



Islamabad POST

Monday, July 26, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

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Briefs

PM wins hearts of Kashmiris

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farukh Habib on Sunday expressed the hope that the Kashmiris would vote for Pakistan Tahreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and ensure its victory in 11th general election of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The minister, in a tweet, said like Gilgit-Baltistan, the people of AJK would also reject the cronies of Narendra Modi, corrupt, money launderers, fake accounts holders and 'certified liars' on Sunday. He said PM Imran Khan had won the hearts of Kashmiris by becoming their ambassador.

Pak-China friendship flourishing

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office said on Sunday Pakistan-China friendship has flourished from strength to strength, unaffected by vicissitudes of time and changes in regional and global environment. The Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhry in a tweet on Sunday, said both Pakistan and China remain firm in resolve to further strengthen this All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. The Spokesperson of Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs also tweeted that China and Pakistan are the most trustworthy good neighbours, good friends and good brothers to each other.

Talus Talib a pride of country

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Weightlifter Talus Talib on Sunday missed out on a rare Olympic medal for Pakistan but turned plenty of heads as Pakistan finally took notice of him. The 21-year-old lifter from Gujranwala, making his Olympics debut, took part in the 67kg category and held the gold medal spot until the final round before eventually being bumped down and denied a podium finish.

PTI leads in AJK elections amid violence

Former PM Sardar Atiq wins his seat; Sh Rashid greets PTI on victory

BUREAU REPORT

MUZAFFARABAD: Counting of votes in polling stations across Azad Jammu and Kashmir, as well as various cities of Pakistan, for the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections saw Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf gain the lead ahead of PML-N and PPP. The unofficial results were coming in till night, according to which PTI had won 19 seats and was leading in a number of other seats. Meanwhile, PPP had won five constituencies, and PML-N had managed to win two seats so far. Polling time ended at 5pm with the gates of polling stations closed to new voters, however those already queued inside were allowed to cast their ballot. AJK has a total of 3.2 million voters, out of which 1.75 million are male and 1.46 million are female. There are 33 electoral constituencies in the ten districts of AJK, while 12 constituencies are reserved for Pakistan-based Jammu & Kashmir refugees. Polling booths in across all of Pakistan's provinces were set up for the refugees. Over 2.8 million voters have been registered in 33 AJK constituencies and 0.4 million in 12 Jammu Kashmir refugees based in various parts of Pakistan. A total of 691 candidates, including 381 belonging to a total of 32 registered political parties and a total of 310 independent candidates, are in the run to win the election for 45 seats. The elections were held under the supervision of AJK Judiciary, Pakistan Army and Rangers with the coordination of the local civil law enforcement institutions.

Four soldiers martyred as vehicle falls in ravine

STAFF REPORT



RAWALPINDI: A Pakistan Army Quick Response Team vehicle on Saturday fell in ravine after it negotiated a steep turn in Laswa where four soldiers embraced martyrdom in the accident. As many as four soldiers embraced shahadat (martyrdom) while three soldiers and a civil driver got injured when an Army Quick Response Force (QRF) team vehicle employed for maintenance of Law and Order in support of the AJK Election 2021, toppled taking a steep turn in Laswa and fell in a ravine, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. It added that the injured had been evacuated to nearby medical facility for necessary medical care.

COVID-19 tally reports 6% positivity ratio

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Sunday of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded 55,720 with 2,819 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 1,176 people recovering from the disease during the last 24 hours. Forty-five corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 41 of whom were under treatment in the hospitals and four of them perished in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). Most of the deaths occurred in Sindh followed by Punjab. Out of the total 45 deaths occurred, 22 of them died were under treatment on ventilators. There were 2,573 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition with 22 of them admitted

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Over 25 million vaccinations carried out so far: Asad Umar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar on Sunday announced that Pakistan has successfully inoculated 25 million people against the novel coronavirus. Taking to Twitter, the minister - who is also the chief of the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) - announced that aside from inoculating 25 million people (2.5 crores), the government is employing measures to vaccinate more people in the coming month. "Further acceleration [is] being planned for August. By [the] end of August, all major cities' target is to have at least 40% of the eligible population vaccinated," Umar wrote. Meanwhile, 45 more people lost their lives to the novel coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking Pakistan's nationwide death toll past 23,000, figures issued by the NCOC showed on Sunday. According to the NCOC, 44,579 coronavirus tests were conducted across the country in the last 24 hours, out of which 2,819 turned out to be positive.



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Saudi FM due on July 27

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud is expected to visit Pakistan on July 27, his second visit here. His Pakistani counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi had in several meetings requested him to visit and an assurance was given in May this year. The announcement comes immediately after Saudi Arabia released Pakistani prisoners, jailed for petty crimes. The move had been promised by Crown Prince Muhammad Bin Salman on his visit to Pakistan in 2019. There have been moments of tension between the two allies over Pakistan's demand that Saudi Arabia should convene a special session of OIC Foreign Ministers to discuss India's annexation of Occupied Kashmir.

"The Saudi foreign minister is expected in Islamabad on a day-long visit during the next week, during which bilateral relations and co-operation in various fields would be reviewed," Prime Minister Imran Khan's Special Assistant on the Middle East Tahir Ashrafi, told Arab News, while a Saudi Embassy official said Prince Faisal is scheduled to arrive on Tuesday. During his last visit to Saudi Arabia in May, Prime Minister Imran Khan had invited Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and it was agreed that Prince Farhan Al Saud leading a delegation would visit Pakistan to prepare for the visit of the Crown Prince.

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Two killed, 10 injured in violence

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: Two people were killed while 10 others were injured during clashes between supporters of different political parties on election day of Azad Kashmir polls on Sunday. During a clash between PML-N and PTI voting agents at most sensitive polling station 53 of LA 53 voter slips were torn apart after which polling was suspended in the station by the presiding officer. On the other hand, fire was exchanged between PPP and PTI supporters in LA 12 as a result two including a PTI supporter were shot dead while two others sustained injuries. Eight more were injured during a clash between PTI and PPP workers in LA-15 and polling process was suspended. Earlier, Pakistan People Party (PPP) filed a written complaint with Azad Kashmir Election Commission and asked it to take strict action as per the law against those involved in the irregularities.

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RUSSIA: Pakistan Navy Ship Zulfikar participates in Navy Day celebration at St. Petersburg. - APP

India upset over PTI victory: Fawad

The minister said that free and fair election process within Pakistan gave hope to the people of IIOJK

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Sunday that India was very upset on certain victory of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections. In today's elections, the Kashmiris have overwhelmingly voted for the PTI candidates and with the grace of Allah it will form the government, he said talking to media persons in Pind Dadan Khan. He said that

'Rigged election': Opp. parties slam PTI govt

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Opposition parties on Sunday slammed the PTI-led government for "rigging" in the ongoing Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections. At least two people were killed due to clashes between political parties in Kotli, while two others who were injured are being treated at a hospital, police said before the polling ended at 5pm. Senator Sherry Rehman, PPP's vice-president, blamed the Centre for "systematic rigging" and said it was



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Thousands of Afghan families flee fighting in Kandahar

"They forced us to leave ... I am now living with my 20 member family in a compound with no toilet," said Akbar

AGENCIES

KANDAHAR: More than 22,000 Afghan families have fled from their homes to escape fighting in the former Taliban bastion of Kandahar, officials said on Sunday, as authorities arrested four suspected insurgents over this week's rocket attack on Kabul. Since early May, violence has surged across several provinces including in Kandahar after the insurgents launched a sweeping offensive just days after the US-led foreign forces began their final withdrawal. The Taliban's deadly assault

Afghan forces capture four Taliban for rocket attack

NEWS DESK

KABUL: Afghan forces have captured four Taliban fighters including a militant commander for carrying out this week's rocket attack targeting the presidential palace in Kabul during the Eidul Azha prayers, officials said on Sunday. At least three rockets landed near the palace on Tuesday as President Ashraf Ghani and his top officials performed outdoor prayers to mark the start of Eid. The interior ministry said police had arrested four Taliban fighters who were behind the attack, which was claimed by the Islamic State group, in an operation in Kabul. "A Taliban commander, Momin, along with his three other men, have been arrested. They all belong to the Taliban group," ministry spokesman Mirwais Stanikzai told reporters in a video message.

has seen the insurgents capture scores of districts, border crossings and encircle several provincial capitals. "The fighting has displaced 22,000 families in the past one month in Kandahar," Dost Mohammad Daryab, head of the provincial refugee department, told AFP. "They have all moved from the volatile districts of the city to safer areas." Fighting continued on the outskirts of Kandahar city on Sunday. "The negligence of some security forces, especially the police, has made way for

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Briefs

Glowing tributes paid to Arif Nizami

BAHAWALPUR: A ceremony was held at a law chamber at District Courts Bahawalpur where late journalist, Arif Nizami was paid rich tributes. According to a press release issued here, the ceremony was attended by Advocate Sabir Khan, Advocate Kaleem and others. They remembered the services of veteran journalist, Arif Nizami for the cause of human rights. They opined that Arif Nizami played a significant role through his media write ups and TV programs for protection of rights of common people of society. Later, prayer offered for the departed soul of the deceased. — APP

10kg hashish seized

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Sadr police arrested two drug peddlers, including a woman, and recovered hashish from their possession. Police said on Sunday that a police team headed by SI Ziaullah set up a picket near Mohalla Elahiabad Chak No 225-RB, Malkhanwala, Satiana road. The police team signaled a suspected car (LEC-5121) to stop but its driver accelerated the speed in panic, due to which, the car crashed into a wall. Police arrested the car driver Ilyas and Sobia wife of Muhammad Amin, residents of Sahiwal. During the search, the police recovered 10.5 kg hashish from the cavities of car. A case has been registered against the accused.

11 new MMHPs inaugurated in Chitral

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Energy and Power Taj Muhammad has visited Chitral valley and inaugurated 11 mini-micro hydel power stations, said a press release issued on Sunday. Out of the total recently inaugurated mini-micro hydel stations 5 projects were situated in Kalash, 5 in Garam Chashma, and one in Sheshi valley. The projects had the capacity generation of 1.7MW cheap electricity. The electricity produced by these projects will be supplied to 4000 households of these valleys.

Addressing on the occasion, the Special Assistant said that the government was committed to provide cheap, clean and green electricity to the people. He further stated that these projects will boost economic activities in the region and also uplift the education and health sectors there. He said that keeping in view the huge potential of hydropower available in Chitral and increasing local demand, more Mini Micro Hydropower Projects (MMHPs) will be constructed in the area during Phase-II. The Special Assistant also reviewed progress on ongoing hydro power projects including the 69 MW Lawi HPP and 4.2 MW Reshun HPP being undertaken by Pakhtunkhwa Energy Development Organization (PEDO).

