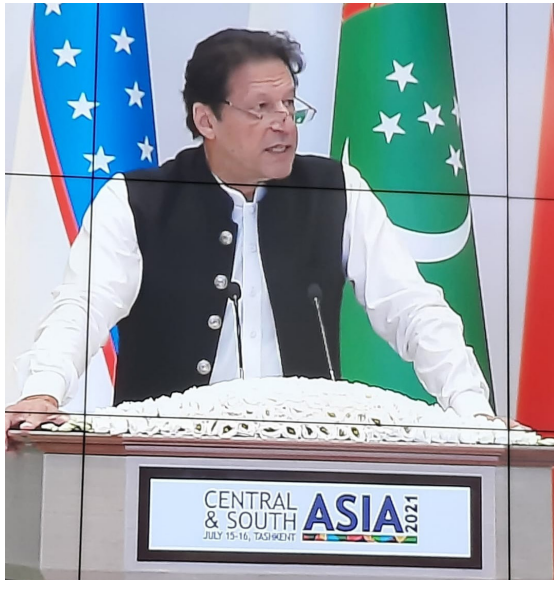
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Pakistan genuinely wants peace in Afghanistan: PM

Says Afghanistan is the natural land bridge between Central Asia and South Asia, and peace in Afghanistan is the most critical factor for regional connectivity; no country has tried harder to get Taliban on dialogue table than Pakistan

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI IN TASHKENT

TASHKENT: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said the regional peace and stability is of paramount importance for enhanced trade and economic cooperation in the region. He was addressing the International Conference on "South Asia-Central Asia Regional Connectivity-Challenges and Opportunities" in Tashkent on Friday. The Prime Minister said the Afghan situation and unresolved disputes are the key challenges to peace and stability in the region. He said Afghanistan is the natural land bridge between Central Asia and South Asia, and peace in Afghanistan is the most critical factor for regional connectivity. Imran Khan said Pakistan's foremost priority is the stability in Afghanistan as it directly affects us. He said Pakistan will continue to support all initiatives for peace and reconciliation in Afghanistan. He said we encourage all the neighbours and international stakeholders for their positive roles for a political settlement in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister expressed disappointment over the allegations against Pakistan from the Afghan side. He said no country has tried harder to get Taliban on dialogue table than Pakistan. He said we have made every effort to get the Taliban on dialogue table and have peaceful settlement. He said to blame Pakistan for what is happening in Afghanistan is extremely unfair. The Prime Minister categorically stated that Pakistan is a partner in peace. He said Pakistan has suffered seventy thousand casualties and a huge economic loss due to the unrest in Afghanistan. He said three million Afghan refugees have been living in Pakistan for decades. He said we do not have capacity and economic strength to get more inflow of Afghan refugees.



TASHKENT: Prime Minister Imran Khan speaking at the Central Asia and South Asia conference held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. - DNA



TASHKENT: Uzbek President, Shavkat Mirziyoyev receiving Prime Minister Imran Khan on reaching International Congress Centre of the Tashkent. - DNA

Afghan VP allegations ridiculous: Qureshi

A.M.BHATTI

TASHKENT: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has termed the allegations of the Afghan Vice President as ridiculous. He was talking to Afghan media people on the sidelines of the Central Asia and South Asia Conference. The Afghan side conveyed to Pakistan its intention of carrying out air operation inside its territory opposite Chaman Sector of Pakistan. Pakistan responded positively to Afghan Government's right to act in its territory. In spite of very close border operations normally

Referring to the unresolved disputes in the region, Imran Khan said Kashmir is the core issue between Pakistan and India adding the huge potential of cooperation remains untapped because of unresolved disputes in the region. The Prime Minister said Pakistan welcomes cooperation between Gwadar Port and other ports of

Tashkent moot a great success, says Fawad

A.M.BHATTI

TASHKENT: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain has said the international conference being held in Tashkent on Friday is aimed at promoting regional connectivity. In an interview in Tashkent on Friday, he said over sixty countries are participating in the conference. The Minister said heads of state and Foreign Ministers from different countries gathered in Tashkent to discuss ways to enhance regional trade and economy. The Minister said

is turbulence in Afghanistan. I can assure you that no country has tried harder to get Taliban on the dialogue table than Pakistan. We have made every effort, short of taking military action against the Taliban in Pakistan., we have made every effort to get them on

Pak-USA-Afghan-Uzbek co-op platform created



NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and the US have formed a new diplomatic platform to support peace and stability in Afghanistan and foster regional trade and business ties, according to a Foreign Office (FO) statement. "Representatives of the United States, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan agreed in principle to establish a new quadrilateral diplomatic platform focused on enhancing regional connectivity. "The parties consider long-

"The development came during the Central and South Asia conference"

term peace and stability in Afghanistan critical to regional connectivity and agree that peace and regional connectivity are mutually reinforcing," said the FO statement. It added that the countries had recognised the "historic opportunity to open flourishing international trade routes" and intended to cooperate on expanding trade, building transit links and strengthening business-to-business ties. "The parties agreed to meet in the coming months to determine the modalities of this cooperation with mutual consensus," said the FO statement. The US State Department also issued the same statement and said on Twitter that it looked forward to partnering with the three countries for regional cooperation, terming it a "cornerstone to a sustained peace". The development came during the international conference on "Central and South Asia Regional Connectivity: Challenges and Opportunities" in Uzbekistan. The conference had originally been intended to discuss building better transportation links across Central and South Asia, but that agenda was trumped by the Taliban advances. Participants gathering in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent traded stinging criticisms and engaged in finger-pointing over the rapidly deteriorating situation in Afghanistan.

Vaccination lowers risk of Covid virus by 7 times

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Friday said the people with both doses of vaccine against COVID have seven times lower risk of getting virus compared to those who were not vaccinated. Even the people with first dose have four times lower risk of the disease compared to those without vaccine, Asad Umar said while addressing a media briefing here along with Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr Faisal Sultan. Urging the people to get vaccinated against the pandemic, The minister who is also Chairman National Command and Operation Center (NCO) said this was the only way to get rid of the disease.

Positivity rate rises to 6.17%

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recorded 2,327 new cases of Covid-19 over the last 24 hours, pushing the tally of confirmed infections to 983,719. According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO), 31 more people succumbed to the disease during this period, taking the death toll to 22,720. A total of 37,690 tests were conducted during the previous 24 hours, out of which results of 2,327 patients came back positive. The positivity rate of infections was recorded at 6.17 per cent. The number of active COVID-19 cases currently stands at 43,670. Overall 917,329 people have recovered from the pandemic, while 2,388 patients are critically ill and currently admitted to hospitals across the country. As of July 16, overall 21,660,650 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine have been administered including 17,336,845 partial and 4,323,805 both doses. On Thursday, Pakistan received another consignment of 1.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine from China. A special flight of the Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), carrying the Sinovac vaccine consignment had landed at Islamabad International Airport on Thursday. Pakistan has purchased 1.5 million doses of Sinovac from China's vaccine maker, sources said.

Security of Chinese nationals top priority



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday assured Chinese Premier Li Keqiang that his government would spare no effort to fully investigate the incident where Chinese na-

tionals lost their lives in a bus accident. In a telephonic conversation, the prime minister said the security of Chinese nationals, workers, projects, and institutions in Pakistan was the "highest priority of the government". During the call, Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed heartfelt condolences over the loss of precious lives of Chinese nationals caused by the tragic incident in Dasu. The prime minister said the people of Pakistan



RAWALPINDI: US Chargé d'Affaires in Pakistan Angela Aggeler calls on Army Chief of Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. - DNA

Afghan conference postponed

ANSAR BHATTI

TASHKENT: The two-day Afghan conference which was scheduled to be held in Islamabad on Saturday has been postponed. New dates have not yet been announced. According to sources, the schedule of the new conference shall be announced later. This correspondent learnt from reliable sources who came to attend the Central Asia and South Asia moot that the conference was postponed due to non availability of the Taliban leaders. Sources further said that Taliban high level delegation was expected to attend the Islamabad moot however due to another meeting in Doha the Taliban delegation requested the Pakistani authorities to re-schedule the conference. New dates shall soon be shared, the sources added.

Afghan forces launch attack at Spin Boldak

AGENCIES

KANDAHAR: Afghan forces launched an attack on Taliban fighters in Spin Boldak on Friday in a bid to retake the country's border crossing with Pakistan, as the group tightens its grip in the north and battles for the stronghold of an infamous warlord. The battle at the southern border follows weeks of intensifying fighting across Afghanistan, with the Taliban pressing multiple offensives and overrunning dozens of districts at a staggering rate. The group have also gobbled up other vital border crossings in the north and west. Following fierce fighting on Thursday evening, dozens of Taliban fighters were wounded.

Pak wants Afghan peace: DG ISI

DNA

TASHKENT: Director General Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt Gen Faiz Hameed Friday rejected the allegations of infiltration levelled by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. "If talks fail, we will fight the Taliban," said Ghani. "This is the last chance for peace," he had said. DG ISI categorically stated that these allegations against Pakistan are not true, in fact infiltration is being done from Afghanistan. "We want peace in the neighbouring country as a peaceful and stable Afghanistan is in the interest of Pakistan and other countries," DG ISI said.

US envoy calls on COAS

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: US Chargé d'Affaires in Pakistan Angela Aggeler on Friday called on Army Chief of Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa to Headquarters (GHQ), Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a press release. During the meeting, issues of mutual interest, the regional and current security situation in Afghanistan and bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed. COAS said Pakistan is keen to maintain this tradition of bilateral engagement and wants long-term, multi-domain, lasting relationships. The American dignitary appreciated Pakistan's sincere efforts for peace and stability in the region, in particular the Afghan peace process.

Briefs

ECP starts training of ROs for cantonment elections

PESHAWAR: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday hold a two-day workshop to train Returning Officers (ROs) for holding general elections in cantonment boards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at Provincial Election Office.

Joint Provincial Election Commissioner KP, Muhammad Farid inaugurated the workshop while Deputy Director Muhammad Nasir and Deputy Director Abdul Qadir were performing training duties, said ECP spokesman. ECP has appointed Chief Executive Officers of 11-Cantonment Boards in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as Returning Officers for holding of elections.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Peshawar Cantt Amir Rashid and Deputy CEO Anna Zafar, CEO Risalpur Cantt Muhammad Tanveer, CEO Cantt Mardan Arshad Khan, CEO Cantt Abbottabad Ammar Ahmed, Additional CEO Amir Sohail Butt, Bannu Cantt CEO Dr Raza Shah, Kohat Cantt CEO Khurram Arif and DI Khan Cantt CEO Farid Munir Wattoo and Deputy Director Training Imran Khatatak attended the workshop. Election would be held on September 12, 2021. According to the election schedule, nomination papers would be submitted from July 26 to July 29, 2021. The names of the candidates who have submitted nomination papers would be published on July 30. — APP

KP cabinet reviews law, order situation

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan Friday convened a special meeting of the provincial cabinet to discuss law and order situation in the province in the wake of changing security situation in neighbouring Afghanistan.

The meeting, attended by all provincial ministers, Chief Secretary, IGP and officials of all concerned departments, discussed the possible effects of the security situation in Afghanistan on the province and the coherent strategy of KP police.

It was decided to strengthen the police force to cope with any untoward situation while the divisional commissioners and regional police officers were directed to chalk out a comprehensive plan to strengthen the police system in their respective regions.

The cabinet expressed satisfaction over the preparedness of police to cope with any emergency situation and appreciated the sacrifices of police officials for maintaining peace in the region.

The cabinet noted that KP police always demonstrated exemplary performance in difficult times and hoped that in future the police force would come up to the expectations of the government and masses. — APP

KP PDMA issues heavy rain alert from Monday

PESHAWAR: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Friday issued a weather advisory predicting heavy rains across the province from Monday to Wednesday.

Through a communique, the PDMA said as per the Meteorological Department forecast, rain/wind-thunderstorm with few heavy/torrential rain were expected in Dir, Swat, Buner, Kohistan, Shangla, Manshera, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mardan, Mardan, Swabi, Kohat, D. I Khan, Peshawar, Waziristan, Kurram, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Karak, Charssada and Nowshera from Sunday evening to Wednesday. Heavy rains might cause flash flooding in local nullahs/streams of Shangla, Buner, Batagram, Manshera, Balakot, Abbottabad, Kohat, Swat, Kohistan and Mardan and urban flooding in Peshawar and Nowshera during the period. — APP

SECDIV to regulate import and export of prohibited items

DNA

FAISALABAD: Business community must play its proactive role in dragging out Pakistan from the grey list by fully adhering to the non-proliferation treaty and FATF (Financial Action Task Force) conditionality, said Dr. Zafar Ali Director General Strategic Export Control Division (SECDIV).