He was accompanied by Chief Executive Officer (CEO) PEDO, Project Director MMHPs and other senior officials of the organization.

Earlier in his briefing to the Special Assistant on Energy and Power, the CEO, PEDO Engineer Mohammad Naeem Khan said that based on the fruitful results of the first phase of MMHPs project and demand of the people, further 672 MMHPs will be constructed in 21 districts of the province during the 2nd Phase. During the visit to site of Lawi HPP, Taj Muhammad expressed his dissatisfaction on the slow pace of work on the project. He directed the project authorities to expedite the pace of work and ensure speedy completion of the project. During his visit to 4.2 MW Reshun Hydro power project, he reviewed the work of rehabilitation of the power plant which was washed away by floods during 2015. — APP

FIEDMC attracting foreign investment to boost growth

DNA

LAHORE: Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Chairman Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) on Sunday said as the world was grappling with the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, Pakistan is turning the challenge into a prospect for greater economic gain through promoting stronger trade links with regional countries under the guideline of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision. Presiding over a meeting of senior executives of FIEDMC through webinar from the camp office, he said Pakistan was looking to the COVID-19 outbreak to offset some of its longstanding economic problems and remodel domestic resource distribution as it attracts significant foreign investment to

boost an ailing economy," says a press release issued here on Sunday. In this regard, Mian Kashif Ashfaq pointed out that the incumbent government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan was committed to bring out comprehensive solutions for sustaining the economic growth in the wake of global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Besides this, he was of the opinion that these trade and investment officers working in more than 50 countries would be bound to link the expected investors with one window operation of FIEDMC and update the administration of these economic zones about the trade possibilities of their designated

countries for promoting and marketing of Pakistani products, which would help the country enhancing volume of exports. Mian Kashif said Allama Iqbal Industrial City provided a huge opportunity for the foreign and local investors under one window operation. "Economic sovereignty is the key to comprehensive development," he said regretting that this was generally ignored and the weak stance adopted by previous governments exposed the country to steady increase in the energy cost affecting the entire economy. He said he was a big supporter of foreign investment but would expect that this should now come forward with the shift and trans-

fer of technology. He was of the opinion that an efficient balance has to be maintained to ensure that a country attracting investment may benefit on an immediate basis as well as on a long term basis. Mian Kashif further said public private partnership in industries would be helpful in growing the local industry and attracting foreign investors for joint ventures. He also highlighted Pakistan's reforms agenda such as steps to improve Pakistan's ranking on the ease of doing business and structural changes in micro-economic sectors particularly industrialization in the country. He reiterated his earlier stance that they would use all available resources to provide the best facilities to their customers so that an industrial revolution would be brought not only in Faisalabad but also across the country.



HYDERABAD: Kashmiri women showing Identity Cards while standing in queue at polling station to cast their votes during AJK Legislative Assembly Elections 2021 at GOR Colony. — APP

Private sector play key role in economic growth

DNA

LAHORE: President SAARC chamber of commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday said that a stronger private sector could help Pakistan realise its economic potential. Talking to a 20 member traders delegation led by Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General United Business Group in the federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said that only private sector play key role in pushing economic growth upward, generating job opportunities, providing oxygen to domestic industry besides boosting export in addition to promotion of SMEs. He said Pakistan has tremen-

dous untapped economic potential that needs to be fully exploited through prudent key policy actions to help create new marketing opportunities, mobilise private investments to create more jobs and help the country in coping with the impact of covid 19 on its economy. He stressed the urgent need for reforms in the wake of pandemic impact on country's private sector especially on SMEs that drive so much of Pakistan's economy. Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan can foster a more innovative, competitive and entrepreneurial economy and rejuvenate growth by addressing critical constraints that are limiting private sector investment.

122 corona patients under treatment in Peshawar

PESHAWAR: As many as 122 coronavirus patients are currently under treatment in two general hospitals of Peshawar Lady Reading Hospital and Khyber Teaching Hospital respectively, an official of the health department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa informed journalists here on Sunday.

Giving details about the current situation in the hospital, the health official said that Lady Reading Hospital has admitted 76 patients with coronavirus. The number of patients in ICU has risen to seven in LRH with 400 beds allotted for coronavirus patients. He said Khyber Teaching Hospital has 106 beds for coronavirus patients and currently coronavirus patients are admitted on 46 beds in Peshawar. The KTH has 25 ventilators for COVID-19 patients. Thirteen patients are in intensive care at the hospital in Peshawar. There are currently 18 patients being treated at HDU and 15 patients are being treated for Low Oxygen levels, he said, adding, 4 more corona patients have been admitted with the death of a Corona patient has been confirmed. — APP

Demo for draining out accumulated water

BAHAWALPUR: A number of people organized a demonstration urging the authorities to ensure draining out accumulated sewage water in streets of their areas. The people of Chah Fateh Khan area staged demonstration here. Talking to media on the occasion, they said that sewerage system of their area was choked and sewage was accumulated in streets and on roads even people could not cross streets to reach their homes. They alleged that the municipality staff was not draining out sewage from their areas. They made appeals to Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of Bahawalpur to direct the officials of Municipal Corporation to drain out sewage of Chah Fateh Khan. — APP

PMD alert authorities to raise guards

BUREAU REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Sunday advised all provincial and federal authorities to remain on "Alert" as the active phase of Monsoon season has been predicted to prevail in the next week. The Met Office in its Monsoon Alert issued here informed that monsoon onset would likely to remain in active phase during next week. The Forecast alert mentioned that rain-wind and thundershowers were predicted in upper and central parts from weekend. The Met Office informed that strong monsoon currents were likely to penetrate northeastern parts of the country from weekend perpetrating the monsoon active phase.

Rain-wind-thundershower (with few heavy falls at time) was expected in Kashmir, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Attock, Chakwal, Jhelum, Gujrat, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narawal, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Okara, Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Sargodha, Mianwali, Khushab, Bhakkar and Layyah. Rain-wind-thundershowers (with few heavy falls at time) was expected in Dir, Swat,

Buner, Kohistan, Shangla, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Mardan, Swabi, Charsadda, Nowshera, Peshawar, Waziristan, Kurram, Bannu, Kohat, Lakki Marwat, Tank, Karak and Dera Ismail Khan, Gilgit-Baltistan (Ghizer, Astore, Diamer, Skardu, Gilgit, Hunza Nagar, Ghanche and Kharmang). Rain/wind-thundershower (with isolated heavy falls) was also expected in Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajapur, Multan, Khanewal, Sahiwal, Bahawalnagar, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan, Sibbi, Kohlu, Loralai, Barkhan, Sukkar, Jaccobabad, Tharparker, Sanghar and Mirpurkhas from Monday (evening/night) till Wednesday.

It warned that heavy rains might generate flash flooding and also trigger landslides in the vulnerable areas of Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Monday to Wednesday (next week). The Met Office has also indicated possibility of damaging effects due to wind-storm during the forecast period. Moreover, the PMD also predicted that the prevailing water stress in rain-fed areas was likely to subside and improvement in water reservoirs would be observed during the period.



Anti-polio drive in Faisalabad starts from 2nd August

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The next Anti Polio Campaign in Faisalabad district would continue from August 2nd to 6th in the district and 1,326,937 children up to the age of five years would be administered polio drops for which 3549 teams would perform duty and all necessary arrangements had been making finalized in this regard. This was informed by Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali during the meeting of District Polio Eradication Committee.

ADCC Khurram Pervaiz, CEO DHA Dr. Mushtaq

Sipra, DHO Dr. Bilal Ahmad and other officers of various departments were also present. Deputy Commissioner directed that before the campaign, all necessary arrangements should be completed keeping in view of micro-plan so that the weaknesses and shortcomings could be rectified. He clarified that every round of polio was important therefore the training of relevant staff should be completed before time besides for awareness of parents all out resources should utilize. He said that all arrangements should be made finalize in tehsil level also and no negligency would

be tolerated in this regard. He also cleared that corona SOPs should be implemented as per guidelines. DHO briefed the house on arrangements of next Polio campaign.

763755 vaccinated against coronavirus
As many as 763755 general public and 43877 health care workers have been vaccinated at Corona Vaccination Centers in Faisalabad district so far. District Health Officer Dr. Bilal Ahmad has informed that from general public 618921 administered first dose and 144834 has been given second like wise 27186 and 16691 health care worker administered

first and second dose respectively. He said that Corona vaccination camps are also functional in various public places. He said that under the directions of Punjab Govt. door to door vaccination campaign would start from 26 July (today) and mobile teams for door-to-door vaccination and vaccination camps would be set up in the suburbs under the management of all teaching hospitals while there would be two mobile teams in each union council for vaccination at home and total 566 teams would perform duty to cover at least 40% population of 18 years and above till 10th August.



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali presides over the meeting of District Polio Eradication Committee.

FWMC starts roads washing operation

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Under the arrangements of Faisalabad Waste Management Company, Mechanical washing operation of roads had been started after completion of Eid ul Adha cleanliness operation. CEO FWMC Kashif Raza Awan inaugurated the operation outside crescent ground. GM Operation Col. Ammad Gill and others officers of FWMC were also present. The CEO said that the stains of the blood of sacrificial animals and other waste would be washed by using the different chemicals. He congratulated FWMC team for successful cleanliness operation on Eid and said citizens had highly appreciated the performance of FWMC which was a great confidence. He said that rewards would also be given to waste workers. CEO informed that washing operation would be completed within two days under a phase programme. Talking to the reporters CEO informed that waste workers of FWMC lifted the 19299 ton waste of sacrificial animals during the three days of Eid ul Adha. He told that on first day 7489 second day 6043 and third day 5768 waste were dumped. He further informed that as many as 6318 complaints of public were resolved and feedback

was also taken from complainants and they were found satisfactory. Land record center established Under the arrangements of the district administration, a Dahi Markaz Mall has been set up at quonoongi Circle Samanabad from where the

applicants will have access to get Farad, land transfers and other facilities related to the land in a minutes. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visited the center and checked the administrated arrangements. Additional Deputy

Commissioner Revenue Fazal Rabi Cheema and Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari were also present. The Deputy Commissioner said that according to the vision of Punjab government, the district administration firmly believes in providing facilities to the citizens near their homes and in the quonoongi circle and the establishment of dahi markaz malls is also the result of these efforts and for which people will not have to travel far to get far but they will be able to get these services faster from near their homes.

He said that the people of rural areas face many problems in land related matters and with the establishment of center, problems were being solved and public acceptance was also taking place. He said that rapid steps were being taken to provide services to the people under the digitization system. He asked the Assistant Commissioner City to deploy the relevant revenue staff in the center and ensure speedy service to the applicants.



FAISALABAD: The washing of roads started after Eid by FWMC.

Covid claims 15 more lives in Punjab

LAHORE: Coronavirus claimed 15 more lives in Punjab, while 529 new cases were reported during the last 24 hours. According to data released by a spokesperson for Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) here on Sunday, the death toll reached 10,939 and total number of recorded cases reached 352,682. As many as, 330,986 patients have recovered so far. Currently 10,757 patients are under treatment in different hospitals and 448 recovered in last 24 hours. Health department conducted 17,525 tests for COVID-19 during the last 24 hours and total number of tests reached 6.04 million. Meanwhile, during the last 24 hours as many as 215,133 citizens were vaccinated at 662 centres, and the total number of vaccinated persons reached 13,435,419 in the province. — APP

Briefs**OGRA directs fuel stations to ensure sanitation**

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has directed all Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) and Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations to ensure strict implementation of the Prime Minister's Clean & Green Pakistan initiative at and around their retail outlets for the public facilitation. Besides, the filling stations must "ensure clean washrooms for customers/public convenience especially alongside motorways and tourist destinations across the country," OGRA spokesman Imran Ghaznavi said in a press statement.

Accordingly, he said, an advisory had also been sent to all chief secretaries for the provincial and district governments' full support in a successful execution of the cleanliness drive in every nook and cranny of the country. — APP

Expert urges people to avoid using storage meat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Health Expert Dr Arif Majeed here on Sunday underlined the need to avoid excessive use of freezing storage meat after Eid ul Azha. Talking to media, he said it could be dangerous to health perspective as it causes various chronic viral infections including hepatitis, typhoid and coronavirus. Dr Arif further informed frozen meat would also result in high cholesterol level, blood pressure, acidity, negative impact on liver function adding he urged people to take care of their health first instead using storage meat. A housewife Ayesha Ahmed said, "My family do not like to put meat in the freezer for storage and made different recipes with fresh food items."

Noor case: ex envoys want murderer on ECL

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Association of Former Ambassadors (AFA) strongly condemns the gruesome killing of the daughter of former Ambassador Mr. Shaukat Ali Mukaddam and calls for an exemplary punishment for the murderer of Ms Noor. In a Press Release over 100 former Ambassadors, members of AFA noted with disgust and horror the brutal and heinous crime and called upon the Chief Justice of Pakistan to take a notice of it to ensure that justice is done. Meanwhile, Police and Prosecutor should get hold of all previous medical and criminal record of the culprit. Supervision of this case would help reduce alarmingly high crime against women in Islamabad.

Singers demand reopening of Open Mic

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Amateur artists on Sunday demanded reopening of Lok Virsa 'Open Mic' program, a popular platform for emerging singers. Open Mic program was an initiative to discover melodious voices and used to be held on weekly basis audition. The Open Mic program was helping those who were eager to sing but they lack a proper or available platform to perform. An emerging singer Uzma Nadeem said Open Mic was very popular music audition program which was started in 2017, she also participated in the first session of Open Mic. Another amateur singer Nasir Jamal said that Open Mic was very productive platform he said that in Open Mic singers sang a number of songs which were judged by a panel of judges comprising of top professional singers.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Women looking at pictures of failed coup attempt against President Erdogan. The valiant Turkish people foiled the coup on July 15. The Turkish embassy organized a function in this regard. — DNA

CDA repairs street lights and signals damaged by rains

At present, 87% of traffic signals in Islamabad are working in their proper condition, which the CDA administration opens or closes with the help of traffic police, while the remaining 13% of traffic signals are being repaired rapidly

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority has repaired the street lights in Islamabad during the last rains and restored the power system in the highways, streets and neighborhoods so that the citizens don't face any difficulties. It should be noted that at present more than 85% street lights are working properly while the CDA administration is rapidly rectifying the minor defects in the remaining street lights. In addition, the CDA street lights

department with the help of 130 staff performed duties in different times has repaired street lights in Islamabad and rectified minor faults in transformers damaged during the recent monsoon rains which have been repaired and street lights restored. In addition, street light staff also played the role during Eid-ul-Adha, the CDA's Street Lights Department performed its duties efficiently to save the citizens from difficulties, and was instrumental in keeping the traffic flowing in the city. At present, 87% of traffic signals in Islamabad are working in their

proper condition, which the CDA administration opens or closes with the help of traffic police, while the remaining 13% of traffic signals are being repaired rapidly. The CDA administration while issuing orders to the concerned department that the repair work of damaged street lights and damaged traffic signals of the city should be completed as soon as possible and all possible facilities should be provided to the citizens. In addition, on the direction of CDA management, special teams have been formed to remove open and bare power lines and other

such defects before the rains so that the public can be saved from any untoward incident. During eid holidays, on the directions of Chairman Capital Development Authority Amer Ali Ahmad, the civic agency had lifted 1,700 tons of waste of around 87,000 sacrificial animals during Eid-ul-Azha from the various locations of the federal capital. Capital Development Authority (CDA) had deputed 100 vehicles and more than 2,000 staff to carry out cleanliness duties in the federal capital and dug up 80 pits in 40 locations to dispose of remains of

sacrificial animals. In addition, two emergency cells in G-6/1/4 and the transport section of the sanitation directorate worked day and night at the Fire Headquarters in G-7/4 to carry out the cleanliness operation. The city was divided into four zones to achieve the desired results. The areas in Zone 1 were F-5, F-6, Blue Area, Saidpur, Bari Imam, Faisal Masjid, E-7, F-7, G-8, and F-8 while F-19, F-11, Golra Sharif, G-8, G-9, G-10, and G-11 fall in Zone 2. Sectors H-8, H-9, H-10, H-11, I-8, I-9, I-10, and I-11 were included in Zone-III.

Pakistan ranks top 10 in improvement of business environment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan ranks top 10 in improvement of business environment, says Annual Report on Investment Security of China's "Belt and Road" Construction(2021). According to China Economic Net on Sunday, the report was jointly released by China Belt and Road Think Tank Cooperation Alliance, Beijing International Studies University, and other institutions. The report puts forward the fruits of researches on the political, economic, social, cultural, and ecological investment security in countries along the Belt and Road Initiative(BRI).

According to the report, Pakistan has reformed to simplify the process of starting a company and obtaining a construction permit, implementing a series of preferential policies in recent years. These measures im-

proved its ability to attract foreign investment and strengthened the ease of doing business year by year, making Pakistan one of the world's top 10 economies with the most improved business environment. In terms of political security, the report said that South Asia as a whole is greatly affected by the superpower game. China, the United States, Russia, Japan, and other countries outside the region have historical ties and practical cooperation here, which makes the geopolitical environment of South Asia complicated. The long-running conflict between India and Pakistan has also intensified pressures on political security in the region, under which the dispute over Kashmir poses a long-standing risk of war. From the perspective of economic security, Pakistan's economic security scores up by 220 percent in 2019 compared to 2010, showing an

overall trend of growth. The construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor(CPEC) has greatly boosted public confidence, stimulated domestic demand, and driven production. However, it is worth noting that since 2019, the accelerated marketization of the domestic exchange rate in Pakistan has led to market fluctuations, currency devaluation, sustained inflation, forcing the government to raise the benchmark interest rate. Besides, the debt burden increased and the international sovereign rating lowered. As per social security, Pakistan's social security is rated at a middle and low level. Constant terrorist attacks in Pakistan have led to social unrest. Violent clashes can halt projects, cause losses and even threaten the safety of workers from the investing countries, undermining the confidence of foreign investors, the report added.

Visitors urged to follow traffic rules in Murree

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) on Sunday urged the visitors to strictly follow traffic rules on the roads of Murree to avoid traffic congestion and road mishaps. According to a CTP spokesman, the tourists traveling to Murree and other hill stations were advised to obey traffic rules to avoid road accidents. He informed that the CTP had designated several points for car parking. A number of main roads including Kashmir Point, Mall Road, Guldana Road and other roads had been closed for two-way traffic to ease traffic flow. He urged the tourists to cooperate with traffic police so that the traffic mess could be avoided. The motorists should avoid wrong parking on roads which would help ensure the smooth flow of traffic. "The beautiful climate of Murree during summer attracts a large number of tourists so motorists face severe traffic congestion."

AIOU announces schedule for merit-based admissions

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced schedule for admission in merit-based programs offered in the first phase of autumn 2021 semester. Merit-based programs include face to face programs offered by different faculties including BS, MBA, MPA, MPhil and PhD in different disciplines. Admission tests for MPhil and PhD programs will be conducted from August 26-31, 2021. First, second and third merit lists of successful candidates will be displayed on September 3, 9 and 15 respectively on the university website. Classes will be held at the main campus of the university. Interested candidates can download prospectus and admission application form from the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk) and can apply online till August 23, 2021. Continuing students can seek admission in the next semester from August 16 to September 16, 2021. — DNA

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'Inclusive education of children with disabilities our priority'

Government pledging support for inclusive education of children with disabilities at Global Education Summit, says Shafqat Mahmood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Shafqat Mahmood emphasized on inclusive education for children with disabilities and said that government of Pakistan will support institutions to provide quality education for children with disabilities. Shafqat Mahmood will be representing Pakistan at Global Education Summit on 28 and 29 July where he will support a pledge. The pledge promotes the education of children and will contribute to the Global Partnership of Ed-

ucation (GPE). Shafqat Mahmood will be endorsing 'Equal World' campaign of Sightsavers which is calling on each participating government at the Summit to commit to children with disabilities benefiting from quality and accessible education. In response to the campaign, Shafqat Mahmood has said "Equal World campaign has raised the significance of equity and inclusion in education systems for marginalised children, especially children with disabilities". Around the world children with disabilities have faced some of the worst effects of COVID-19 and subse-

quent school closures. To counter this the government of Pakistan plans to increase investment in inclusive education. Munazza Gillani, Country Director at Sightsavers Pakistan, said, "This is a critical moment for the government of Pakistan to make ambitious, bold and specific commitments on inclusive education and it's great to work with them on doing this. These policy commitments will help to ensure that no child is left behind in learning". Sightsavers is currently partnering with the Ministry of Education on programmes that promote school eye health and the

inclusive education of children with disabilities in mainstream schools. These projects train teachers on disability inclusion and screen thousands of children for eye health problems. Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children, around 22.8 million, and it is very likely that large numbers of these are children with disabilities. The Summit will provide an opportunity to global community to come together and support quality education for all children and pledge their support to transform education systems in their countries and territories.