Addressing an awareness session on "Export Control on Goods, Technologies, Material and Equipments related to Nuclear and Biological Weapons and their Delivery Systems Act, 2004 (V of 2004)" in Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Indus-

try (FCCI), he said that Pakistan has been placed in grey list not due to the technical but because of Indian political clout. Responding to a question about two successive incidents of illegal trade of raw uranium in India, he said that the international community is intentionally ignoring this clear violation of the non-proliferation treaty due to grouping and regrouping by India at the international level. "We had to face complete ban if such an incident had occurred in Pakistan", he remarked and added that countries siding with India have responded that Indian government is investigating this issue and they would give their response after completion

of investigation by India. He said that most of Faisalabad based exporters are not directly involved in manufacturing or export of weapons of Mass Destruction and technologies. However, some products commercially manufactured and used in Pakistan could also be used in the fabrication of prohibited atomic weapons and missile technology including biological weapons. In this connection, he quoted high voltage capacitors and some chemicals used in the ceramic industry. He said that SECDIV has evolved a comprehensive system to regulate import and export of prohibited items for which SECDIV is extending free services. He said that a separate link has been

provided on SECDIV website from where items used for dual purposes could be ascertained. Responding to a question he said that international organizations have clamped a ban on some countries and we could not trade with these countries. "Among these countries also include North Korea and Iran etc.", he added. Earlier Acting President FCCI Chaudhry Talat Mahmood briefly introduced Faisalabad and FCCI and said that our major export is textile and only few persons could be involved in the import and export of such prohibited items and technologies. He thanked Dr. Zafar Ali for organizing this awareness session in FCCI and said that it will help

our exporters to remain vigilant by discouraging import and export of prohibited items. Awan Arshad Gilani Deputy Director SECDIV gave a comprehensive presentation about the aims and objectives of this organization working under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A question answer session was also held while Acting President Chaudhry Talat Mahmood presented FCCI memento to Dr. Zafar Ali Director General SECDIV. Later Vice President Ayub Aslam Manj offered a vote of thanks. The meeting was also attended by Rana Fayyaz, Rana Sikandar Azam and Assistant Directors SECDIV Ghias Ahmed and Fahad Jameel.



LAHORE: Rai Taimoor Bhatti Punjab minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, holds a meeting with the Ambassador of Indonesia to Pakistan, Adam Mulawarman Tugio at the Punjab International Swimming Complex Lahore. Talks were held on promoting the traditional Indonesian martial arts game pencak silat in Punjab and providing technical support. — DNA

Over 350,000 people being vaccinated on daily basis: Yasmin

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Health

Minister Dr. Yasmin Rashid on Friday said that over 350,000 people were being vaccinated per day and a motivational campaign had been launched to convince the citizens for early vaccination to protect their lives.

Talking to a private news channel, she said that million of anti-corona vaccine doses available with health department which were also very effective against delta variant. She said that by the end of this year, around 80 million population would be vaccinated across the country, adding now the Punjab was in leading position in vaccination as compare to other provinces.

Dr. Yasmin Rashid said that around 80% of government employees had been vaccinated against Covid-19 so far and delta variant was too much dangerous as com-

pare to other viruses as it spread very fast.

She said that delta virus had diagnosed in various patients in the recent pathology tests, adding that it was spreading very quickly due to non implementation of Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). To a question, she said that vaccination centers had been established at public places including markets, cattle markets, bus stops and bazars. The minister said that over 37% people had been vaccinated in Lahore adding that the government was making plan to prevent the virus spike on Eid-ul-Azha. Yasmin underlined that millions doses of vaccine was available in the country. She requested the people to take the situation seriously and vaccinate themselves against the pandemic as soon as possible. The government was taking concrete steps against the virus to protect the masses, she added. — APP

pare to other viruses as it spread very fast.

Commissioner inaugurates Miyawaki Forest in Gattwala

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of Parks and Horticulture Authority Miyawaki Forestry has been set up at three places in the city and the project will be completed in 20 places in the current financial year. Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali alongwith DG PHA Asma Ejaz Cheema started Miyawaki Forestry by planting trees in the Green Belt near Thatta Bridge on Canal Road. DG PHA briefed that under Miyawaki Forestry the growth of plants completed in 20 to 30 years and there is no need to take care of these trees after some years while traditionally planted forests take 200 to 300 years to grow up completely. She added that the Miyawaki-planted trees are more eco-friendly and much more life-sustaining than those planted in the conventional way. She said that after the forest station at Bagh-e-Jinnah and Samundari

Road under Miawaki technique, it has also been started on Canal road which will be extended to other parks and green belts. The Commissioner appreciated the efforts of PHA in launching the Miyawaki Forest System and said that all available re-

sources should be utilized for the success of the Clean and Green Program. He stressed on the need for successful implementation of afforestation plan. DC said that deforestation was causing environmental degradation and trees would help in controlling

smog and pollution in the city. He said in billion Tree Tsunami is a big program and the district administration is committed to making the city green and clean and full cooperation would be provided to PHA for establishing Miyawaki Forestry in the city.



FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali inaugurates Miyawaki forestry project at canal road. — DNA

Yarn merchants assured of issue's resolution

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: PTI Member Provincial Assembly, President Karachi Division Khurram Sher Zaman and Member National Assembly Aftab Siddiqui have said that PTI government will not leave Karachi businessmen alone, and will request Prime Minister Imran Khan and Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin to resolve issues on a priority basis. They will also arrange a meeting of Yarn traders with PM Imran Khan so that they can inform them about their problems.

They expressed these views while addressing a meeting held at the office of Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA) to discuss budget anomalies. PYMA Vice Chairman Farhan Ashrafi, Saqib Goodluck, SVP KCCI, Junaid-ur-Rehman Chairman KCCI Law & Order Sub-Committee, S M Alam, Chairman Old City Tajir Ittihad, PYMA members Khurshid Sheikh, Khurram Bharara, Saqib Naseem, Sohail Nisar, No-man Ilyas, Qadir Sheikhan, Anis Mandvia, Samad Gaba, Waheed Umar, Rizwan Diwan, Faisal Sheikhan, Nasir Makani, Sikandar Memon and others were also attended the meeting. Farhan Ashrafi, Vice Chairman PYMA took Member Provincial Assembly Khurram Sher Zaman

and Member National Assembly Aftab Siddiqui on a tour of the Old Area markets and apprised them of the muddy and muddy streets and street lights after the recent rains. Aftab Siddiqui on the occasion asked Farhan Ashrafi to identify the streets of the Old Area. Where they will repair roads with their own funds, they also announced the installation of street lights. MNA Aftab Siddiqui while discussing the budget anomalies in

detail in the meeting said that he was a member of the Finance Committee so he will inform the Prime Minister and the Finance Minister about the budget anomalies, and play his full role in resolving the problems of yarn traders. MPA Khurram Sher Zaman, said that despite the announcement in the budget speech, the customs duty was not reduced at 9%, the Prime Minister's vision is to make it easier to do

business, but it seems that the Enamels Committee wants to thwart Prime Minister Imran Khan's economic policies. "Our hands and feet are tied because of the 18th amendment, but we have done and will continue to do a lot in Karachi", he added. He also promised to beautify the historic buildings in the Old Area so that foreign buyers do not shy away from coming here. Earlier, Farhan Ashrafi, Vice

Chairman PYMA apprised the Member Provincial Assembly and Member National Assembly of the problems faced by Polyester, and pointed out that the promise of 9% customs duty on yarn was not fulfilled in the budget speech, while budget anomalies committee made decisions before convening a meeting with stakeholders, and the customs duty on yarn was maintained at 11% while 8% was not abolished.

He called for abolishing the anti-dumping duty of 3 to 13 per cent on tax rate gap between commercial & industrial importers to save the SME sector from collapse, as manufacturers have not increased their production capacity in 40 years and can barely meet 25 to 30% of local demand. Industries, on the other hand, depend on imports for the remaining 70%. Farhan Ashrafi added that equalization of yarn and fabric duties would affect the SMEs sector and shut down industries. Therefore, the formula of 7% difference of cascading should be maintained. PYMA Vice Chairman also rejected the decision of the Sindh government to raise the minimum wage to Rs 25,000, and requested the Sindh government to announce a minimum wage of Rs 20,000 like the federal government.



Khuli Kachehri held to address public issues

PESHAWAR: The district administration on Friday held Khuli Kachehri (open court) in Tehsil Shah Alam to listen and resolve issues of people at their doorstep as per directives of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

On the directives of Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Relief) Muhammad Imran Khan, Additional Assistant Commissioner Anwar Akbar Khan, Tehsildar Shahryar Khan, officers of departments concerned and large number of people were present on the occasion. People sharing their problems have demanded action against encroachment on Charsadda road due to which traffic remained jammed for hours especially in morning school and college going timings causing great inconvenience to people. They also complained about excessive load shedding, low voltage and low gas pressure in the localities and demanded of the authorities to address these issues on priority basis.

On the occasion, people gave applications in order to address their various problems and applied for land documents. The district administration resolved many of their problems on the spot and directed concerned authorities to resolve their issues at the earliest. — APP

732,923 people vaccinated

FAISALABAD: As many as 732,923 people have so far been vaccinated against the COVID-19 in the district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im on Friday said that 570,719 citizens had been given the first dose while 119,386 were administered the second one.

He said sufficient stock of vaccine was available in the district, and 35 vaccination centers and 20 mobile camps were operational. The centers had been established in Allied Hospital, District Headquarters Hospital, Government General Hospital GM Abad, Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology, Government General Hospital Samanabad, Children Hospital, Sports Complex Samanabad, Tehsil Head Quarters Hospital Jaranwala, Samundri, Tandlianwala, Chak Jhumra, Sports Complex Jhumra, Sports Complex Jaranwala, Government General Hospital Chak 224-RB, New Building RHC Khurrianwala, New Building THQ Samundri, New Building THQ Tandlianwala, Social Security Hospital Madina Town, Wapda Hospital, Rural Health Centers Mureed Wala, Chak 174-JB, Chak 134-JB, Chak 229-Rb, Chak 65-GB, RHC Lundianwala Jaranwala, RHC Khurrianwala Jaranwala, Pindi Sheikh Musa, Kanjwani, Mamukanjan, RHC Chak 400-GB, RHC Chak 153-RB, RHC Chak 374-GB and Chak 469-GB, he added. — APP

KP Govt proposes Rs 9,850m for development

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has proposed Rs 9,850 million for development of Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera districts with special focus on infrastructure development, improvement of links roads, sanitation and construction of parks. Under development plan, officials in Local Government and Rural Development told APP on Friday that Rs1,300 million earmarked for speedy development of these districts in current fiscal year under which priorities were being made on establishment of socioeconomic and recreational projects. In Charsadda district, an Entertainment City would be established at Nisatta village near Peshawar Toll Plaza on Motorway where recreational facilities including water sports, restaurants, fun land, playing lands for kids, parks and commercial activities to be provided to facilitate thousands of people and children in these districts. People would be able to enjoy few kilometers distance to enjoy water boating, meat and fish dish parties with families in open. As per the plan, beautification of Charsadda would be achieved with establishment of green belts on motorway and link roads besides taking pollution-reducing measures in districts known for Gandhara civilizations. — APP

Briefs**NA Body defers three bills**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue Friday deferred decision on Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) amendment bill 2020. The committee which met under the chairmanship of Faiz Ullah also deferred the Eradication of Riba Bill, 2019 (moved by Moulana Abdul Akbar and The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2020 (moved by Syed Javed Hasnain, MNA). Member National Assembly (MNA) Muhammad Afzal Khan Dhandla, mover of the matter briefed the Committee pertaining to recoveries of agriculture loans in calamity affected areas and the problems being faced to farmers for recoveries.

The President, ZTBL informed the Committee that there exist no relief for the farmers at present that Provincial Board of Revenue, Punjab has not yet declared that areas "as calamity affected" areas. The Committee unanimously directed that recovery of loans in affected areas, as pointed out by the mover may be deferred till the next meeting of the Committee. The Committee further decided that Board of Revenue, Punjab and Chairperson, Ehsas Program may be invited in the next meeting. The Committee also deferred the matter referred by the House regarding share of erstwhile FATA in NFC award (moved by Mr. Gul Zafar Khan, MNA/Mover) due to paucity of time.

Theatre Wallay tohonor Dilip Kumar

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Theatre Wallay would organize a movie night in honour of Bollywood legend film star Dilip Kumar (Yousaf Khan) on July 17 here at The Farm, Banigala. A film "Deedar" would be screened at the Farm, besides Karaoke night. Deedar was a 1951 musical film by Nitin Bose, starring Dilip Kumar, Ashok Kumar and Nargis. The soundtrack was composed by the legend Nausad with lyrics by Shakeel Badayuni. An official of Theatre Wallay Masnoon Raza said that the event aimed to pay a tribute to legend Dilip Kumar who died on July 7 after a prolonged illness. Karaoke night menu includes Cheese sandwiches, chicken roll paratha, Aloo Paratha, Pineapple, green tea, coffee, lemonade and Lassi.