Police committed to curb drug peddling: SSP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Senior-Superintendent of Police (Operations) has said that Islamabad Police have accelerated its campaign against the menace of drugs and determined to eliminate this ugly business from the federal capital. He said as per the vision of the Prime Minister and in compliance with the orders of IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil Ur Rehman, a massive anti-drug campaign is already in progress in the city adding that under the supervision of Additional SP Islamabad Farhat Abbas Kazmi, Islamabad police have arrested 150 drug-peddlers during the last month after registering 149 cases. The police also recovered huge cache of drugs including 98615 grams of hashish, 13445 grams of heroin, 110 gram of Ice and 4323 bottles of wine.

Met Office alert authorities to raise guards

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Sunday advised all provincial and federal authorities to remain on "Alert" as the active phase of Monsoon season has been predicted to prevail in the next week. The Met Office in its Monsoon Alert issued here informed that monsoon onset would likely to remain in active phase during next week. The Forecast alert mentioned that rain-wind and thundershowers were predicted in upper and central parts from weekend. The Met Office informed that strong monsoon currents were likely to penetrate northeastern parts of the country from weekend perpetrating the monsoon active phase.

Briefs

Pak earns US \$1908 mn from IT export

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan earned US \$1908.125 million by providing different information technology (IT) services in various countries during the first eleven months of fiscal year 2020-21.

This shows growth of 47.13 percent when compared to US \$1296.930 million earned through provision of services during the corresponding period of fiscal year 2019-20, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

During the period under review, the computer services grew by 49.91 percent as it surged from US \$996.880 million last fiscal year to US \$1494.405 million during July-May (2020-21).

Among the computer services, the exports of software consultancy services witnessed increase of 32.18 percent, from US \$377.134 million to US \$498.500 million while the export and import of computer software related services also rose by 29.24 percent, from US \$286.088 million to US \$369.648 million.

The exports of hardware consultancy services decreased by 72.49 percent from, US \$1.919 million to US \$0.528 million whereas the exports of repair and maintenance services also decline by 65.52 percent from \$1.456 million to \$0.502 million. — APP

Over 1.2 mln people to be jabbed

RAWALPINDI: A two-week-long Anti-Covid drive would commence in the district from July 26.

Talking to the media persons, District Health Authority spokesman Dr Waqar Ahmed said that 356 teams would go door-to-door and administer the anti-covid vaccine to 1,299,838 people above 16 years of age in all tehsils and union councils of the district.

He said that the target of vaccinating 70 per cent of the population of the district would be achieved by August 10.

Dr Waqar informed that the rate of positive cases of coronavirus had reached 6.7 per cent so far which was 2.1 per cent in June and 6.1 per cent in July last year.

He said staff deployed for the campaign had been issued special instructions and informed that no negligence in that regard would be tolerated. "Sufficient quantity of vaccine is available, and no stone will be left unturned in efforts to make the campaign a success," he added. — APP

People urged to take part in tree plantation

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Active participation of the masses in tree plantation at large scale is a must to overcome the threats to lives and health being occurred and aggregated due to environmental pollution and global warming.

District Range forest officer Chakwal of Forest Department (Extension) Punjab Rawalpindi Division Sher Afzal Raja said this while planting saplings at different places along with the officers of district administration. Assistant Commissioner Chakwal and workers of Insaf Tiger Force also planted saplings on this occasion.

He said the role of every citizen is very important in solving serious problems like environmental pollution and global warming. "In order to make this role of the citizens active and fruitful, the campaign 'Har Bashar... Do Shajar' organized by the Punjab Forest Department (Extension) Rawalpindi Division is successfully underway", he added.

He said that a large area of barren lands owned by farmers has so far been turned into dense potential forests apart from making the present forests more dense and wide. He mentioned that the district range forest office was also pursuing a special campaign regarding making the public aware of the importance and need of trees.



ISLAMABAD: A traditional tent established at the Embassy of Kyrgyz Republic. The Kyrgyz people gather in the tent to celebrate special occasions such as Eid etc. — DNA

Wind, solar projects to account for 7pc of electricity generation

We have been waiting for the finalization of the generation expansion plan by the government as this would be helpful to determine the exact need to generate clean electricity to overcome the energy shortfall in the country

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Renewable energy production in Pakistan is getting increased and will soon account for seven percent of the total electricity generated in the country. This was stated by the Chief Executive Officer of the Alternative Development Board (AEDB), Shah Jahan Mirza while speaking at the International Renewable Energy Conference organized here at a local hotel.

"At present, the functional wind, solar, and some other renewable energy projects in the country have been producing 2,000 Megawatts of clean electricity. Under-construction wind and solar projects in the country would add 850 MWs of renewable energy in the system soon," he said.

On this occasion, Mian Ghulam Mohiuddin Ahmad, CEO of SGS Electrical Company, said that his company had been working hard to help the Pakistani fan industry adopt the necessary technological innovations to save electricity through their appliances.

He said that his company has introduced a fan in the Pakistani market, which was capable of saving up to 80 percent electricity to the benefit of the power consumers. Sharing his views with the participants of the meeting, the CEO of Prosun Solar, Muhammad Tahir, said that his company had been making efforts to introduce special solar-powered appliances for areas of Pakistan that were off-grid and didn't have electricity.

"Our company is also working with the concerned regulatory authorities of the

energy sector to prevent the sale and usage of substandard solar equipment and products in the country. The solar energy sector has a bright future in Pakistan," he said. CEOs of solar and wind power generating companies also bring forward the issue of circular debt which, in their opinion, was shaking the confidence of investors in Pakistan.

Responding to a question, Chairman AEDB SHAH JAHAN Mirza said that government is facilitating and encouraging companies to invest in solar and wind power projects. He said AEDB had been making progress to introduce the system of international competitive bidding to promote electricity generation through clean resources in the country. "Although we have an ambitious target of clean electricity generation in the country

we will try our best to achieve it," said the AEDB chief.

"We have been waiting for the finalization of the generation expansion plan by the government as this would be helpful to determine the exact need to generate clean electricity to overcome the energy shortfall in the country.

He assured the participants that more electricity would be drawn from the wind and solar power projects already functional in the country with an increase in national energy demand.

Speaking on the occasion, Naeem Qureshi of Energy Update, stressed the need for greater interaction and dialogue between concerned stakeholders of the government and private sectors to promote the cause of clean power generation in the country.

Noor Mukaddam murder case: parents of Zahir arrested

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The parents of Zahir Jaffer, who has been allegedly involved in the murder of former diplomat's daughter Noor Mukaddam, have been arrested on the basis of hiding evidence, police revealed Sunday.

Meanwhile, orders to seal Therapy Works, the drug rehabilitation centre where

Jaffer is believed to have sought treatment, have also been issued.

Taking to Twitter, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Hamza Shafiqat in the murder of the news and wrote: "Sealing orders of Therapy works issued. Parents of Murderer Zahir Jaffer also arrested."

The parents of the accused have been arrested on the charges of concealing the crime, the police said, add-



ing that two employees working for Therapy Works have also been taken into custody. On Saturday, police present-

ed Jaffer in the court of Duty Magistrate Sohaib Bilal Ranjha after the completion of a three-day physical remand.

Jaffer was arrested after Noor's father lodged a case against him at the Kohsar police station.

According to the police, Jaffer was arrested from the site of the murder and the murder weapon — a knife — was recovered. A pistol and an iron machete found at the accused's residence had also

been seized, police said. The accused's mobile phone was also confiscated.

As per sources, the accused had planned the crime and had taken some of his friends into confidence regarding the plan a few days before the incident.

The accused, according to the source, called Noor at this residence and told her to switch her phone off. When her parents couldn't contact her, they started inquiring from her friends about her whereabouts. When some of Noor's friends went to Jaffer's residence to inquire about the deceased, he denied seeing her. Upon this, Noor's friends had a scuffle with the accused, sources told the police.

A source also told the police that Jaffer was a little concerned about being arrested while he was planning the murder. However, he was confident to be spared as he holds American citizenship. After brutally murdering Noor, the accused tried fleeing to the United States but was arrested on time. It should be noted that Jaffer had previously been deported from the United Kingdom on charges of assaulting a female.

Price hike hitting projects

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said continued hike in the price of construction material has not only damaged government and private projects but also increased house rents. The construction of houses has become costly, therefore, investors are seeking more rent which is contributing to inflation, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that cost of construction material including cement, sand, steel, glass, wood, brick, stone, paint and hardware etc. continue to skyrocket after the construction package was announced. The increased cost of construction has increased rents in the urban centers putting additional burden on masses which can become a crisis if not noticed by authorities.

The business leader said that presently the country is facing a shortage of ten million houses and every year the shortage in being increase by almost increased by four hundred thousand units.

High oil prices punishing poor

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW) on Sunday said a weak rupee and costly oil is resulting in inflation which is beating poor.

The price of food and oil products is increasing in the international market while imports and current account deficit are increasing which is resulting in economic troubles, it said.

US dollar has jumped to Rs162.32 while the current account deficit is almost two billion dollars which show increased pressure on local currency, said Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President PEW.

He said that inflation has deepened poverty and the majority is unable to buy proper food for their families which is leading to health issues among millions. A good number of people are compromising on everything else as food is taking away a major chunk of their income, he added.

The aid provided to the poor has left much to be desired while the middle-class is disappearing under the pressure of inflation.

The rupee would likely continue to trade under pressure next week on account of high demand and some other factors while the business community is awaiting the State Bank's monetary policy, he observed.

According to independent economic experts, the rupee may shed more points against the dollar due to various problems which will be a nightmare for the poor who have no cushion against inflation. Some say that a sharp fall in the rupee's value is not expected as SBP's reserves are at \$18 billion as of July 16, 2021.

Over 2kg drugs recovered

RAWALPINDI: The police here on Sunday arrested a lady smuggler and recovered over 2 kg drugs from her possession, a police spokesman said.

Sadiqabad police during course of action held a lady smuggler namely Ayesha bibi and recovered 2.4 kg drugs from her custody.

A case has been registered against the lady smuggler while further investigation was in progress.

Meanwhile, City Police Officer (CPO), Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the performance of police.