Renowned Urdu poet 'Himayat Ali remembered

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Urdu poet, writer, actor and radio drama artist 'Himayat Ali Shair' was remembered on his second death anniversary on Friday to pay glowing homages for his unforgettable services for entertainment industry. Himayat Ali Shair was born on July 14, 1926, in India's Aurangabad and later moved to Karachi after partition. Himayat Ali Shair's collection of poetry includes MitiKaQarz, TashnagiKa Safar, Haroon Ki Awaz, which received Allama Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Award and "Harf Harf Roshni," Private news channel reported. Several of his songs written such as Na ChuraSakogay-Daaman and JaagUtha Hai Sara Watan went on to become instant classics. Himayat Ali Shair received the Pride of Performance Award for his services in the promotion of arts and was also given the Nigar Award for his contribution to films. Himayat Ali Shair was died in Toronto, Canada on 15 July 2019 at the age of 93. He reportedly suffered a heart attack. Among his survivors were his eight children, four boys and four girls. - APP

Bulgaria keen to deepen relations with Pakistan

The Bulgarian envoy said that peace in Afghanistan is important not only for Pakistan but for the whole world and Pakistan's efforts in this regard are commendable

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Bulgarian Ambassador Ms. Irena Gancheva said that Bulgaria is serious about expanding trade, economic and political relations with Pakistan and she started her diplomatic assignment as an ambassador to Pakistan two months ago. She expressed these views during a meeting with Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman Pakistan Cultural Forum at her embassy in Islamabad today. Ahsan Bakhtawari and Waqar Bakhtawari were also present on the occasion. The Bulgarian Ambassador said that peace in Afghanistan is important not only for Pakistan but for the whole world and Pakistan's efforts in this regard are commendable. She said that the next



government of Afghanistan should have international acceptance and it Global and constitutional issues must be taken into account which will lead to the regional peace stability and development. Zafar Bakhtawari, chairman of the Pakistan Cultural Forum, said on the occasion that after Russia, the United States has also left Afghanistan without forming a joint government and now all its responsibilities fall on Pakistan, Afghanistan's and their neighboring countries. We must work together to bring peace to Afghanistan. Waqar Bakhtawari called for the development of trade relations with Bulgaria and assured full cooperation from his organization in this regard. Zafar Bakhtawari presented his book "Jahan Dost" to the ambassador on the occasion.

Govt committed programmes for social welfare

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The government was committed to accelerate policies and programmes to enhance social well-being of its people while ensuring that no one was left behind, Senate informed on Friday. In a written reply to question, Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar said that major thrust of public sector investment under the Federal Public Sector Development Programme (PSPD) after the 18th amendment to the Constitution is on the funding of large scale strategic projects of national interest, he said. The minister said that these priorities were defined and determined by the National Economic Council (NEC) and other development planning for. He said that the corner stone of the incumbent government's policy is to invest in under developed regions to bring them at par with other, relatively developed areas of the country; reduce poverty and empower segments of the marginalized society. "Accordingly, the entire premise of the programme is to ensure social welfare of the people and creation of a welfare state," the minister said that the programme has restructured Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) - Kifalat Tahafuz launched the regionally tested National Poverty Graduation Initiative which was one of the largest COVID-Emergency cash transfer programs globally, featured by the World Economic Forum. He said that Sehat Sahulat program was another initiative that has been launched to relieve the most vulnerable populations of the catastrophic out of pocket expenditure on health covering 14 million families living below the poverty line. He said that it was including universal coverage of health protection in all districts of Gilgit Baltistan, Tharparkar and KM. The Kamyab Jawan Program, specifically, on human capital development, creating income generation/ employment opportunities for the 64 million youth of Pakistan through Hunarmand Jawan Skills development, Youth Entrepreneurship Schemes (YES) and several other supporting initiatives. Asad Umar said that federal government also initiated special regional development and equalization packages for Southern Balochistan, Gilgit Baltistan, 14 plus priority districts of Sindh and allocations for newly merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under ten year accelerated plan and Annual Development Plan (ADP).

**PEMRA takes action on violation of code of conduct**

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Friday informed the National Assembly that Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) had taken action against violation of its code of conduct. Reply to a Calling Attention Notice in the House, raised by the Maulana Abdul Akbar Chitrali, Muhammad Anwar, Shahida Akhtar Ali, and others about the increasing obscenity on television channels, the minister said the PEMRA had a complete code of conduct which was formulated in 2015 on the directions of the Supreme Court. Farrukh Habib said that as per the code of conduct, as

many as 365 show-cause notices were issued to various channels, while action had also been taken against 28 advertisements and dramas. The minister said that as per the code of conduct, the PEMRA had the authority to impose Rs one million fine on the violation, and to date, it had imposed about Rs 25,000,000. He said the directives had been issued to the PEMRA for circulating of advisory to all the TV channels during the next week and a copy of the advisory would also be shared with the House. Farrukh Habib asked the members to share their objections if they have on any particular channel or drama, the authority would take action against. The minister said the PEMRA had a Council of Com-

plaints and the parliamentarians and any individual could approach it on any violation. The PEMRA in the past, the minister said, had already taken action on the applications against the channels. The minister said that the part-III of the code of conduct was very clear and PEMRA took immediate action on any violation, "We will try our level best not to violate our traditions and values," the minister said. Replying to a question from Shahida Akhtar Ali, he said that PEMRA had a complete monitoring system, and in the past channels were stopped from airing objectionable dramas and advertisements. The dramas and advertisements were allowed to air after the removal of objectionable material, he added.

"We ensure that freedom of expression is not affected while implementing the code of conduct," the minister added. Farrukh Habib said that arrangements would be made for the members of the house to visit PEMRA next week so that they could personally inspect the procedure in that regard. He said that so far about 28 advertisements had been banned and the regularity authority had the complete list of them. The minister said strict action had been taken against Indian content, vulgar language, and other such types of material. To another question, the minister said that the text of dramas and advertisements should be in accordance with the country's basic principles and traditions.

NADRA officials suspended over corruption charges

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Ali Muhammad Khan Friday informed the Senate that National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) had suspended its 39 officials and lodged FIRs on further 10 personnel on reports of alleged corruption in the Karachi office. He said this in a reply to the calling attention notice of Senator Faisal Ali Subzwari to draw the attention of the Minister for Interior, towards the fake CNICs

issued by NADRA in large number in its Karachi office. He said that the report of issuing fake CNICs to a large number of people was not true, however, the investigation team was probing the matter and the NADRA was vigilant. He said that there was a set procedure of issuing CNICs to eligible citizens of Pakistan after thorough confirmation through different means like fingerprints, personal appearance, submission of certificates, and authorized officers' letters to ensure authenticity.

NA passes 2 Govt bills, adopts 3 resolutions

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Friday passed two government resolutions and adopted three resolutions seeking extension of as many ordinances. The House adopted three resolutions seeking 120-day extension to as many ordinances including the Regulation of Generation, Transmission and Distribution of Electric Power (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021; the Higher Education Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2021 and the Higher Education Commission (Second Amendment) Ordinance, 2021. The House passed two government bills including the Islamabad Capital Territory Senior Citizens Bill, 2021 and the Special Technology Zones Authority Bill, 2021. Earlier, Chairperson Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat Kishwer Zehra presented report on the Special Technology Zones Authority Bill, 2021.

Rwp Admin to plant over 3.247m saplings

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Administration on the directives of Punjab Government would plant over 3.247 million saplings under 'Hur Bashir AikShajar,' monsoon plantation campaign. According to a district administration spokesperson, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division Syed Gulzar Hussain Shah and Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi on July 12 launched the monsoon plantation campaign by planting a sapling here at Gymkhana Club. The Punjab government had issued a schedule for June 28 to August 01 for the program 'Khidmat Aap Ki Dhamra Par' under which the public sector water tanks were also being cleaned besides changing filters of water filtration plants in the district. She informed that a special plantation campaign titled 'Hur Bashir AikShajar' launched here to plant maximum saplings in the district.

A special cleanliness program would be finalized for 'Eid ul Azha' which would start from July 19, she said adding, and eidgahs would be cleaned besides proper arrangements for removal of offal of sacrificial animals during Eid holidays. The performance of all the departments concerned would be monitored on daily basis. The citizens can also use 'Karkardagi' App launched by the Punjab government and get registered their complaints, she added.

IRSA releases 268,700 cusecs water

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 268,700 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 363,800 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1457.68 feet, which was 73.68 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 206,000 and 145,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1164.25 feet, which was 126.25 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 44,100 and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 190,000, 162,500 and 30,100 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 55,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 24,700 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

NUST signs agreement for expansion of NSTP

ISLAMABAD: National University of Science and Technology (NUST) has signed an agreement with a multinational consortium led by International Consulting Associates (ICA) for the development and expansion of National Science and Technology Park (NSTP), Pakistan's first STP. The signing ceremony of the expansion agreement of NSTP was held at NUST Islamabad campus the other day. The Transaction Advisory Services agreement between NUST and the multinational consortium led by iConsult, will augment NUST's plans to develop NSTP by constructing eight towers in four phases over the next 10-12 years on Public-Private Partnership (P3) basis, over close to 60 acres of land at its H-12 Campus. Special Economic Zone status, availing income tax and import duty exemptions for 10 years, has already been conferred on the project to provide incentive support by the government. Taking place at Tech Sanctum - NSTP auditorium, the ceremony was graced by the presence of Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Shibli Faraz as chief guest. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kyrgyz Republic, Mr. Erik Beishembiev called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House. - DNA

The Dangerous Escape

ONCE I went to Murree, where climbed a small mountain. On the other side of the mountain the scenery was beautiful. In the middle of some trees, I saw a hut and smoke was coming from it. Then I went towards the hut and looked in the window. I looked all around and saw no one except some tools and other home things and a pot of some food on the fire. I thought that I should go in and look. I went to the door and tried to open it; luckily it was open. I went in and began to look around. I tried to be as quiet as I could. In one drawer I saw some white powder. I couldn't make out what was it. So I took one out; closed the drawer and put the packet in my pocket; I knew that this was stealing but I badly to know what was in the packet. Suddenly I heard voices and when

I looked around, I saw an empty barrel big enough to fit me in. I got in the barrel and stayed there. When the men came in, I saw that there were only two. They sat on the chairs beside the table. One of the men got up and brought the plates and the pot of food. They began to eat, and talk. As they were talking, I noticed that one of them talked a little about Heroin. On hearing this I knew that the packet I had in my pocket was filled with Heroin. As I tried to move a little in the barrel, it fell on the ground. One of the men quickly ran towards the barrel and found me. I knew I was in big trouble. He quickly took me out and asked me what was I doing here. I told him about the 'smoke and all the things that happened' except the drawer one but I made one mistake. I told him that Listened to

all the talk they word. Talking; after listening to this he grabbed me and look me to the other man. The other man took a piece of cloth out of his pocket and came towards me. I tried to struggle, but the man was strong. The other man quickly put the cloth on my nose, and mouth. I knew that it

SHORT STORY
Zeenat Iqbal Hussain

had some kind of medicine. After a while I fainted! When I opened my eyes again, I was amazed to see that I was on a boat with me two men and then I noticed that I was tied up. One of the men rode the boat and we went at a high speed and after a while we reached a deserted island with

only birds around. They took me out of the boat and we went in the cave. When we were deep in the cave, I saw a light. As we entered something like a room, I saw that there were boxes and boxes everywhere. We all sat in the middle of the room. After sometime, they took me to the other room which even had a door. They pushed me in and untied my ropes and threw them aside and locked the door. There was only a small window enough for me to get out but it was high, it was not possible for me to escape. As I was tired I went to sleep. The next day I woke up very early. I began to think of a way, to escape. I thought many ways, but suddenly I saw the rope aside. I got a plan. I took the rope and threw it out of the window, luckily it reached the ground. I tied the other end to a big rock. Then I started to climb

down. I reached the ground and started running towards the boat. As remember the way. As I got nearer to the boat, I heard voices. My heart sank, but I got a plan I took a rock and tried to throw it in the deck. And they press to it went right in it and to two men thought that there was someone in the deck. As he was out looking in the deck, I got in the boat and pushed to other man in the deck also and locked the door not be broken, after sometime we reached the place we came from. I went to the Police Station and left the two men in the deck. I told the Police Officer the whole story and showed him the packet of Heroin. After sometime all of the things were taken away and the two men were arrested. The next day I met my parents and my photo also came in the papers.

Briefs

Govt to address issue of circular debt

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Textile and Commerce Aliya Hamza Malik on Friday informed the National Assembly that the government was taking steps to address the issue of circular debt. During question hour session, she said that the government was entering into cheaper agreements with the independent power producers (IPPs). She said the government has reduced line losses and significantly enhanced the recoveries. She said that due to steps taken by the government transmission and distribution losses had also declined. She said that relief of Rs 50.69 billion was provided on account of payment of electricity bills of small and medium enterprises after the breakout of COVID-19. She said that the relief of Rs 23.2 billion was given to consumer for the payment in installment and deferment of payment.

Banned outfits not allowed to collect hides

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Banned outfits would not be allowed to collect hides of sacrificial animals on Eid-ul-Adha besides the Home Department of Punjab Government has also banned the collection of the hides by NGOs without the approval of the competent authority. According to a district administration spokesman, Deputy Commissioner Office Rawalpindi has announced July 10 as last date to submit applications for collecting hides of sacrificial animals. The administration would not allow anyone to collect hides without permission of the authorities concerned. The charity organizations were directed to submit applications to the office of Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi for permission letter by July 10. Any organization or person who would collect hides of the sacrificial animals without NoC would be treated as offense and strict action would be taken against them as per law. At least 85 prescribed organizations and banned outfits were on the radar of the Punjab Home Department for hide collection ban. Some 11 sub-organizations have also been included in the proscribed list.