He made it clear that strict action would be taken against those who were found in such illegal businesses. — APP

USA, UK, top 2 destinations of Pakistani exports

ISLAMABAD: The United States of America (USA) remained the top export destinations of the Pakistani products during the fiscal year (2020-21), followed by United Kingdom (UK) and China.

The total exports to the USA during July-June (2020-21) were recorded at US \$ 5029.400 million against the exports of US \$ 3915.226 million during July-June (2019-20), showing growth of 28.45 percent during the period under review, according to State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by UK, wherein Pakistan exported goods worth \$ 2047.079 million against the exports of \$ 1638.544 million last year, showing increase of 24.93 percent.

China as the at third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$ 2043.206 million during fiscal year under review against the exports of US \$ 1663.962 million during last fiscal year, showing growth of 22.79 percent, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to United Arab Emirates (UAE) stood at US \$ 1487.279 million against \$ 1588.330 million during last year, showing decrease of 6.36 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at US \$ 1511.227 million against US \$ 1302.991 million, the data revealed. During July-June (2020-21), the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at US \$ 983.295 million against US \$ 890.052 million whereas the exports to Holland stood at US \$ 1118.093 million against US \$982.263 million. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Therapy Works, clinic of parents of Zahir Jaffer being sealed on the instructions of the District Administration. The parents of Zahir have also been arrested. — DNA

The magic of cleanliness

Twenty kilometers west of the bounty road a small lane wound its way to a small castle. The castle looked like it was built for a prince and princess to stay in. The sky seemed to hug the earth there. The cheerful sun smiled and beamed on the earth and the flowers opened up and smiled back. The towers which seemed to reach up to the sky had music playing in them. Little children danced to the tune, Ho hum ta ra rum...one leg moved left, one right, hands in the air. The atmosphere was filled with happiness and cleanliness. The bear with his snowy, clean coat of fur cuddled up with the monkey who had a well combed tail. King Lion with his

shampooed mane was sleeping and a fly fluttering its wings came and settled on his nose but that did not seem to bother him. The freshly groomed horses sung, "Neigh ho, here we go, Right and left, high and low, On and on till we meet miss doe, We'll stop her and tell her to come to the show Sniff, sniff what do I smell in the air?"

The sweet smelling flowers nodding their heads from here to there.

Mr Green the plant was as bright as a day just as if the rain had cleansed it. Freddy the frog sat on the pond and was puzzled to see another frog staring back at him.

He wanted to shake its hand but as he touched the water he found nothing there. It was only his reflection. Big Wing the butterfly had hurt one of its legs. Off it flew to the hospital to get it cleaned and plastered. Daisy the cow sat grazing on the grass. "I'll have a

SHORT STORY
Zeenaat Iqbal Hussain

glass of milk shake". Big Wing told her. "You get some hair for my bald head", said Daisy with a smile. "I'll get you some from Kaku the lion. Urn, mum" he went as he drank the milk it was as

white as snow. The brook was bubbling at its seams. Daffy the duck was busy pointing its beak towards the fish. "I want to play with you", she said. They all went to Popo the owl's school. Naughty calf had to jump thrice over the fence for going to school with a dirty uniform and Mammy the mouse was not given cheese to eat as punishment for wearing dirty shoes.

One day the sky was all dark. The moon hid behind the clouds. The lion growled and the bear started to fight. The pond water became black as night. The air started to smell. The grass sprouted weeds and the flowers died. Everything was gripped with fear. Some al-

iens from outer space had come to earth to dirty and destroy it.

They sprinkled dust everywhere with their guns and threw litter everywhere. The animals went to uncle and auntie cleanwallah and begged them to help them overcome this problem.

They advised them to take three elephant trunks full of soap, two mouthful of happiness; five bucketful of fairy tonic and ten images of lions paws.

Make a portion of this and spray it on the enemy and they shall beat a hasty retreat. The animals sat down to this task and did as they were told. Lo and behold! It was not long before they saw the backs of the aliens.

Mismanaged tourism

THE tourism industry brings in a majority of revenue for the residents of popular tourist spots in the north. This is one reason why the government reversed the ban on tourism and allowed tourists to flock to the northern areas as long as strict SOPs were implemented. However, when these regulations are discarded and when good civic sense is also not practiced, excess tourism becomes a nuisance and a health risk for not only the residents but the tourists themselves too, and on government resources. The weekend after Eid proves that pandemic or not, delta variant or not, the number of tourists flocking to the north has not diminished, as hundreds of thousands of people rushed to Naran, Swat, Murree and Hunza. Reportedly there has been almost no following of SOPs—masks are rarely worn and there is almost no social distancing. For the last two days, there have been reported roadblocks and traffic jams lasting all the way from Chilas to Balakot—travellers report driving for twenty hours to cover distances that would normally take three hours—something which not only leaves tourists stranded but also is a cause of major noise pollution for locals. Two tourists were killed when a car plunged into a ravine near Lulusar Lake in Kaghan valley, and there have been more car accidents reported near Babusar Pass. These occurrences are not just a natural by-product of tourism, they are the side effects of mismanagement. The traffic congestion has been addressed before in previous years, yet there are still inefficient implementation mechanisms against breaking of traffic rules. A strong civic sense is also missing as travellers illegally form second lanes and participate in overtaking, making the situation dangerous for all. All of this is a recipe for disaster for the pandemic. As the weekend ends, it is hoped that the tourism surge will be better handled. It is also important that the government finally improves on managing tourism and poor civic practices such as hazardous traffic and littering on prominent events like Eid or Independence Day.



Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 69

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Vaccinate, now

PAKISTAN'S total reported coronavirus cases crossed the one million mark recently, even though it is believed the actual number may be much higher owing to the country's low testing numbers. With daily cases averaging around 2,000 in the past two weeks – a rate last witnessed towards the end of May and early June when the third wave was subsiding – there is sufficient reason for alarm, especially with the new variants of concern. The Delta variant is the most dangerous one to-date and has been identified as the dominant strain in 85 countries. It appears to be gaining ground in Pakistan too, though its exact footprint is hard to gauge due to our limited resources. Nevertheless, it's potential for devastation cannot be taken lightly. The variant is wreaking havoc in places like Indonesia in similar ways to what transpired in India earlier this year from where it is believed to have originated. At present, around 25 million vaccine doses have been administered in Pakistan, and as stated many times here earlier, the figure is far behind from reaching any kind of protective shield from the coronavirus. With a purported fourth wave of the virus taking shape in the country, statistics from Sindh reveal that a vast majority – 85 percent – of those hospitalised from Covid-19 at present had not been vaccinated. These grim figures should be enough to compel people to take the vaccine, which appears to be well-stocked at the moment. With Sindh's positivity ratio hovering around 10 percent and Karachi's at over double that, the provincial government has announced a roll back of recently eased restrictions. Perhaps other governments should follow suit before it's too late. And while the Sindh government's decision to withhold salaries of unvaccinated government employees and proposal to block SIMs of those who refuse to vaccinate appear unjust and hard to implement, sadly, it seems only the threat of such sanctions may force the majority to successfully overcome vaccine hesitancy. Doctors operating vaccination centres believe the country's inoculation drive was initially aided by the devastation in India, and later due to official and international vaccine requirements, leading to the present slump or inadequate acceleration. The challenge ahead is a mammoth one and demands the complete attention of the government, opposition, and every member of the public.

Strategic partners Uzbekistan and Pakistan aim at strengthening Central and South Asia cooperation

Furqat Sidikov



As the President of Uzbekistan stressed at the opening of the conference, the time has come, based on the huge historical, scientific, spiritual and cultural heritage of the peoples of the two regions, the complementarity of the economies, the availability of intellectual potential

ON July 15-16, 2021, a high-level International Conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Connectivity, Challenges and Opportunities" was held in Tashkent, organized on the initiative of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The conference was attended by Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani, heads of foreign ministries of Central and South Asia and other regions of the world, heads of leading international organizations, financial institutions, investment funds and companies, as well as world research and analytical centers. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Furkat Sidikov spoke about the main goals and objectives of the conference, as well as the significance and results of the official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan to the country

First of all, I would like to emphasize that the first official visit of Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan to Uzbekistan and his participation in a major international forum on the interconnectedness of Central and South Asia opened a new era of bilateral partnership and interregional cooperation. As President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev stressed during the talks in Tashkent, Pakistan is our time-tested and reliable partner. The relations between the two States are based on mutual respect and trust. Despite the current difficult situation, our cooperation is developing at a dynamic pace, and we are interested in further expanding ties in all areas. During the exchange of views on topical issues of the regional and international agenda, the heads of the two states confirmed the coincidence or proximity of the positions of the parties. It was stressed that Uzbekistan and Pakistan, as close neighbors of Afghanistan, are interested in establishing peace and stability in this country, which will contribute

to the formation of transport routes, accelerated development of trade and economic ties in the region. The issues of increasing mutual trade turnover, establishing air cargo transportation, providing mutual benefits and preferences were discussed. The issues of ensuring regional security and strengthening military-technical cooperation were also considered. Following the talks, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Prime Minister Imran Khan signed a Joint Declaration on the establishment of a strategic partnership between the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. 8 documents were also signed, including intergovernmental agreements on transit and trade, simplification of visa procedures for representatives of business circles and tourist groups. They also signed a protocol on cooperation in the field of military education between the Ministries of defense of the two countries, a Program of cultural exchanges for 2021-2026, a Memorandum of understanding on tourism, a protocol on the exchange of preliminary information on goods and vehicles crossing the state border, as well as a Memorandum of Understanding between the University of World Economy and Diplomacy and the Pakistan Academy of Diplomatic Service, an agreement on the establishment of the Uzbek-Pakistani Business Council.

In addition, following the meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission and the Uzbek-Pakistani business forum, held on the eve of the visit of the head of Pakistan to Tashkent, agreements worth \$ 500 million were signed.

It is worth noting that in recent years, the bilateral dialogue and contacts have noticeably intensified. The meetings of the President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan in Beijing and Bishkek in 2019, the online summit of leaders in April this year opened new prospects for interstate cooperation. As a result of mutual visits at the level of governments and regions, bilateral relations are filled with practical content. Participation of the two heads of state in the international conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectivity. Challenges and opportunities" was a confirmation of the high mutual interest in the development of investment and economic cooperation, the implementation of the transport and transit potential of the countries of the two regions, the strengthening of cultural and humanitarian cooperation.

The initiative to strengthen regional connectivity was proposed by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in the context of Tashkent's new foreign policy strategy aimed at turning Central Asia into a region of security, stability and sustainable development integrated into the world economy. As you know, South Asia is a region that is historically closely connected with Central Asia in economic, social, cultural and civilizational dimensions. Located at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road, these two regions have contributed to an active dialogue between peoples and civilizations for many centuries. Unfortunately, in the nineteenth century, due to historical circumstances, the interconnectedness of the two adjacent regions was violated. Today, when the world has entered the era of global geopolitical transformations that bring both challenges and new opportunities, the revival of mutual relations between Central and South Asia is becoming an even more popular and objective process.

As the President of Uzbekistan stressed at the opening of the conference, the time has come, based on the huge historical, scientific, spiritual and cultural heritage of the peoples of the two regions, the complementarity of the economies, the availability of intellectual potential, to consolidate joint efforts, which will undoubtedly give a powerful synergy effect. At the same time, it is important to note that the growth of trade turnover with Pakistan and other South Asian countries largely depends on the creation of reliable routes for the delivery of goods. Following the results of the Uzbek-Afghan-Pakistani high-level talks held in February 2021 in Tashkent, a Joint Action Plan ("Road Map") for the construction of the Mazari-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway was signed. This railway project occupies a special place

and will significantly reduce the transport costs for the delivery of goods between the countries of the region. Thus, the main promising areas of cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia are new transport corridors that provide access to the southern seaports of the countries of Central Asia, cooperation in the energy sector (electricity exports), promotion of mutual investments, as well as the expansion and diversification of foreign trade. The implementation of transport and energy projects on the territory of Afghanistan, which is a bridge between the two regions, will create conditions for expanding oppor-



and will significantly reduce the transport costs for the delivery of goods between the countries of the region. Thus, the main promising areas of cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia are new transport corridors that provide access to the southern seaports of the countries of Central Asia, cooperation in the energy sector (electricity exports), promotion of mutual investments, as well as the expansion and diversification of foreign trade. The implementation of transport and energy projects on the territory of Afghanistan, which is a bridge between the two regions, will create conditions for expanding oppor-

unities for building trade, economic and investment ties, strengthening transport and communication cooperation between the countries of Central and South Asia.

In general, the practical implementation of Uzbekistan's plans for interconnectivity can create a new economic reality in two regions at once, creating the most favorable soil and all the necessary conditions for the inclusive economic development of the Central and South Asian states.

— The writer is the Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan. He has also served as Uzbek ambassador to Pakistan.

Silk Route, the route to prosperity and hope

Huma Arshad



Silk Road embodies the spirit of discovery and exchange

SILK Route, the lifeline of the trade from ancient times to medieval times from east to west is the historical trade route. This route had played a pivotal role in the establishment and growth of civilizations in both east and west in the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The historically famous silk route is dated back from 130BC during the reign of the Han Dynasty of China. Silk Route or the famous Silk Road is stretched up to 4,000 miles has become the biggest source of transporting goods, exchanging cultures, and contributing to the history of the world in trade and culture.

Importance of Silk Route in Ancient and Medieval times The precious fabric of silk originated in China and then had been distributed to other parts of the world from China. So, The Silk Route refers to the routes leading west out of China to Central Asia, the Middle East, the subcontinent, and beyond. The Route got its name on the name of precious fabric 'silk.' Here it is important to mention that the Silk Route had not been restricted to the trade of silk only; the trade of spices, fabrics, animals, fruits, and vegetables, precious stones, and other valuable items also took place through this famous Silk Route. Chinese has a prominent contribution towards using and developing the Silk Route. Since ancient times, gunpowder and

paper invented by China during the ruling period of the Han Dynasty used to export from China to the rest of the world mainly via Silk Road since the 3rd century. The invention of paper and then its transportation to Europe had brought a revolution in communication as written words became the main form of communication for the first time and resulted in the form of the first printed press in the world named, "Gutenberg's Printing Press."

Many explorers had used the Silk Route from west to east and east to west to transfer knowledge, religion, and history. Marco Polo the famous explorer came from Italy to China and had spent twenty-four years altogether in the court of Kublai Khan the Mongolian emperor. Marco Polo went back to Italy by using the same Silk Route. Marco Polo's memoirs gave a clear understanding of Asian culture, traditions, and economy to the rest of the world. Silk Route had contributed to spreading religions like Christianity, Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism, and other small religions from ancient times to medieval times. Missionaries of different religions had used to use the Silk Road to spread their religions.

Modern-day Silk Route and new avenues of trade and commerce

The Silk Route was always in use from ancient to modern times but with the rapidly growing economic world,

China in 2013 announced to restore the original historic Silk Route to improve China's cordial relations in terms of trade and culture with the rest of the world. Behind all this, the main aim of China is to improve its domestic growth. The project of connecting China with Asia, Europe, and East Africa is known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The maritime Silk Road plan of China is sea-based connecting China's southern coast to the Mediterranean, Africa, South East Asia, and Central Asia.

If we talk about Pakistan particularly we came to know that with passing years Silk Route was replaced by the Karakoram Highway. The road passes through our famous mountains of Himalayas, Hindukush, and Karakoram ranges in the same direction of Silk Road. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor is the project to promote trade and commerce via Gawadar Port. CPEC will link the Xinjiang region with Gawadar port in Balochistan. This mega project of 64 billion dollars includes a network of roads and railway infrastructure along with a hydropower plant. CPEC project is a milestone in the economic history of Pakistan and is opening new avenues of economic stability in our country. "Silk Road embodies the spirit of discovery and exchange. We want to encourage people to look for what unites them instead of what divides them." (Laura Field)

Briefs

Medal Count					
Pos.	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	6	1	4	11
2	Japan	5	1	—	6
3	USA	4	2	4	10
4	South Korea 2	0	3	5	5
5	Russia	1	4	2	7

Saudi FM due on July 27

FROM PAGE 01
"Saudi foreign minister is visiting Pakistan on July 27," the embassy official said, adding the visit is a continuation of high-level engagements between the two countries which started with the visit of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, followed by Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to the kingdom," added the Arab News. The crown prince was in Islamabad on a high-profile visit in February 2019, during which Saudi Arabia signed investment deals with Pakistan worth \$20 billion. According to Ashrafi, progress on the agreements will be reviewed during Prince Faisal's upcoming visit, which "will also focus on future cooperation between the two countries."

Thousands of Afghan families...

FROM PAGE 01
The Taliban to come that close," Lalai Dastageeri, deputy governor of Kandahar province, told AFP. "We are now trying to organise our security forces." Local authorities had set up four camps for the displaced people who were estimated to be about 154,000. Kandahar resident Hafiz Mohammad Akbar said his house had been taken over by the Taliban after he fled. "They forced us to leave ... I am now living with my 20-member family in a compound with no toilet," said Akbar. Residents expressed concerns that the fighting might increase in the days ahead. "If they really want to fight, they should go to a desert and fight, not destroy the city," said Khan Mohammad, who moved to a camp with his family. "Even if they win, they can't rule a ghost town." Kandahar, with its 650,000 inhabitants, is the second-largest city in Afghanistan after Kabul. The southern province was the epicentre of the Taliban's regime when they ruled Afghanistan between 1996 to 2001. Ousted from power in a US-led invasion in 2001 after the September 11 attacks, the Taliban have spearheaded a deadly insurgency that continues to this day. Their latest offensive launched in early May has seen the group take control of half of the country's about 400 districts. Earlier this week, the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff General Mark Milley said the Taliban appear to have "strategic momentum" on the battlefield.

COVID tally reports 6% positivity...

FROM PAGE 01
during past 24 hours in various Covid dedicated health-care facilities of the country. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 6.32 percent. The Covid positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major cities including Islamabad 38%, Lahore 20%, Peshawar 15% and Karachi 15%. The maximum Oxygen beds (alternate oxygen providing facility other than ventilator administered as per medical requirement of COVID patient) was also occupied in four major cities of Gilgit 50%, Karachi 46%, Rawalpindi 24% and Muzaffarabad 28%. Around 278 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in the country while no COVID affected person was on ventilator in Balochistan, and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Some 44,579 tests were conducted across the country on Saturday, including 16,156 in Sindh, 17,525 in Punjab, 6,117 in KP.



TOKYO: Players of Australian hockey team celebrate after a seven goal win against India, in their second match of Tokyo Olympics. Indians could score only one goal. — DNA

Australia defeat India by 7-1 in Men's hockey

India men's hockey team was not able to carry their winning momentum as the Manpreet Singh-led side stumbled to a defeat at the hands of Australia in their second Group A game in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: World's No. 1 ranked Australian team played like No. 1 to hand India one of the worst defeat for the Indian Hockey team in recent times. Indian defence was completely exposed by the Australian attackers as they scored goals at will against the helpless Indian team — Follow India will now play Spain in their 3rd game in Olympics on Tuesday. India men's hockey team was not able to carry

their winning momentum as the Manpreet Singh-led side stumbled to a defeat at the hands of Australia in their second Group A game in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics. Australia defeated India 7-1 here at the Oi Hockey Stadium North Pitch. India will next take on Spain on Tuesday. In the first quarter, Australia managed to take the lead as Daniel Beale scored. The Manpreet Singh-led India was not able to get the equaliser in the first quarter and hence the scoreline remained 1-0.

Australia dent another blow as Jeremy Hayward went through India goalkeeper PR Sreejesh and as a result, Australia took a 2-0 lead, creating more pressure on India. In the same quarter, Flynn Ogilvie scored as well, giving Australia a 3-0 lead. India had no answers to whatever was being thrown at them, and they quickly conceded another, to go 0-4 down in the second quarter. In the third quarter, India finally managed to get on the scoring sheet as 21-year-old Dilpreet Singh

rose up to the challenge. However, Australia once again restored their four-goal lead as Blake Govers scored through a penalty stroke, giving Australia a 5-1 lead. Minutes later, Govers scored again and Australia gained a 6-1 lead, and India ran the risk of conceding goals in double digits. In the fourth and final quarter, Australia scored one more goal and in the end, they registered a thundering win. Spain Vs Argentina: One of the non-sporting high-

lights of the Olympic Games is the camaraderie we see between athletes of different nations - whether it be a congratulations after a tough battle or a helping hand when an opponent hits the deck. But Argentina won't be winning any medals for sportsmanship this year, after an unprovoked attack from one of their field hockey players at the end of a game against Spain. The game itself ended in a 1-1 draw, and Spain's David Alegre finished the match lying on the field

as Argentina's Matias Rey came over to help stretch out his tired muscles, the two rivals seemingly in good spirits. The 36-year-old Argentinian came flying over and appeared to shout in Alegre's face before shoving his stick at the back of his head while he was still lying on the field, much to the outrage of the other Spanish players. A scuffle ensued where Delas from Spain pushed Rossi away with a hand around his throat, aggravating Rossi further.