GPU an excellent initiative by ICT police

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister of state for Climate change Zartaj Gul and MNA Maleeka Bukhari on Thursday visited Islamabad Police Gender Protection Unit (GPU) in sector F-6 and appreciated the police initiative. According to a police spokesman, they highly appreciated this initiative and the role and performance of the Unit, saying it has really put a check on incidents as violence against women and children. SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer and ASP Amna Baig were also present on the occasion. Zartaj Gul and Maleeka Bukhari thanked the command of Islamabad police for the steps taken by the police as these will restore the trust of the public in police. They also assured their cooperation to Islamabad police to project this initiative through social media and other platforms. SSP (Operations) while briefing the legislators said that it was the brainchild of Inspector General of Police Qazi Jamil-ur-Rehman with a mission to provide community-focused gender and child sensitive police services so that all individuals in Islamabad may safely exercise their fundamental right to a life of dignity free of discrimination and violence. He emphasized that Islamabad police cares if you are a woman or transgender in distress. "Call anytime of the day or night. You will find our lady officers ready to assist," he added.

ICCI slams hike in prices of petroleum products

Fatma Azim Senior VP and Abdul Rehman Khan VP ICCI said that in the current difficult circumstances, the Govt should have taken measures to reduce inflation and production cost that would have enabled trade and industrial activities to flourish in the country

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has expressed great resentment against another hike in the prices of petroleum products as it would further enhance the cost of doing business in the country and bring a new wave of high inflation for the common man making his life more miserable. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that the people were already facing great difficulties due to high inflation and the business

community was also struggling to combat the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. In these tough times, the government has increased the price of petrol by Rs.5.40 and diesel by Rs.2.54 per litre that would unleash a new wave of inflation besides further increasing the cost of doing business in the country. ICCI President said that from January to July 2021, the government has raised the petrol price by over 14% and diesel by over 5% as the price of petrol has gone up from around Rs.103/litre on 1st January 2021 to its highest level of over Rs.118/litre while the price of diesel has surged from around



Rs.110/litre to over Rs.116/litre till to date. He said that the government had already put an additional burden of Rs.135 billion on power consumers by increasing power tariff by Rs.2.97/unit in July while another hike in POL

prices would make businesses very uncompetitive in the domestic and international markets. He said that the repeated hikes in the prices of POL products and utility tariffs would shatter the confidence of investors as they needed predictable and consistent prices and tariffs regimes to make investment in Pakistan. He stressed that the government should withdraw all taxes and petroleum levy on POL products to provide some relief to the people. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that in the current difficult circumstances, the government should have

taken measures to reduce inflation and production cost that would have enabled trade and industrial activities to flourish in the country. But instead of providing relief, the government is taking steps that would further enhance the manufacturing cost making our products more uncompetitive for exports besides pushing up inflation across the country. They said that raising the price of petrol and diesel would further increase the cost of manufacturing, transport, agriculture inputs and would have a harmful impact on the overall economy, therefore, the decision should be revised.

CDA approves designs of 14 Projects

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority's Design vetting Committee has approved 14 projects while one project could not be approved due to non-attendance. Among the approved projects are Plots No. 88 and 44 of Gulberg Residencia, Plot No. 143,151 & 69 of Business Square Gulberg Green, Plot No. 9 of Bahria Lifestyle, Plot No. 76,31,32,59 & Plot No.13, 14 of Civic Center Gulberg Green, Plot No. 13 of Business Park Gulberg Green, Plot No. 11 of D-12 (Markaz), Pakistan Foundation Fighting Blindness, Plot No. 55 of Pakistan Council of Appropriate Technology and Plot No. 6 of Blue Area, Islamabad.

Another rain spell starting from Sunday

ISLAMABAD: The Meteorological Department on Friday forecast more rain-wind thundershower in upper and central parts of the country from Sunday.

Strong monsoon currents are likely to penetrate upper parts of the country from Sunday (evening/night) and may persist till Wednesday. Rain-wind-thundershower (with very heavy/torrential rain) in Kashmir, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narowal, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Okara, Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Sargodha, Mianwali, Khushab, Dir, Swat, Buner, Kohistan, Shangla, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Nowshera, Peshawar, Waziristan, Kurrum, Bannu, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Karak , Dera Ismail Khan and Gilgit-Baltistan (Ghizer, Astore, Diamer, Skardu, Gilgit, Hunza Nagar, Ghanche and Kharmang) from Sunday (evening/night) to Wednesday. Rain/wind-thundershower (with isolated heavy falls) is expected in Bhakkar, Layyah, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Multan, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Sibbi, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Kohlu, Loralai, Barkhan, Zhob, Musa Khel, Quetta, Ziarat, Harnai, Qila Saifullah, Qila Abdullah, Larkana, Sukkur, Jacobabad, Tharparker, Sanghar, Umerkot and Mirpurkhas from Monday (evening) to Thursday. — APP

NH&MP to ensure safe travel of vehicles

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Highways and Motorway Police (NH&MP) on Friday organized an online meeting to discuss and implement different measures to ensure safe traveling of vehicles carrying petroleum and related products on motorways and national highways.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of the Inspector General (IG), NH&MP Dr. Syed Kaleem Imam, said a press release issued here. Important matters were discussed in the meeting. Dr. Syed Kaleem said that a campaign would be launched by field formations to ensure availability of two foam based fire extinguishers (9 Kg & 2kg), maximum side mirrors, at least 2 triangles or 2 cones, adding that availability of spare wheel, inspection of tyre size and tread also condition of brakes, proper covering of electrical related stuff, physical inspection of the tank and condition of vehicle would be ensured. He said that awareness campaigns would immediately be launched to advise drivers to avoid driving during night especially on highways and motorways, adding that the drivers would be motivated to park their vehicles at designated spots in all zones. He said that third party insurance may be ensured by all petroleum vehicles/transportation companies, medical fitness of drivers may also be encouraged through coordination with OMC's, also enhance local coordination with oil marketing companies (OMCs) for quick decanting process in case of any incident.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Makhdoom Khusró Bakhtyar participated virtually in the first meeting of Ministers of Industries of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states. — DNA

US Embassy to establish Lincoln Corner at NUST



DNA

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. Embassy and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) here on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a Lincoln Corner in the university's campus. Raymond Castillo, the U.S. Embassy's Minister Counselor for Public Affairs, and Dr. Osman Hasan, Pro-Rector of Academics at NUST, signed the MoU to establish and run the Lincoln Corner, said a press release issued here. Additionally, representatives from the U.S. Embassy joined Lieutenant General Engineer Javed Mahmood Bukhari (retired), NUST Rector, and Dr. Riaz Ahmad, Head of the NUST International Office, for the ceremony. In his remarks, Castillo said, "I believe that the Lincoln Corner at NUST will be a substantial resource for young leaders seeking to build their networks, hone their cross-cultural skills, and deepen their relationship with the United States." In joining the Lincoln Corners community, NUST becomes part of an 18-member strong network of partnerships between the U.S. Mission to Pakistan and eminent Pakistani institutes of education and culture. Lincoln Corners are event spaces and resource centers that connect young leaders with the United States. Online and in-person programs are free and open to the public. The state-of-the-art Lincoln Corner at NUST will be located in the campus's Central Library and will include a makerspace lab, comprehensive physical and digital information resources, and an Americana-themed public events space. Construction of the Lincoln Corner NUST is anticipated to begin later this summer.

Government to monitor SOPs at public places

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Health Secretary Dr. Nausheen Hamid Friday said that vaccination as well as precautionary measures were essential to ward off 4th wave of Coronavirus and during the Eid holidays government would monitor implementation of SOPs in public places. The new strict SOPs are being issued in view of the recent uptick of Indian delta variant cases country-wide, she was speaking to a private news channel. "We are a strong nation and can defeat COVID-19

waves effectively, but for that cooperation from every citizen is imperative", she added. Nausheen Hamid said health teams were conducting random testing in cattle markets, which would prove to be a good exercise for checking the spread of the coronavirus among the people visiting for sacrificial animals. "Delta Indian variant is a deadly virus, but we can control it just as we controlled it by following the SoPs during the previous three waves", she said. Replying to a question, she showed her serious concerns over rising Covid-19 cases and said the situa-

tion was worsening in the country with each passing day and citizens need to be more vigilant and take extra precautionary measures to control the situation. She further said that special SOPs have been devised for hotels, restaurants and public places, adding that for next 10 days tourists would also be restricted to visit tourist spots. In order to contain the spread of fourth wave of corona, government has also decided to issue strict standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Eid prayers and take strict measures for implementation of the precautions including wearing face masks and maintaining

social distance, she mentioned. Worshipers would have to bring their own prayer mats and perform ablutions at home, she said, adding that everyone entering mosques has to wear a face mask. She also requested the citizens to alter their social behavior in terms of following the SoPs. Replying to a another question, she clarified that there was no shortage of COVID-19 vaccines in the country, adding that if any citizen not getting text message for second dose he/she should visit to their nearest vaccination centre and get second dose of vaccine after 6 weeks gap.

DC orders strict implementation of SOPs on Eid

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of Deputy Commissioner of Islamabad Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat, the Islamabad administration has decided to seal several hot spot of the city, as positivity ratio of coronavirus has jumped to 6% and health officials fear that this may increase on Eid if SOPs were not followed. Head of DC ICT Task Force Ayab Ahmed speaking to a private news channel said that strict implementation of health

guidelines would be ensured in restaurants, tourist spots, and public transport and in cattle markets. Covid-19 cases including delta variant are increasing at a very fast pace in Islamabad, he said, adding that poor SOPs compliance is the main causes for the rise in cases. He said the DC Islamabad himself was paying surprise visits to cattle markets and a strict advisory has been issued to prevent spread of the delta variant especially for cattle markets established for the sale of sacrificial animals. During the last 24 hours, 9,454 cases were reported and out of which most-

ly delta virus patients were including children, he added. Replying to a question, he said awareness drive was also started in Islamabad in which door-to-door mobile teams were visiting rural areas of the city for creating awareness among the masses about second dose of coronavirus and people who were not able to visit centers would get their vaccination on their doorsteps. He warned that capital administration would seal the cattle markets, bazaars and public places where they found increase rate of positivity cases of coronavirus.

CDA meeting of "Clean and Green Islamabad" held

CDA Chairman also issued orders to set up a portal to involve the citizens in tree planting matters and ensure full participation of the citizens

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: A high level meeting of "Clean and Green Islamabad" board chaired by CDA Chairman Amir Ali Ahmed was held at CDA headquarters here on Friday. Shafaq Hashmi administrator MCI, representatives of CTTI Islamabad, renowned jurist and lawyer Riaz Hanif Rahi, representatives of Horticulture Society Islamabad, representatives of the Ministry of Climate Change, DG Environment CDA and Regional Director Environment attended the meeting and gave briefing to the CDA chairman.

On this occasion, the Chairman CDA while issuing instructions said that in order to make the Federal Capital more beautiful and attractive, the same type of trees



and plants should be planted on every highway, intersection, roadside slopes, green belts so that it has its own identity. He told the participants to introduce modern techniques for tree plantations

and ensure monitoring. He further instructed to plant beautiful trees along the drains. Meanwhile, the CDA Chairman also issued orders to set up a portal to involve the citizens in tree planting matters and ensure full participation of the citizens. In addition, the CDA Chairman also issued orders to conduct Survey of vacant lands in Islamabad so that tree planting can be done there. The CDA chairman further directed that STP water be used for horticulture, and a public campaign be organized every Friday at F-Nine Park for plant care and awareness. In this regard, the Chairman CDA issued instructions to formalise TORs of the Board and to reconstitute the existing committee to involve also citizens directly in it.

Acrimony in AJK

It appears that Pakistan's political leaders fail to comprehend the importance of the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir following India's actions of August 2019. As soon as it seems that a sense of respect and decency may finally prevail in parliament, members of the opposition and treasury benches remind us that while politics is a messy affair the world over, in Pakistan it features a particularly sticky sludge difficult to wash away completely. The ugly and unnecessary name-calling between the two sides echoed once more in both houses of parliament this week as opposition members cried foul over remarks made by the Kashmir affairs minister during election rallies ahead of the July 25 polls in AJK.

It would serve politicians well to strictly adhere to the AJK chief election commissioner's code of conduct and refrain from muddying the region's otherwise cordial political atmosphere. Unlike in Pakistan's federating units, during elections, a caretaker government does not take charge in AJK and the baton is passed over to the next government without accusations of interference. All this may seem easier said than done, with both opposition and ruling parties knowing fully well the stakes involved. Although history suggests it is the ruling party in Pakistan that always manages to form a government in AJK since people look towards Islamabad for the release of funds and provision of essential services, if the PTI is unable to come up with the required numbers in the legislative assembly, it would lend credence to the opposition's narrative that the government does not have the mass support of people behind it, which the opposition says the recent by-elections have shown. As for the opposition's case, although Bilawal Bhutto Zardari kick-started the PPP's election campaign before dashing to the US, and Maryam Nawaz continues to tour up and down the scenic valley launching scathing attacks on the PTI, the example of last year's election in Gilgit-Baltistan is all too fresh wherein both parties suffered a heavy defeat despite substantial election rallies. The extent of tension and acrimony that exists between the major parties weakens democracy in our country. We should not allow our country to fall victim to such politics which sends out an ugly message to the world and does nothing for the cause of the Kashmiri people who have lived in misery over the last few decades.