TOKYO: China's weightlifter Li Fabin won men's 61 kg gold at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics on claiming the 5th gold medal for Team China. — DNA

Pakistan vs West Indies T20I series schedule revised

LAHORE: The schedule for the Pakistan and West Indies T20I series has been revised, with the number of fixtures cut down from five to four. Cricket West Indies announced in a statement on Sunday. The four-match T20I series will start on July 28 at the Kensington Oval, Barbados, while the rest of the matches will be played at the Guyana National Stadium on July 31, August 1, and August 3, the board announced. "The adjustment [...] was necessary due to the changes to the fixtures for the ongoing ODI series between West Indies and Australia, which are part of the International Cricket Council's ODI Super League, which concludes on July 26," it added.

Match schedule:

July 27: 1st match at Kensington Oval
July 31: 2nd match at Guyana National Stadium
August 1: 3rd match at Guyana National Stadium
August 3: 4th match at Guyana National Stadium
August 12-16: 1st Test at Sabina Park
August 20-24: 2nd Test at Sabina Park

Low-energy Olympics put skate star in a spin

TOKYO: American superstar Nyjah Huston bemoaned soaring temperatures and the lack of fans as he endured a day to forget in skateboarding's grand Olympic debut on Sunday. The multiple world champion and world number one has dominated street skating but four straight falls in the tricks section left him seventh out of eight finalists. Japan's Yuto Horigome took the inaugural gold with Huston, skating's high-profile, multi-millionaire answer to Tiger Woods or LeBron James, left searching for answers. He said it was difficult competing in a sun-baked, empty venue — after fans were barred from most of the Games over the coronavirus — with an Olympic title on the line. Many of his victories have come in front of noisy crowds and while hip hop still thumped from the speakers, the lack of an audience was keenly felt at Ariake Urban Sports Centre. "The atmosphere has been hard definitely," Huston said. "Even though I skate with headphones on out there, I normally feed off the energy of the crowd. It's really unfortunate that there's no fans here." He added that the hot weather, with temperatures hitting 34 degrees Celsius (93 degrees Fahrenheit) "really makes a difference". "Your feet start burning out, it feels kinda crazy. It gets so hot that your board kinda flexes. It's not easy," Huston said, admitting that he felt more pressure than normal. "There's an extra pressure here. I've been skating pro-contests for 15 years now but there's Street League, X Games, but if you compare that to the Olympics there's no comparison," he said. Despite his disappointment, Huston said it was a dream come true to compete at the Olympics — and hoped skateboarding could bring a "new vibe" to the highly traditional Games. "Skateboarding can give to the Olympics a great competition, some new vibes that I feel it'd kinda need," he said. "After this, hopefully people will be more accepting to skateboarding in cities like Tokyo. There's a lot of good spots here and amazing skaters that come from here," Huston added. — DNA

World No.1 Barty suffers shock defeat in first round

The rules call for a 10-minute break, if requested, between the second and third sets once the reading goes above 30.1 Celsius, while changeovers and set breaks have been extended by 30 seconds

TOKYO: World number one Ashleigh Barty crashed out of the Olympics women's singles tennis tournament in the opening round on Sunday, losing 6-4, 6-3 to Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo. Barty, the reigning Wimbledon champion, dropped serve twice in each set and made 55 unforced errors compared to just 13 for her opponent. "It's an amazing feeling, I still can't believe it," said the 48th-ranked Sorribes Tormo, who will go on to face France's Fiona Ferro in the second round. "It's something incredible for me. It's something that I've been dreaming of all my life, being here and even more so beating the world number one. I'm super, super happy." While Barty's bid to become the first Australian singles gold medallist in tennis ended prematurely, she and partner Storm Sanders are through to the second round of



the women's doubles. Barty could potentially come up against Sorribes Tormo again in the quarter-finals of that competition. Sorribes Tormo and Paula Badosa are in first-round action later on Sunday. Sorribes Tormo dismissed concerns of playing twice on the same day as the ITF's extreme weather policy was activated with temperatures again reaching 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit) in Tokyo. The rules call for a 10-minute break, if requested, between the second and third sets once the reading goes above 30.1 Celsius, while changeovers and set breaks have been extended by 30 seconds. "I'm playing with Paula, who is one of my best friends, and we are super happy to be here. We will enjoy it," said Sorribes Tormo. "It doesn't matter the conditions. We are here to play, we are here to enjoy and that's what we will try to do." — APP

India upset over PTI victory: Fawad

FROM PAGE 01

Indian media had strongly opposed Imran Khan's government regarding Kashmir. Formation of Imran Khan's government in Azad Kashmir would be a great shock to India, he added. He said that Pind Dadan Khan was the stronghold of PTI. He also thanked the people for voting for the PTI candidate. Congratulating the people of Kashmir, the minister said that free and fair election process within Pakistan gave hope to the people of Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said that time would open when the people of IOJK would also cast their votes in free and fair election process. Fawad said that the election process in Pakistan and Kashmir as a whole was peaceful. He said that unfortunately a PTI worker was martyred during an incident. He said that the PPP workers had attacked the PTI activists at several places during the polling. Fawad said that the turnout of more than 50 per cent was a positive development.

'Rigged election': Opp. parties slam...

FROM PAGE 01

attempting to "steal" the elections. The PPP leader alleged PTI workers had fired on a PPP worker's car during polling time, while police had uprooted a camp belonging to her party. "There is a clear difference between the voter lists of several polling stations [...] PPP has submitted a written complaint to the AJK Election Commission," she said. Meanwhile, PML-N spokesperson Mariyum Aurangzeb, in a statement, claimed PTI "goons" had attacked her party's workers in Gujranwala's Alipur Chatha area to "rig" the election. Aurangzeb said despite PTI workers beating up her party workers, the police "arrested those associated with PML-N". "PTI has been allowed to engage in hooliganism with complete liberty," she said. The spokesperson alleged AJK Election Commission officials refused to accept PML-N's written complaints, saying they would accept them after permission from the chief election commissioner. "Complaints of violence and rigging do not meet the criteria for a transparent election," she added. Aurangzeb had earlier drawn attention to what she had termed as "irregularities" being reported from various constituencies. "Complaints of polling agents being prevented from entering polling stations and closure of polling are increasing," she said in a statement. She claimed that polling has been stalled for two hours at Girls Primary School Kangarhariwala, Union Council Komi Kot. "Women voters are being treated insultingly," she added and claimed that there are reports of votes being stamped inside the polling station with the help of staff. No polling agent was allowed to enter LA-32 Chakar, LA-33 Goharabad except that of PTI, she further claimed.

Indonesian playing Tokyo Games for Covid-victim brother

TOKYO: An Asian champion badminton player is gunning for glory at the coronavirus-delayed Tokyo Olympics in memory of his brother who died of the disease. Indonesia's Jonatan Christie was competing at a tournament in Thailand earlier this year when he learned that his older brother, Ivan, had contracted the illness back home. The 23-year-old Christie's mother, father and brother all eventually ended up in hospital, but his sibling suffered most. "After I came back from Thailand, my mother said to me, 'he is already sick,'" the 2018 Asian Games badminton champion said. "My mother and father were ill at the same time, but in a different hospital to my brother. I was going to my father and mother's hospital, and then in the evening I was going to my brother's hospital, so I had to take time out for them."

Briefs

Turkey reports 12,381 daily Covid cases

ANKARA: Turkey on Sunday registered 12,381 new COVID-19 cases, raising its tally of infections to 5,587,378, according to its Health Ministry.

The death toll from the virus in Turkey rose by 58 to 50,879, while 5,383 more people recovered in the last 24 hours. A total of 221,463 tests were conducted over the past day, it said.

Turkey has started mass COVID-19 vaccination on Jan. 14 after the authorities approved the emergency use of the Chinese Sinovac vaccine. More than 39.37 million people have received their first doses of the vaccine, while over 22.46 million had their second doses. Turkey has so far administered over 65.59 million doses including third booster jabs. — APP

India monsoon death toll climbs to 124

MUMBAI: The death toll from flooding and landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains in India climbed to 124 Sunday, officials said, with rescuers searching for dozens more missing.

The country's western coast has been inundated by torrential rains since Thursday, with the India Meteorological Department warning of further downpours over the next few days.

In Maharashtra state, 114 people have been killed, including more than 40 in a large landslide that hit the hillside village of Talje, south of Mumbai, on Thursday. Villager Jayram Mahaske, whose relatives remained trapped, told AFP that "many people were washed away as they were trying to run away" when the landslide hit.

It flattened dozens of homes in a matter of minutes, leaving just two concrete structures standing and cutting off power supply, local residents told AFP.

Rescuers were scouring the mud and debris for 99 others still missing.

"My entire team is engaged in rescue operations now," National Disaster Response Force Inspector Rajesh Yawale, who was coordinating rescue operations in the village, told AFP Saturday. He said many bodies were washed away, with some found stuck among trees downstream.

A dozen others were killed in two separate landslides, also south of Mumbai.

In parts of Chiplun, water levels rose to nearly 20 feet (six metres) on Thursday after 24 hours of uninterrupted rain submerged roads and homes. Eight patients at a local Covid-19 hospital also reportedly died after power supply to ventilators was cut off by the floods.

In neighbouring Goa, a woman drowned, the state government told the Press Trust of India, in what Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said were the "worst floods since 1982".

In the coastal plains spanning Maharashtra and Goa, floodwater levels remained elevated after rivers burst their banks. — APP

Morocco reports 5,494 Covid cases

RABAT: Morocco reported on Sunday 5,494 new COVID-19 cases, bringing the total infections in the country to 575,162.

The death toll rose to 9,559 with 23 new fatalities added during the last 24 hours, while 616 people are in intensive care units, according to a statement by the Ministry of Health.

The total number of recoveries from COVID-19 in Morocco increased by 1,604 to 542,078, the statement said.

The COVID-19 fatality rate in Morocco stands at 1.7 percent while the recovery rate is 92 percent.

Meanwhile, 11,728,171 people have received so far the first vaccine shots against COVID-19 in the country, and 9,794,265 people have received two doses.