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EU's strategy to counter China

MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

THE European Union has decided to create its global strategy on infrastructure, trade, and commerce to counter China's rising influence. Termed as "Globally Connected Europe", the strategy is set to be put in motion in 2022. The European Union has been cautious about China's economic and trade influence over South Asia and even the West. EU's joined collaboration will create a bloc that will pursue activities pertaining to the domains of trade, commerce, diplomacy, military, and security.

The G7 countries did ponder upon such a strategy that can stand against China's CPEC and Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). According to Heiko Maas, German Foreign Minister, "We see China using economic and financial means to increase its political influence everywhere in the world. It's useless moaning about this, we must offer alternatives." Reports suggest that Brussels recently signed deals with India and Japan to connect Europe and India. While the details are yet to be known, the deal may consider connecting European nations with India through trade and digital media including technology and collaboration in infrastructural developments. EU's infrastructural project is being termed as a "connectivity" plan set to be launched in 2022. In comparison to the EU's infrastructure plan, the BRI comprises 40 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, 34 countries from Europe and Central Asia, 24 countries from East Asia and Pacific, 17 countries from the Middle East and North America, 19 countries from Latin America and the Caribbean, and 6 countries from South East Asia. Time will tell how many countries the European Union manages to include in its plan. Interestingly, the EU and the G7 would need to tackle the European countries that are already a part of the BRI. Will the G7 compel them to switch sides and become members of the EU's plan or will they be a part of both projects - led by the EU and China.

Multilateralism the best weapon against Covid-19

Mohamed Chebaro



Tony Blair, the former UK prime minister, last week called for int'l action to end the confusion on travel via a worldwide solution. He said there was still a confusing lack of agreement between countries on which vaccines are accepted as valid, different testing standards and different COVID-19 "passports," showing people's vaccination status. The Tony Blair Institute has called on the WHO to take on an expanded role in bringing uniformity to vaccines, testing and COVID-19 passports

THE maxim "nobody is safe until everybody is safe" should have been adopted by the international community in its common fight against the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which has disrupted the world. Instead, we have witnessed and sensed distrust, dissent, denial and even conspiracy and competition from all states and non-state actors when dealing with the pandemic.

More than 18 months have lapsed since the start of this crisis and the world looks stagnant and its people confused, still grappling to understand the origin of the pandemic, the speed of its spread, and the new variants and their impact on vaccinated people. That is if we believe vaccines to be the key weapon in the arsenal deployed to ensure the world, its population and its economy can resume life as normal in the not too distant future.

In the UK, we are told that this future is close - July 19, to be exact. But the expected freedom from lockdowns, social distancing and even mask wearing might be a mirage if variants of concern keep filtering through the country's seemingly open borders and airport arrival halls.

In London, the government is setting the stage to drop quarantine requirements for fully vaccinated Britons returning from medium-risk amber list countries, but what about non-Britons arriving from countries that are today listed as safe, but which could be placed on the red list tomorrow?

Travel, as we have seen recently, is the driver of the global economy and, unless a multilateral approach is adopted to regulate the safety of this sector, disruption is likely to become the norm.

Tony Blair, the former UK prime minister, last week called for international action to end the confusion on travel via a worldwide solution. He said there was still a confusing lack of agreement between countries on

which vaccines are accepted as valid, different testing standards and different COVID-19 "passports," showing people's vaccination status.

The Tony Blair Institute has called on the World Health Organization (WHO) to take on an expanded role in bringing uniformity to vaccines, testing and COVID-19 passports. The think tank even suggested that national governments, particularly those of the G20 nations, should empower the WHO to take the lead on a new travel framework.

Alternatively, the world will likely oscillate between lockdown and freedom for many years to come, as scientists around the world have repeatedly predicted in the last 12 months that the virus is here to stay.

It is not difficult to see this disrupted state of affairs, such as with the EU and Switzerland agreeing to recognize each other's vaccination certificates, while the UK has scrapped its plan to issue official vaccine passports or certificates.

Though the EU is supposed to be one bloc, France last week warned its citizens against traveling to Spain or Portugal due to spikes in infections recorded there.

On another front, the EU has proposed to Russia a joint recognition plan for their vaccination certificates, but Moscow has approved four different vaccines that are produced in the country, none of which the EU has approved. Likewise, Russia has not approved the use of any foreign vaccines.

This list could go further, pointing to more disruption and a lack of uniformity in rules that could suffocate the virus.

Australia has raised its lockdown levels due to an increase in infections, while Thailand has locked down Bangkok. After airlifting oxygen to Indian hospitals a few weeks ago, countries like the Philippines and Indonesia are now battling to treat an ever-growing number of infections.

I am not trying to paint a grim picture here or belittle the efforts of care workers, governments, the scientific sector and nongovernmental organizations across the globe, who are working hard to save lives, restrict infections and ultimately tame the virus.

To combat the spread of this deadly virus, it would be reasonable to have a worldwide approach, but this remains elusive. Last month's G7 summit in Cornwall, UK, called for better cooperation in order to help poorer countries get the vaccine.

The EU is continuing its efforts to provide vaccine doses for all its people after a slow start, while also aiming to provide an EU-wide vaccine passport to help reopen its states' economies. Jacinda Ardern, the prime minister of New Zealand, has called for an emergency summit of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) countries to be held virtually this week.

The economies of this regional grouping last year suffered their biggest contraction since the Second World War, with 81 million jobs lost. Ardern hopes the APEC leaders can make their vaccine rollouts more efficient and discuss the steps their respective governments can take to protect jobs and their economies.

One can only hope that leaders around the world digest and act on that one fact that nobody is safe until all are safe, and maybe follow up on the Tony Blair Institute's calls or even build on Ardern's move.

A summit like APEC's could become a world summit that initiates a road map for ridding the world of the pandemic this year, next year or in 10 years. It could at least agree to harmonize procedures in the hope of taming the pandemic's effects on people and maybe offer a lifeline to the crippled world economy, which might suffer further if world leaders don't act soon.

- Courtesy: Arab News

Artificial Intelligence and the Human Race

Huma Arshad



Artificial intelligence is the science of getting machines to mimic the behavior of humans. machine learning is the subset of AI that focuses on getting machines to decide by feeding them data on the other hand deep learning is the subset of machine learning that uses the concept of a neural network to solve complex problems

JOHN Mc Carthy the man who has coined the term "Artificial Intelligence" never had an idea that thousands of articles will be written for/against 'artificial intelligence' only due to the fear and myths about it. Generally, it is assumed that AI is introduced and has been programmed to do something devastating against human beings or it is a war of technology verse human beings. One of the most common fear is that AI will take over the job market and millions of people in the world will be jobless.

Artificial Intelligence versus Machine learning and deep learning Artificial intelligence is the science of getting machines to mimic the behavior of humans. machine learning is the subset of AI that focuses on getting machines to decide by feeding them data on the other hand deep learning is the subset of machine learning that uses the concept of a neural network to solve complex problems. So we can say that artificial intelligence, machine learning, and deep learning are interconnected fields. Both machine learning and deep learning feed artificial intelli-

gence by providing algorithms and neural networks to solve data-driven problems. However, AI is not only dependent on these two. AI covers a huge field including robotics, natural language processing, expert systems, and a lot more.

Jobs at high risk due to AI

Kai-Fu Lee mentions in his book "AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World order," almost 50% of the jobs worldwide will be taken over by AI. Drivers, cashiers, Farmers, Publishers, travel agents, receptionists, proofreaders, market research analysts, and many more could be handled by machines.

Jobs that are safe in an AI world

AI is very powerful but it cannot do everything, which humans can do. So, the good news in few jobs is still safe when it comes to AI. AI cannot do tasks comprised of compassion and creativity. The twist in the story is AI cannot deal with empathy it can produce answers based on data and data analysis but deal with the human while having an empathetic approach is beyond AI's boundaries and control. Counseling of patients, computer science and engineering,

fiction writing, even teaching, and science are the field that could be safer in the world of AI. AI can be your friend as well and can provide you a resource that can listen to you like a mother, and even you can program that resource according to your wish. It feels really exciting when you imagine your pizza delivery boy a robot but actually, that robot is a replacement of a human being.

Possible Solution

As we all know that the rapidly growing pharmaceutical world is inventing cures for diseases which is increasing life expectancy. That means more population and fewer jobs. The solution to this whole revolution of AI is either to control the population to create such job markets which can alive human creativity so that the human race will not only look towards government and become complacent.

When it comes to wars and political governments of countries have to be extremely vigilant when and where to use AI which would not harm the entire human race. So AI is a blessing if used empathetically and with a humane approach.

Briefs

Vaccination lowers risk of Covid virus by 7 times

FROM PAGE 01

Showing results of research work on the vaccination process in Pakistan, the minister pointed out that from February 03, 2021-when the vaccination started, to July 01, some 17.7 million received the vaccines out of which 6.2 million people had received both jabs. During the period, he said 490,000 cases of COVID-19 were reported which counts for 0.3 percent of the whole adult population (18 years and above) that is around 125 million in the country. He said 0.08 percent or 9,917 cases were reported among those who received first dose, whereas 0.04 percent or 5500 people with complete vaccination were infected with the virus. This means every one out of 333 Pakistani citizens was infected, but if we see among the people who got first dose, only one out of 1250 people was reported positive and among those who were completely vaccinated, only one out of 2500 people was reported COVID positive, Asad Umar said. He said the data showed that health experts, doctors or scientist were not giving their opinions on the basis of their personal opinions but they had talked on facts and based on the real results of vaccinations in Pakistan. He said even the people who were vaccinated but got infected, the seriousness of the disease was far lower compared to those who were not vaccinated. The Indian variant, he said had worst impact on the whole region but the good news was that if you got vaccinated, the risk would minimize. The world has praised Pakistan's strategy to cope with the pandemic, therefore in order to maintain this positive image, all Pakistanis are urged to get vaccinated and follow SOPs against the pandemic especially during Eid holidays.

Security of Chinese nationals top priority

FROM PAGE 01

shared grief and pain of the bereaved families. He underlined that the government of Pakistan was providing the best possible medical care to the injured Chinese nationals.

He reiterated that Pakistan and China had an iron-clad friendship which had withstood the vicissitudes of time. No hostile forces would be allowed to damage brotherly relations between Pakistan and China, he said.

Hasan Ali to miss first T20I

NOTTINGHAM: Pacer Hasan Ali will miss the first T20I of the series against England after he picked a strain in his left leg during a training session at Trent Bridge on Thursday. The team management has decided to bench the 27-year-old Hasan as a precautionary measure. He will now be assessed ahead of the second T20I, following which a decision on his participation will be made. It is likely that the 21-year-old Mohammad Hasnain will play in place of Hasan. Remember, Green Shirts lost to England by 3-0 in three-match ODI series. - APP

Morikawa makes charge into British Open lead

SANDWICH: Collin Morikawa showed no sign of inexperience when surging into the lead on his British Open debut at nine under par after a second round score of 64 on Friday. The American is making his first appearance at the Open Championship and played for the first time on British soil last week at the Scottish Open where he finished in a tie for 71st. However, the 24-year-old has already shown an ability to raise his game for the big occasion during his short career and he did so again with a round of six under at Royal St. George's. - APP

Biden, Merkel united against Russia, disagreements remain

"I value the friendship," she told reporters while hailing the US and Germany as sharing the same values and "determination to tackle the challenges of our times"

AGENCIES

WASHINGTON: United States President Joe Biden and German Chancellor Angela Merkel have pledged a unified front against "Russian aggression" from Moscow, while remaining at odds over the Russia-to-Germany Nord Stream 2 pipeline, in what is likely the outgoing German leader's final visit to the White House as a head of state. Biden and Merkel were quick to strike a familiar tone during the German leader's first visit to Washington following four years of fraught relations under former President Donald Trump. "On a personal note, I must tell you I will miss seeing you at our summits," Biden said as he stood by Merkel, the second-longest serving chancellor in Germany's history, during a late afternoon joint news conference on Wednesday. "I truly will."

Pakistan women bags first win on West Indies tour

SPORTS DESK

ANTIGUA: Omaima Sohal's half-century and four-wicket hauls by pacer Fatima Sana and left-arm orthodox Nashra Sandhu scripted Pakistan Women's victory over West Indies Women by four wickets in the fourth ODI at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium here on Thursday. Pakistan overhauled 211-run target with nine balls spare with Omaima, who posted her second half-century of the series, top-scoring with 61 off 89. The right-handed middle-order batter smashed four

fours and led her side's recovery after they were two down for 44 with Muneeba Ali (19 off 22) and captain Javeria Khan (run-a-ball 10) back in the hut in the 10th over. Omaima added 81 runs for the third wicket with opener Sidra Amin, who came into the national side after scoring a sparkling 108 not out for Pakistan Women 'A' on Tuesday which helped the side to an 80-run win. Sidra scored 41 off 87 before she was dismissed in the 29th over off Shakera Selman's bowling, who also accounted for Javeria. Pakistan were taken over the line by Nida Dar (29 off 34, three fours) and Fatima (two

wickets helping Pakistan to skittle West Indies out with two balls remaining. It was Nashra's two wickets in three balls in the 40th over which brought Pakistan back in the contest as the left-arm orthodox broke 142-run stand between West Indies captain Stafanie Taylor, who missed half-century by a run, and Kysihona Knight (88 off 140, eight fours and a six) with the wicket of the former. She sent Britney Cooper back without giving her an opportunity to open her account and then accounted for Chinelle Henry (nine off 17) and Anisa Mohammed (five off eight).

would deliver gas from the Arctic to Germany via the Baltic Sea, bypassing Ukraine and depriving it of valuable transit fees. Washington has long opposed the \$11bn project, arguing that it will threaten European energy security by increasing the continent's reliance on Russian gas and allowing Moscow to exert political pressure on vulnerable Eastern and Central European nations. Merkel, for her part, repeated Berlin's stance that the pipeline is intended as an additional project, not a replacement for Ukraine as a gas transit route. She added that Russia could face EU sanctions if it



2005, plans to exit Germany's government after the national elections in September. Polling shows her Christian Democrats are poised to take the lead in forming a government after the election but it remains unclear which parties would be included in a coalition. Biden's Democratic Party, meanwhile, has tenuous majorities in the US Senate and House of Representatives. Those could evaporate in the 2022 congressional elections. During the White House visit, the leaders also walked a careful line on China, a policy area where Washington and Berlin have been at odds in recent times. Berlin has wooed Chinese trade, while the Biden administration has framed combating Chinese competition as its top foreign policy priority. "There is a lot of common understanding that China, in many areas, is our competitor; that trade with China needs to rest on the assumption that we have a level playing field," Merkel told reporters. Both leaders said they would stand up for democratic principles and universal rights when they saw China or any other country working to undermine them. "We are united, united in our commitment to addressing democratic backsliding, corruption, phony populism in the European Union or among candidates for the EU membership, or anywhere we find it in the world," Biden said.

Belarus conducts new raids on journalists and rights activists

AGENCIES

KYIV: Belarusian police searched offices and homes of independent journalists and human rights activists for the third successive day on Friday, extending what President Alexander Lukashenko's opponents say is a new crackdown on dissent. A senior law enforcement official was quoted by the state-run Belta news agency as saying security forces carried out the searches after receiving information about the alleged financing of protests against Lukashenko. Local human rights groups said at least five people had been detained, and 25 homes and offices had been searched. The office of U.S. broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty was among those searched, the Belarus association of Journalists said, denouncing "a massive attack by security forces on journalists across the country." On its website, RFE/RL quoted witnesses as saying police had broken through the door of its office in the capital Minsk, and said the homes of two RFE/RL journalists had been searched. Human rights organisation Viasna-96 said two RFE/RL journalists were detained. The wife of one, correspondent Alek Hrudziolovich, told RFE/RL that he had been led away in handcuffs by police who removed computers, phones and money. Belta quoted Vladimir Shyshko, an official at Belarus's Investigative Committee which prosecutes major crimes, as saying the committee had acted on information about a "shadow movement of significant financial resources, primarily from abroad, tax evasion and financing of various kinds of protest activity." Non-governmental organisations and independent media have previously dismissed such accusations. The authorities have shut down a number of media outlets and rights groups since protests began last August against a presidential election which the opposition says was rigged. Lukashenko, in power since 1994, denies electoral fraud. On Wednesday and Thursday, security officials conducted searches in around 20 human rights, charitable, media and expert institutions, detaining more than 15 people, including the head of Viasna-96. The searches follow new sanctions imposed on Belarus by the European Union and the United States since Minsk diverted a passenger plane flying from Greece to Lithuania and detained a dissident journalist and his girlfriend who were on board.

Pakistan, India placed in same group for T20 World Cup 2021

KARACHI: Pakistan and India will take on each other in few months time as both team are placed in same group for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021. The world's governing body announced groups for the mega event, hosted by the BCCI in Oman and the United Arab Emirates from 17 October to 14 November. The groups, selected on the basis of team rankings as of 20 March 2021, see defending champions the West Indies pooled along with former champions England, Australia and South Africa in Group 1 of the Super 12s, with two qualifiers from Round 1 joining them. Group 2 will comprise former champions India and Pakistan, New Zealand, Afghanistan and the other two qualifiers from Round 1. Eight teams will contest the first round including automatic qualifiers Sri Lanka and Bangladesh with the remaining six who booked their spot through the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019. Ireland, Netherlands and Namibia join Sri Lanka in Group A, whilst Oman, PNG and Scotland will face Bangladesh in Group B. The venues for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 are Dubai International Stadium, the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi, the Sharjah Stadium, and the Oman Cricket Academy Ground. The tournament schedule will be announced in due course. - DNA

Azerbaijan files criminal case into deadly mine blast

BAKU: Azerbaijan has filed a criminal case into the mine blast that killed a civilian in western Goygol region on July 14, the Prosecutor-General's Office has reported. Goygol region resident Ramal Ojagulliyev, 31, was killed by a mine while grazing animals in a pasture. "A criminal case was initiated in Goygol region prosecutor's office under Article 120.2.4 (murder committed with special cruelty or in a dangerous way) and other articles. An investigation [into the case] is currently underway," the report added. It underlined that the incident took place in the area called Purple Plateau located between Goygol region and liberated Kalbajar region, which was considered to be a mined territory between the Azerbaijani army's battle positions and the positions of the Armenian troops before the 44-day war. The highest peak of Goygol region is located in the Murov mountain range. Azerbaijani troops liberated from Armenia's occupation the Murov peak in the Murov mountain range on September 27, 2020. Over 140 Azerbaijanis have been killed or injured in the explosion of mines planted by Armenians in Azerbaijan's formerly-occupied regions since the end of the war in autumn 2020 that saw Azerbaijan liberate most of its territories in and around the Karabakh region. Azerbaijan has warned its citizens against traveling to the formerly-occupied territories without permission, citing land mine threats. It should be noted that Nuru Nuriyev was detained back in February for attempting to visit these territories. - DNA



LONDON: Pakistani HC to UK Moazzam Ahmad Khan met with first Pakistani lady alumna of Royal College of Defence Studies, Group Captain Maria Saeed. HC felicitated her on the successful completion of the course. She is a trailblazer and a role model for all young Pakistani women. - DNA

South Africa unrest was 'instigated': Ramaphosa

They quickly turned into looting as crowds pillaged shopping malls and warehouses, hauling away goods as police stood by, seemingly powerless to act. South Africa has deployed more than 20,000 defence personnel to assist police in quelling the unrest

FOREIGN DESK

JOHANNESBURG: The deadly violence and looting that have rocked South Africa for the past week were planned, President Cyril Ramaphosa has alleged, during his first visit to areas affected by the worst unrest in the country's post-apartheid era. "It is quite clear that all these incidents of unrest and looting were instigated, there were people who planned it and coordinated it," he said on Friday. Ramaphosa made the remarks when he visited Ethikwini Municipality, which includes the port city Durban in KwaZulu-Natal province, one of

the worst-hit areas in a week of looting that destroyed hundreds of businesses. At least 117 people have died, some shot and others killed in looting stampedes. "We are going after them, we have identified a good number of them, and we will not allow anarchy and mayhem to just unfold in our country," Ramaphosa told reporters. The government said on Thursday that one of the suspected instigators had been arrested and 11 were under surveillance. In all, 2,203 people have been arrested during the unrest for various offences, including theft. Ramaphosa did admit, however, that his government could have acted "quicker" to prevent the unrest and expressed

concerns about growing racial tensions in KwaZulu-Natal. Protests broke out a day after Ramaphosa's predecessor Jacob Zuma, who wields support among the poor and loyalists in the governing African National Congress (ANC) - began a 15-month jail term for refusing to testify to a corruption investigation. They quickly turned into looting as crowds pillaged shopping malls and warehouses, hauling away goods as police stood by, seemingly powerless to act. South Africa has deployed more than 20,000 defence personnel to assist police in quelling the unrest. In one of the largest troop deployments since the end of white

minority rule in 1994, the government said 10,000 soldiers were on the streets by Thursday morning and the South African National Defence Force has also called up all of its reserve forces of 12,000 soldiers. South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor said that the government is now in control of most of the areas where there has been looting and riots. "There are still pockets of areas, where there continue to be some looting," she told Al Jazeera. "Local communities have stood their ground to repel any individuals, trying to enter businesses," Pandor said. "In the majority, it is now quiet. What we need to do is to maintain stability to start the

process of rebuilding," she added. Business Unity South Africa (BUSA), a respected business lobby group, has called on the government to impose a 24-hour curfew to quickly contain the unrest. "This is an emergency unparalleled in our democratic history and requires the state to take immediate action," it said in a statement on Thursday. "We believe this must include a strongly enforced curfew in specific areas to clear the streets and allow law enforcement to regain control," it said. It echoed fears expressed by Ramaphosa of a disruption to supply chains, including energy, food and the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pakistan genuinely wants...

FROM PAGE 01

the dialogue table and to have a peaceful settlement there. To blame Pakistan for what is going on in Afghanistan, I feel, is extremely unfair. I came to Kabul. Why would I come to Kabul if I was not interested in peace? The whole idea was that you should have looked upon Pakistan as a partner in peace. And I feel really disappointed that we have been blamed for what is going on in Afghanistan. What has been happening in Afghanistan is over two decades of conflict, deep divisions and unfortunately the United States seeking a military solution when there was not one. When there were 150,000 NATO troops in Afghanistan, the greatest military machine, that was the time to ask the Taliban to come on the table.

Why were the Taliban going to compromise when the exit date was given and there were only a few thousand American troops left? Why would they listen to us when they are sensing victory? So I assure you again I had a long conversation with President Shovkat last night how we all the neighbors can help, Tajikistan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, how can we get together and somehow help the peace process and settlement because it is in all of our interest.

All the neighbors are interested that there should be a peace settlement. There are already three million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. We are petrified that there would be another flow of refugees coming in and we do not have the capacity or the economic strength to bear another inflow of refugees. So I can assure you again, if any country is trying its best out of all the other countries of the world is Pakistan today." Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Imran Khan held delegation level talks with President of Afghanistan, Muhammad Ashraf Ghani on the sidelines of 'Central and South Asia 2021: Regional Connectivity: Challenges and Opportunities' conference in International Congress Center of the Tashkent. Prime Minister Imran Khan also held a meeting with Joseph Borell Fontelles, EU HC representative and Vice President of EU, on the sidelines of 'Central and South Asia 2021.'

Afghan VP allegations ridiculous: Qureshi

FROM PAGE 01

not acceded to by internationally accepted norms/standards/procedures, Pakistan took necessary measures within its territory to safeguard our own troops and population, he added. The Minister said, 'We acknowledge Afghan Government's right to undertake actions on its sovereign territory'. However, as alleged by the Afghan Vice President, Pakistan Air Force never communicated anything to the Afghan Air Force. Such statements undermine Pakistan's sincere efforts to play its part in an Afghan owned and Afghan led solution. Pakistan lately rescued 40 ANDSF all ranks who fled to Pakistan and returned them to GIORA with respect and dignity, with a declared offer to ANDSF to provide all logistical support as requested. We remain committed to peace in Afghanistan and shall continue to endeavour towards this end irrespective of the detractors, the Minister added.

Tashkent moot a great success, says Fawad

FROM PAGE 01

Pakistan wants peace in Afghanistan so that our regional connectivity improves and we are linked to the Central Asia. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan's efforts for the purpose continue, which will succeed. The Minister also talked about rail line from Uzbekistan to Peshawar and termed it a landmark project. He said the project will help in having an improved connectivity.

Briefs

Missing Russian plane found

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: A small transport plane that went missing in Russia on Friday has been found, with all its passengers and crew members alive, the country's Emergency Ministry said. According to updated data, 19 people, including two children and four crew members, were on board when the AN-28 plane made a hard landing in a dense Siberian forest. There is no word yet on their condition, but they will be taken by helicopter to Tomsk, the nearest city, for medical examination, the ministry said. A distress signal was received from the aircraft before it disappeared from radar over the Tomsk region, the ministry said in an earlier statement. The missing plane was heading from the city of Kedrov to Tomsk, according to Siberian Light Aviation, the company that owns the aircraft. The plane was found to be fit to fly before departure and the crew did not report any malfunctions during the flight, it added. Earlier this month, another AN-26 plane crashed in Kamchatka in the Russian Far East, killing all six crew members and 23 passengers on board.

Azerbaijan, Russia ink MoC

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Insurers Association and All Russia Insurance Association have signed a memorandum of cooperation in the field of insurance.

According to the memorandum signed in Baku, the two institutions will cooperate in the fields of information exchange, preparation of legislative and regulatory legal acts, financial and credit operations and taxation, training of professional personnel, exchange of training programs and methodological materials.

In addition, the parties will cooperate in the process of organizing the business meetings, conferences and seminars related to the insurance business, etc. Discussing the possibilities of expanding cooperation between the two countries in the insurance field, the participants of the meeting stressed the importance of the insurance sector in the formation of a sustainable financial system.

The ARIA's president also discussed the insurance sector with Azerbaijan's Central Bank Chairman Elman Rustamov.

Azerbaijan's Insurers Association signed a memorandum with the Turkish Insurance Association in December 2020, to study international experience and application of new trends in the insurance sphere in Azerbaijan.

Nuclear reactor shut down in Belgium

AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: The second reactor of the Doel Nuclear Power Station in northern Belgium was shut down manually during the night of 14 to 15 July 2021, because employees noticed a rapid increase in hydrogen consumption in the alternator, indicating a leak. Report informs, citing the Belgian Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC).

Therefore, it was decided to shut down the reactor as a preventive measure, which immediately reduces any risks drastically. The situation is under control, but the FANC is monitoring this incident together with ENGIE Electrabel. The cause of the leak is now being sought. The reactor can only be restarted when the leak has been closed.

A hydrogen leak in the alternator is not specifically linked to the operation of a nuclear power plant, and it can also occur in other types of power plants. However, very strict standards apply in the nuclear sector, which means that action is taken very quickly in the event of a possible risk.

Int'l summit on Sahih Bukhoriy takes place in Samarkand

The event was attended by about forty famous Islamists, religious scholars and specialists from foreign countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan

DNA

TASHKENT: An international conference was held at the Imam Al-Bukhari Memorial Complex on the topic - Ancient and rare handwritten copies of the work "Sahihul Bukhoriy" stored in libraries around the world, the press service of the international research center of Imam Bukhari.

The event was attended by about forty famous Islamists, religious scholars and specialists from foreign countries, such as Turkey, Egypt, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Great Britain, Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan.

At the opening of the conference, they spoke about the importance of studying the heritage of Imam Bukhari by authoritative foreign experts and scientists, the current state and tasks for the future of study stored in the world collections of the scientist's works, as well as the reforms carried out in Uzbekistan in the religious and educational sphere. At the beginning of the conference, a presentation



was made on rare handwritten copies of the work "Sahihul Bukhari". Then the conference continued its work, dividing into subgroups. Scientific reports

of the participants were heard on the following topics: ancient and rare handwritten copies of the work "Sahihul Bukhoriy" stored in libraries of the world,

the scientific heritage and modernity of Imam Bukhari, the contribution of Maverannahr scientists to the development of Islamic civilization.

"The works of the scientist still serve as a spiritual and moral guideline for the Muslim world. I am sure that today's conference will serve to further develop interest in the history of Imam al-Bukhari, his unique works, as well as the development of pilgrim tourism in this place," said Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sports Utkir Saidov.

The participants also noted the fruitful activities of the International Research Center of Imam Bukhari as evidence of the religious reforms carried out in our country related to the study of the huge scientific heritage of Imam Bukhari and many other scientists, the publication of scientific-explanatory and comparative texts of works created by them.

At the press conference, the participants exchanged comprehensive views, highlighted the need for further development of cooperation, as well as the organization of such events. They noted that the center of Imam Bukhari has risen to the status of a leading scientific institution in the international arena.

Uzbek President receives Kazakhstan Deputy PM



DNA

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received Deputy Prime

Minister - Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tileuberdi, who is attending the events of the International Conference "Central and South

Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities".

The current issues of further strengthening Uzbekistan - Kazakhstan friendship, good-neighborliness

and strategic partnership were discussed.

Foreign Minister Mukhtar Tileuberdi conveyed to the President of Uzbekistan sincere greetings and best wishes from the President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and the First President of Kazakhstan - Elbasy Nursultan Nazarbayev.

The main attention was paid to the preparation of the upcoming events at the highest level, as well as the promotion of economic cooperation projects and programs of mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.

The regional agenda was considered in the context of the situation in Afghanistan and the preparation of the forthcoming Consultative Meeting of the leaders of the Central Asian countries in Turkmenistan in early August.

Azerbaijan provides 50,000 vaccines to Uzbekistan

DNA

TASHKENT: Azerbaijan provided Uzbekistan 50,000 doses of AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, as part of the global COVAX program, with the support of the Azerbaijani Embassy and UNICEF Office in Uzbekistan on July 16. The vaccines were delivered by the government delegation headed by Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev.

The vaccines were handed over to the Sanitary-Epidemiological Center and Public Health Center of Uzbekistan's Health Ministry at the airport. Azerbaijani Ambassador to Uzbekistan Husein Guliyev was also present at the handover of vaccines to the Uzbek side.

The Azerbaijani delegation will also participate in the "Central and South Asia" Regional Interaction. Chal-

lenges and Opportunities" conference to be held in Tashkent on July 16.

Azerbaijan earlier announced that it would provide 40,000 doses of AstraZeneca vaccine to Kyrgyzstan as part of the humanitarian aid in the fight against COVID-19. The government allocated \$1.1bn from the 2020 budget to fight coronavirus infection.

Azerbaijan started vaccinating citizens using China's Sinovac on January 18, Vaxzevria vaccine produced over to the Sanitary-Epidemiological Center and Public Health Center of Uzbekistan's Health Ministry at the airport. Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Uzbekistan Husein Guliyev was also present at the handover of vaccines to the Uzbek side. The Azerbaijani delegation will also participate in the "Central and South Asia" Regional Interaction. Chal-

Azerbaijan, Turkey discusses regional issues, mutual ties

DNA

TASHKENT: Azerbaijan's Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu discussed mutual relations and regional issues during a meeting on July 16 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

"We discussed our relations with the Deputy Prime Minister of Azerbaijan Shahin Mustafayev and assessed the regional situation. Long live the Turkish-Azerbaijani brotherhood!" Cavusoglu wrote on his Twitter account today.

Mustafayev and Cavusoglu met in Tashkent on the sideline of the international conference on "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Trials and

Opportunities" hosted by Uzbekistan, Turkish media has reported.

Azerbaijan and Turkey cooperate in various fields of economy. The countries have jointly completed giant energy and infrastructure projects such as Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan, Baku-Tbilisi-Kars and TANAP.

Eleven agreements were signed between the two countries within the Azerbaijani-Turkish business forum held in Ankara on February 18. The agreements envisage the development of Azerbaijani-Turkish cooperation in the economic, trade, and other spheres. Afterward, Azerbaijan and Turkey have signed a memorandum of understanding in the areas of strengthening international legal cooperation.



KABUL: Pakistan ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmed Khan met with new Saudi ambassador Faisal Talag M. Al-Bogami to Afghanistan and had wide ranging discussions with him about peace in Afghanistan and the regional situation. - DNA

Germany, Belgium floods toll tops 100

AGENCIES

BERLIN: The death toll from devastating floods across parts of western Germany has risen to 103, according to local authorities, pushing the total death toll from flooding in Western Europe past 110, as the search continued for hundreds of people still unaccounted for.

While heavy rainfall battered parts of France, Switzerland, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, the worst-hit areas were western Germany where more than 60 victims have been reported in the state of Rhineland-Palatinate and 43 in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia. In Belgium, the death toll has risen to 23. There are fears more victims could be found as waters drain away across the devastated region and clean up and salvage operations are stepped up. Nearly 900 army personnel have joined rescue workers in Germany as about 1,300 people were still reported missing. Authorities, though, said efforts to contact them could be hampered by disrupted roads and phone connections.

Here are the latest updates:

Scientists have insisted that climate change exacerbates the extreme weather that has been on show from the western US and Canada to Siberia to Europe's Rhine region.

"There is a clear link between extreme precipitation occurring and climate change," Professor Wim Thiery of Brussels University told The Associated Press.

For the heat records, Professor Stefan Rahmstorf of the University of Potsdam said: "Some are so extreme that they would be virtually impossible without global warming, as recently in western North America." Sir David King, chair of the Climate Crisis Advisory Group said: "These are casualties of the climate crisis: we will only see these extreme weather events become more frequent." Hundreds of people have fled their homes in and around the southern Dutch town of Meerssen after floods broke through a dyke.. Emergency services said the flood waters were about to swamp the surrounding villages of Bunde, Voulwames, Brommelen and Geulle. Sirens sounded and drone footage

showed water flowing into streets and homes.

"Immediately leave your home and get to safety," the emergency services said in an online alert. "There is a large hole in the dyke." Families were told to turn off their electricity and gas supplies.

The flooding was expected to impact about 3,000 people, local emergency services spokeswoman Samantha Wisniewski said.

The number of people dead in Belgium has risen to 23, Belga news agency has reported, citing the governor of badly-hit Liege province.

"There are still people on roofs in the province of Liege who haven't had food or drink for 36 hours," governor Herve Jamar told broadcasters RTL-TVI and KTFB in comments carried by Belga.

Belgian Interior Minister Annelies Verindien told broadcaster VRT there was a provisional death toll of 18 with a great many missing. Helicopters and drones are to keep searching in the coming hours, she said. About 707 soldiers have been deployed across 20 counties in the worst-hit states of Rhineland-Palat-

inate and North Rhine-Westphalia to provide support to the local communities affected by the heavy rains, the defence ministry said on Twitter. Translation: There are currently 709 soldiers on duty in 20 districts in North Rhine-Westphalia and Rhineland-Palatinate. Disaster relief is now the top priority, said Minister AKK [Minister of Defence Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer]. We are pooling all available forces.

Authorities in the southern Dutch town of Venlo are evacuating a hospital due to the looming threat of flooding. Emergency coordinators said some 200 patients will be transported from the VieCuri hospital to other hospitals Friday afternoon as a precaution "to get ahead of any possible flooding".

The hospital is close to the banks of the swollen Maas River that flows into the Netherlands from Belgium, where flooding has caused widespread damage in and near the city of Liege. In Erftstadt, a town southwest of Cologne which has been badly hit by the storm, several residential buildings and part of the historic castle have collapsed, local media

reported. "We assume several deaths, but do not know," said North Rhine-Westphalian Interior Minister Herbert Reul in Dusseldorf.

Authorities in the German state of Rhineland-Palatinate said 60 people had died there, while in neighbouring North Rhine-Westphalia state officials put the death toll at 43, but warned that the figure could rise further.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said he was "stunned" by the devastation caused by the flooding and pledged support to the families of those killed and to cities and towns facing significant damage. Steinmeier also highlighted how climate action was needed to prevent such devastation in the future.

"Only if we take up the fight against climate change decisively, we will be able to prevent, we will be able to keep extreme weather conditions such as those we are experiencing," he said. On a similar note, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen urged stronger action on climate change.

Cuba rejects US 'failed state' accusations

AGENCIES

HAVANA: Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said on Friday the United States, not Cuba, was a failed state, reacting to comments made the previous day by U.S. President Joe Biden in the wake of unprecedented protests on the island.

Biden called the Communist-run country a "failed state" that is "repressing their citizens", dashing hopes he could lift crippling sanctions any time soon that have contributed to Cuba's worst economic crisis in decades.

Biden, a Democrat, had vowed during his presidential campaign to ease some of the sanctions on Cuba tightened by his predecessor Donald Trump, a Republican. But analysts say the protests have complicated his political leeway to do so. "A failed state is that which, to please a reactionary and blackmailing minority, is capable of doing damage to 11 million humans," Diaz-Canel wrote on Twitter.

France to host Lebanon aid event

WEB DESK

PARIS: France's foreign ministry has said President Emmanuel Macron will host a new international conference on crisis-hit Lebanon next month, on the first anniversary of a devastating explosion at Beirut's port that killed some 200 people and wrecked much of the Lebanese capital.

The announcement on Friday came a day after Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Saad Hariri gave up trying to form a government, striking a further blow to a long-running political impasse. Prime Minister Hassan Diab has been serving in a caretaker capacity since resigning in the wake of the port explosion on August 4, 2020, with fractious sectarian politicians unable to agree on a new government ever since.

The French foreign ministry said in a statement the event will be organized with the help of the United Nations "to respond to the needs of the Lebanese whose situation is deteriorating every day".

Macron had hosted a first aid conference in the wake of the port explosion, rallying some 250 million euros in pledges (\$295m). But France, the former colonial power, has repeatedly expressed exasperation over the failure of Lebanon's leaders to end a political and economic crisis that dates back to well before the explosion.

The foreign ministry said Hariri's failure to form a government "confirms the political deadlock which Lebanese leaders have deliberately continued for months, even as Lebanon sinks into an unprecedented economic and social crisis".

Azerbaijani oil prices down

DNA

BAKU: The price of Azeri LT CIF Augusta, produced at the Azeri-Chirag-Deepwater Gunashli (ACG) field, decreased by \$1.82 on July 15 compared to the previous price, settling at \$75 per barrel, Trend reports referring to the source from the country's oil and gas market.

The price of Azeri LT FOB Ceyhan amounted to \$75.4 per barrel on July 15, decreasing by 81 cents compared to the previous price. Azerbaijan has been producing Azeri LT since 1997 and exporting it via the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) and Baku-Supsa Western Export Pipeline, as well as by rail to the Georgian port of Batumi. Azerbaijan also sells its URALS oil from the Russian Black Sea port of Novorossiysk, delivering it through the Baku-Novorossiysk pipeline. The price of URALS with shipment from the port stood at \$71.12 per barrel on July 15, has decreased by \$1.51 as compared to the previous price.

Meanwhile, the cost of a barrel of Brent Dated oil, produced in the North Sea decreased by \$1.55 compared to the previous price and reached \$75.42 per barrel.

Briefs

PML-N facing conspiracies

DNA

BHIMBER: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Vice President Maryam Nawaz has alleged that former premier Nawaz Sharif has alleged that power through a conspiracy. Addressing an election rally in Bhimber area of Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK), the PML-N vice president claimed that the false cases were registered against Nawaz Sharif for removing him from premiership. "Nawaz Sharif is in London but they have to steal the election for defeating him in the election. These people lost even by staying on a same page," she added. "I am a daughter of this soil who loves the armed forces of Pakistan. Some people did unfair to us with cruelty; however, I have left this matter to Allah Almighty," Maryam Nawaz maintained.

Young Pak fisherman dies in Indian captivity

NEWS DESK

LAHORE: A 22-year-old Pakistani fisherman has died in Indian captivity, three years after he was imprisoned by the authorities for fishing near the Indian waters. The 22-year-old fisherman identified as Teji was arrested by Indian authorities three years back. The body of the fisherman was handed over to the Edhi Foundation at the Wagha Border and was shifted to a morgue of the welfare organization. This is not the first time that a Pakistani fisherman has died in Indian captivity as in April 2019, four fishermen died in the Indian captivity in a month. Another Pakistani national died while in Indian custody, a spokesperson of Fishermen's Co-operative Society told a private television channel at that time. The spokesperson said that a Pakistani fisherman, Muhammad Sohail died in an Indian jail and added that he was the fourth Pakistani, who died in Indian custody during a short span of one month. He said, "Muhammad Sohail went fishing over two years ago and was taken into custody by Indian forces on October 2, 2016, over mistakenly entering into Indian waters." The spokesperson said that the reasons for his death were not known yet and added that it would take three to four days to bring his body back to Pakistan. He said that Muhammad Sohail was a resident of Muhammadi Colony in Karachi. The spokesperson further said that at least 108 Pakistani fishermen were still imprisoned in different jails in India.

Afghan leaders in Doha to resume talks

NEWS DESK

DOHA: A delegation of Afghan political leaders led by top peace official Abdullah Abdullah left for Qatar on Friday to attempt to breathe life into stalled talks with the Taliban as violence escalates around the country. Abdullah, head of the country's High Council for National Reconciliation and former government chief executive, said that even as conflict rose and districts toppled to the Taliban insurgents, peace needed to be sought at the negotiating table. We hope that the Taliban side will see this as an opportunity and know that there will be no peace with continued capturing of districts, he said at Kabul's airport before departing. The result of peace can only be achieved at the negotiating table (and) despite all the pain that our people are suffering today... we believe there is still a chance for peace.

PM seeks EU's support on Afghan refugees' rehabilitation

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI IN TASHKENT

TASHKENT: European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on the sidelines of the International Conference on Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Opportunities and Challenges on Friday. Views were exchanged on Pakistan-EU cooperation and the situation in Afghanistan were discussed. The Prime Minister highlighted Pakistan's vital contributions to the Afghan peace process and Intra-Afghan Negotiations (IAN). He stressed that the conflict could only be settled through an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned political process leading to a comprehensive negotiated political settlement. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of continued engagement of the international community after the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan to facilitate lasting peace in the country. The Prime Minister expressed concern at the worsening situation in Afghanistan and its negative impact on Pakistan's security.



TASHKENT: Joseph Borrell Fontelles, EU HC representative and Vice President of EU called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on the sidelines of 'Central and South Asia 2021: Regional Connectivity: Challenges and Opportunities' conference. – DNA

He also called upon the EU and the international community to support and assist Afghan refugees. Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Imran Khan expressed disappointment over Pakistan being blamed for unrest in Afghanistan and said that no one played more role than Pakistan did in bringing the Taliban to the negotiating table.

US, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa improve diabetes treatment

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The United States Government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is partnering with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to improve diabetes treatment. By installing a case-based information management system – called the D-Talk Electronic Medical Records system - at 20 health facilities across the province, they will revolutionize the case management of diabetic patients and improve the availability of insulin at provincial health facilities. "USAID is committed to extending all possible support



to the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for sustainable public health systems in the province," said Dr. Enilda Martin, Director of USAID/Pakistan's Office of Health, Population and Nutrition. "If we want Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to progress and health services to be on par with the developed world, digitization is the key," said KP Secretary of Health, Mr. Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah. "Digitizing and having a dedicated management information system for various functions in the department is the way towards e-governance and effective patient management in the future."

The U.S. government support will also include an Asset Management Information System to automate the inventory at health facilities and thereby manage resources more effectively, reducing the waste of expensive equipment and assets to streamline health management in the province. Additionally, USAID has partnered with the Government of Pakistan's health and disaster management authorities in their COVID-19 pandemic response to strengthen district-level monitoring and rapid response teams, expand testing, provide ventilators, and train health workers across COVID-19 related service delivery systems.

Opp blasts 'Tabahi Sarkar' for price hike

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) senior leaders have condemned the government for heavily increasing the prices of petroleum products. The PTI-led federal government issued a notification on Thursday increasing petrol price by Rs5.40 per litre. Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Political Communication Shehbaz Gill said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had approved only Rs5.40 increase despite receiving a summary for hiking POL prices by up to Rs11 per litre. However, mainstream opposition parties rejecting the petrol price hike condemned it in the strongest possible words. Opposition Leader in the National Assembly and PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif said that the PTI government has made a new record of inflated prices of petrol and with this people have seen the empathy of 'Naya Pakistan'. In a statement issued on Friday, the PML-N leader said that he had already highlighted that this government is making people's lives miserable with inflation. "The reality of the so-called tax-free budget has now been exposed," he added.

Govt approves hike in ghee, sugar, flour prices at USCs

The ECC gave approval of Rs17 per kilo increase in sugar price. Now the sugar will be available at Rs85/kg instead of Rs68/kg

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: After dropping the petrol bomb by rising the price by Rs5.40 per litre yesterday, the government on Friday gave another knockout blow to the already economically-pressed people by hiking prices of three basic necessities at the Utility Stores Corporation of Pakistan. The Economic Coordination Committee headed by Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin approved a hike in the prices of three basic eatable items. The ECC gave approval of Rs17 per kilo increase in sugar price. Now the sugar will be available at Rs85/kg instead of Rs68/kg. The committee also allowed a rise of Rs150 in the price of 20-kilo sack of flour. Now the 20-kilo flour sack will be available for Rs950 instead of its current price of Rs800. The government okayed an astounding Rs90 per kg

hike in the price of ghee. Now the ghee could be purchased for Rs260/kg instead of Rs170/kg. The ECC also gave approval to the adjustment in the receivables and payables of Wapda, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Neelum Jhelum hydro-power project and National Transmission & Dispatch Company (NTDC). This decision will lead to a reduction of Rs116 billion in the circular debt. According to a press statement issued after the meeting here, Secretary, Ministry of Industries and Production presented a summary regarding extension of the Prime Minister's Relief Package-2020 providing subsidies on five essential commodities from 15th July 2021 to 30th September 2021 till the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system becomes fully operational. The ECC considered and approved a summary, presented by the M/o Commerce, regarding the elimination of Documents attestation fee for goods imported into Pakistan from Kenya as this Non-Tariff Measure (NTM) increases cost of business and transaction time. The said decision by the Committee would facilitate trade between the two countries and enhance Pakistan's market share in the region. The ECC approved a summary tabled by the Power Division regarding non-cash settlement for Power Sector re-lent loans against subsidies payable by Government of Pakistan equal to Rs.116 billion. The ECC approved "Kamyab Pakistan Program". A flagship program which shall extend micro-loans to entrepreneurs and farmers under "Kamyab Karobar" and "Kamyab Kissan" schemes respectively. The program shall also provide low cost housing loans through NAPHDA.

Hungarian envoy calls on Air Chief

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Hungary to Pakistan Bela Fazekas Friday called on Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force (PAF), Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu. The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of PAF personnel and exceptional progress made by

the PAF over the years, especially through indigenization, a news release said. The Air Chief highlighted the cordial relations between the two countries and reiterated his resolve to further augment the existing cooperation between the two Air Forces. During the meeting, various matters of mutual interest and professional cooperation also came under discussion, it added.



TASHKENT: Chief Editor Daily Islamabad Post Ansar Mahmood Bhatti with Foreign Minister of Pakistan Shah Mehmood Qureshi at the sidelines of Central and South Asia Conference. Pakistani delegation is in Tashkent for the conference. – DNA

'Maryam seeks NRO in AJK polls campaign'

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Farrukh Habib on Friday said the PML-N vice-president Maryam Nawaz was seeking an NRO (National Reconciliation Ordinance) like concession to save her father Nawaz Sharif from prison during her election campaign in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Responding to the public meeting address of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) vice president, the minister said "Maryam was running 'Abbu Bachao' campaign in AJK instead of asking people to vote for her party." He advised that she should not expect any NRO from Prime Minister Imran Khan. Farrukh said the PML-N vice president should inform the people about the deep ties of Nawaz Sharif with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Jindal family [Indian businessman] that forced him to put Kashmir on back burner. He said Maryam Nawaz did not speak on atrocities and unconstitutional measures taken by Modi in Indian illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir during her election campaign. She [Maryam] did not even dare to utter a single word over the illegal detention of Hurriyat leaders, he added. The minister said Maryam did not mention her party manifesto in any of her speech during public meeting of the election campaign. He said Maryam was obsessed with hatred of Prime Minister Imran Khan as she open her speech remarks with his name and concluded on it. – APP

'RSS ideology main hurdle', PM rebuffs Indian journo

DNA

TASHKENT: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday snubbed Indian journalist, saying "RSS ideology is the main hurdle" in the way of normalisation of ties between Islamabad and New Delhi. The prime minister, who was in Tashkent to participate in a conference on "Central and South Asia Regional Connectivity, challenges and opportunities", responded to the question by an Indian journalist who sought Pakistan's stance on talks with India. "We have been trying to tell India... that we have been waiting... for a long time, let's live like civilised neighbours... but what to do, as the RSS ideology has come in the way," PM Imran remarked. The premier was leaving the Congress Hall after attending the conference when an Indian journalist asked him that "India wants to know whether talks and terrorism go side by side".

Pakistan, Kuwait decide to set up Joint Commission

TASHKENT: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and his Kuwaiti counterpart Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Muhammed Al-Sabah on Friday vowed cooperation to set up a Joint Commission to promote bilateral and economic ties in near future. In a meeting held on the sidelines of the Central and South Asia Coordination Conference in Tashkent, the two foreign ministers decided that the Commission would work under their supervision. The two sides discussed issues of mutual interest and the promotion of bilateral cooperation in various fields particularly education, science, technology, culture and food security. Qureshi said Pakistan and Kuwait enjoyed fraternal ties based on common religious and cultural bonds. The two foreign ministers emphasized on the need to strengthening high-level relations between Pakistan and Kuwait. – APP

Balochistan, Henan to establish sister province ties

Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong congratulated the inter-provincial partnership, calling it a step towards the building of a shared community between Pakistan and China

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Balochistan and Henan province of central China have signed a letter of intent to establish sister province relationship through a video conference, signaling more pragmatic cooperation in the future between the two major agricultural provinces that are both endowed with rich resources. According to Gwadar Pro, the conference themed on Pak-China Agriculture Cooperation Forum 2021 was jointly organized by China Overseas Ports Holding Company (COPHC) and Gwadar Port Authority (GPA) to strengthen economic and trade cooperation, especially in agriculture sector, between Ba-

lochistan and Henan province. The conference also witnessed the unveiling ceremony of PAK-CHINA (Puyang-Gwadar) Friendship Green Park and Henan Agricultural Industrial Park, which are part of the outcomes of Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to Gwadar in early July. Addressing the event, Governor of Henan Province Wang Kai said the establishment of sister relationship between Balochistan and Henan is a significant development for both sides and the two provinces should strive to become a model of China-Pakistan cooperation at the provincial level. Wang specified that Zhengzhou Airport Economy Zone and Gwadar Port, both as logistics hubs, are possessed with cooperation opportunities in manufacturing,

tourism, e-commerce, and modern service industry, but it lies in the efforts of the two governments to realize these potentials. He stressed the importance of organizing exhibitions and business matchmaking activities between the two provinces to enhance the business community's understanding of each other's markets and expand the scope of trade and investment. The development of Henan Agricultural Industrial Park should be placed as a high priority, Wang noted, adding that the park will play an important role in facilitating storage and cold chain and promoting in-depth cooperation in the agricultural sector. Chief Minister of Balochistan Jam Kamal Khan pinpointed that agri-

culture plays a pivotal role in the economic development of both Balochistan and Henan provinces. While they have some in common in agricultural development, there is more for Balochistan to catch up in the technological aspect. Highlighting the opportunities presented by the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in agricultural and industrial development, Jamal expected the cooperation could bring more changes to Balochistan as the two provinces strengthen economic ties and mutual exchanges. Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque stressed the significance of the event. He noted Balochistan is essential for CPEC, as Gwadar lies in the heart of the project, while Henan, as a historic and cultural prov-

ince of China, has been excelled in the agriculture and textile industry and renowned as a busy transportation hub. In this condition, the inter-provincial cooperation is bound to bring more benefits for the two sides. Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong, represented by Deputy Chief of Commission Mr Xie Guoxiang in the conference due to tight schedule, congratulated the inter-provincial partnership, calling it a step towards the building of a shared community between Pakistan and China. Reviewing his visit to Gwadar weeks ago with the PM, Nong expressed recognition of the work completed by enterprises from Henan in improving the environment in Gwadar and developing the port and the free zone.