The North African country launched a nationwide vaccination campaign on Jan. 28 after the arrival of the first shipment of China's Sinopharm vaccines. — APP

Chinese company to set up smart phone assembly unit

The local production of smartphones saves the company from paying massive import duty, which has also been increased by up to 240 % following the Annual Budget 2021-26

AGENCIES

BEIJING: Xiaomi, the second biggest smartphone company in the world, is planning to set up its assembly unit in Pakistan in the next 3-4 months, creating employment opportunities as well as making smartphones more accessible to people across the country.

According to global analytics firm Canalys, Xiaomi became the world's second largest smartphone vendor behind Samsung, surpassing Apple in Q2 2021, China Economic Net (CEN) reported.

Its shipments jumped 83%

year-on-year to hit a 17% global market share during the quarter, per data from Canalys. If this level of growth continues to evolve at its current pace, the China-based tech giant may soon trump Samsung like it did one over Apple, and can become the world's biggest smartphone vendor before the end of this year.

Canalys also reports top smartphone vendors, Q1 2021 in Pakistan which includes Transsion at #1, Vivo at #2, Samsung at #3, Oppo at #4 and Xiaomi at #5.

It is pertinent to mention that several other smartphone manufacturers have already set up their



assembly plants in Pakistan. These brands include Tecno, Infinix, Gfive and Realme.

The development came shortly after Realme, another Chinese smartphone manufacturer, announced setting up its smartphone

manufacturing plant in Lahore.

This resulted in a massive price cut for the brand's smartphone model (C21) being manufactured in the country and if Xiaomi is successful with setting up its own assembly plant in Paki-

stan, similar results can be expected when it comes to the company's smartphone prices. Realme has already had a test run of its local assembly line in Lahore, causing a considerable drop in the prices of Realme phones, such as that of the new C21.

This was revealed by Realme's Director of Marketing in Southeast Asia, South Asia and Latin America, Sherry Dong.

Both Xiaomi and Realme aim to produce smartphones and other Artificial Intelligence of Things (AIoT) products in their local assembly plants in the South Asian country.

Affordable products are the hallmark of both companies. As Pakistan is a developing country with a large, young population, establishing local mobile assembly units is expected to have a positive socio-economic impact.

It is to be noted that Pakistan, with over 40 million users, is the 7th largest importer of mobile phones globally. Therefore, local manufacturing will also save foreign exchange on mobile phone imports.

The local production of smartphones saves the company from paying massive import duty, which has also been increased by up to 240 % following the Annual Budget 2021-26.

Vietnam's daily Covid infections hit new high

HANOI: Vietnam's daily COVID-19 infections hit a new high for the third day in a row with 9,256 new cases on Saturday, surging from Friday's 7,307, according to the country's Ministry of Health. The new infections included 9,225 locally transmitted and 31 imported, bringing the total tally to 90,934 with 370 deaths, the ministry said. Among the community cases, 5,396 were reported in the southern epicenter Ho Chi Minh City, 1,892 in the southern Long An province, and 785 in the southern Binh Duong province. Nationwide, 17,583 COVID-19 patients have recovered, up 2,047 from Friday.

As of Saturday, Vietnam had registered a total of 88,762 domestically transmitted COVID-19 cases, including 87,192 detected since the start of the latest outbreak in late April, the ministry said. — APP



CHENGDU: State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi held talks with Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto in Chengdu, Sichuan Province. — DNA

India's FATF admission exposes its real face in region

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Narendra Modi-led Indian government's admission that it ensured Pakistan remained on the grey list of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has exposed its double-faced role in the region.

An analytical report released by Kashmir Media Service, on Friday, said Pakistan was placed on the 'increasing monitoring list', generally known as the grey list, by the FATF in June 2018 and since then it continues to be on this list. It said India's admission on FATF politicization once again vindicated Pakistan's stance on New Delhi's negative role in the region. India has long been using global forums for its narrow political designs against Pakistan, it deplored.

The report said, manipulating an important technical forum for achieving narrow political

designs is disgraceful but not surprising for Modi-led fascist Indian government. It said, New Delhi is trying to destroy credibility of global institutions like FATF for fulfilling its nefarious political designs, adding that FATF must take stern notice of the Indian foreign minister S. Jaishankar's statement as his admission has raised serious questions on the integrity of FATF.

The report pointed out that the Indian FM's confession has once again proved that New Delhi was hatching conspiracies to turn public opinion at the global level against Pakistan. While referring to the statement of the Foreign Office of Pakistan wherein it gave a hint of approaching the financial watchdog for appropriate action against Modi-led Indian government for politicizing FATF, the KMS report said that the world community must tell India in no uncertain terms to stop its nefarious agenda against Pakistan.

Spain imposes 10-day quarantine

MADRID: The Spanish government confirmed on Sunday that travelers from Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia and Namibia will have to spend 10 days in quarantine following their arrival in Spain.

The decision was published in the Spanish Official State Bulletin (BOE), which said the measure will come into effect from July 27 as a result of the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the four countries.

The 10-day quarantine may end earlier if the travelers get a negative COVID-19 test result on the seventh day after their arrival.

Argentina, Colombia, Bolivia and Namibia thus join a list of over 25 countries from outside the European Union that are considered to be high risk. Travelers from these countries have to spend time in quarantine after arriving in Spain. The Spanish Health Ministry said earlier this week that the ban on arrivals from Brazil and South Africa, which was imposed earlier in the year, will remain in place until at least Aug. 3. — APP

FIEDMC to promote investment culture in country

DNA

LAHORE: Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Chairman Faisalabad Industrial Estate Development and Management Company (FIEDMC) Sunday said as the world was grappling with the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic, Pakistan is turning the challenge into a prospect for greater economic gain through promoting stronger trade links with regional countries under the guideline of Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision.

Presiding over a meeting of senior executives of FIEDMC through webinar from the camp office, he said Pakistan was looking to the COVID-19 outbreak to offset some of its long-standing economic problems and remodel domestic resource distribution as it attracts significant foreign investment to boost an ailing economy," says a press release issued here today.

In this regard, Mian Kashif Ashfaq pointed out that the incumbent government under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran

Khan was committed to bring out comprehensive solutions for sustaining the economic growth in the wake of global outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

Besides this, he was of the opinion that these trade and investment officers working in more than 50 countries would be bound to link the expected investors with one window operation of FIEDMC and update the administration of these economic zones about the trade possibilities of their designated countries for promoting and marketing of Pakistani products, which would help the country enhancing volume of exports.

Mian Kashif said Allama Iqbal Industrial City provided a huge opportunity for the foreign and local investors under one window operation.

"Economic sovereignty is the key to comprehensive development," he said regretting that this was generally ignored and the weak stance adopted by previous governments exposed the country to steady increase in the energy cost affecting the entire economy.

Pak expert among 25 in UN Tax Committee

DNA

NEW YORK: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed a distinguished group of 25 tax experts from around the world, including Pakistan, to serve as members of the United Nations Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters for the 2021 to 2025 term, according to an announcement.

The Pakistani expert named to the committee is: Dr. Muhammad Ashfaq Ahmed, who is the Director General of the International Taxes, Federal Board of Revenue, Islamabad.

The UN Chief's Deputy Spokesman, Farhan Haq, who made the announcement at the regular noon briefing, said that the UN Tax Committee guides countries' efforts to advance stronger and more forward-looking tax policies adapted to the realities of globalized trade and investment, an increasingly digitalized economy and worsening environmental degradation.

A stronger private sector can boost economic potential

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: President SAARC chamber of commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said that a stronger private sector could help Pakistan realise its economic potential.

Talking to a 20 member traders delegation led by Zafar Bakhtawari Secretary General United Business Group in the federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, he said that only private sector play key role in pushing economic growth upward, generating job opportunities, providing oxygen to domestic industry besides boosting export in addition to promotion of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs). He said Pakistan has tremendous untapped economic potential that needs to be fully



exploited through prudent key policy actions to help create new marketing opportunities, mobilise private investments to create more jobs and help the country in coping with the impact of covid 19 on its economy. He stressed the urgent need for reforms in the wake of pandemic impact on country's private sector especially on SMEs that drive so much of Pakistan's economy.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said Pakistan can foster a more innovative, competitive and entrepreneurial economy and reinvigorate growth by ad-

ressing critical constraints that are limiting private sector investment. He said a private sector led growth agenda needs to be equitable and benefit Pakistan, many SMEs and also offer jobs and opportunities for the more than two million young who join the labor force each year.

In response to a question regarding grossly abuse of power and wastage of resources of Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry by the office bearers for their vested interests, Iftikhar Ali Malik said that all its resources must be utilised for the promotion of trade activities and welfare the business community not to obligingly their blue eyed on extreme higher package by creating unnecessary new posts which are not required.

CONDOLENCE



The All Pakistan Newspapers Society expresses its

heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of its

former President

Mr. Arif Nizami

Editor & Publisher

Pakistan Today

May Allah the Almighty rest his soul in eternal peace and give courage to his family and his colleagues at Pakistan Today to bear this irreparable loss.



All Pakistan Newspapers Society

Briefs

PM to launch plantation drive today

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan will launch the countrywide monsoon plantation drive today (Monday) in a bid to turn Pakistan green. The Prime Minister will plant a sapling at Fatima Jinnah Park in Sector F-9 Islamabad as a gesture to encourage the masses to fully participate in the tree-plantation campaign. The nationwide activity is taking place in the rainy season of monsoon as part of the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami under the auspices of the Ministry of Climate Change. In the next few weeks, the Capital Development Authority will plant nearly half a million trees across Islamabad. Islamabad over the years, has witnessed a massive reduction in tree cover, particularly in the last two decades.

Rescue operation launched for stuck ship

DNA

KARACHI: A rescue operation for the cargo ship stuck near Karachi's SeaView for the last five days will finally be launched on Monday (July 26), Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Ali Zaidi announced on Sunday. "The owner [of the vessel] has nominated Bharia Marine Services as their agent in Pakistan," he tweeted. "Rescue tugs will arrive early Monday and along with our tugs will start the operation." A Chinese expert has been flown in by the owner of the ship to monitor the operation. Tong 77 departed from the Chennai port for Istanbul. On July 18, it stopped in Karachi for staff changes. The high tides pushed it towards the coast, a few kilometres away from SeaView. Experts of the Karachi Port Trust and Pakistan Navy have warned of the shipping breaking down which will result in environmental hazards such as oil spills in the ocean. According to Zaidi, the ship's engines are running and its captain has not yet given an SOS call. "This means we cannot launch an operation." KPT has activated oil spill response teams at SeaView since Saturday. A 200 meters floatation boom has been deployed along the starboard side and the ship is being monitored 24/7 by the KPT Marine Pollution Control and Port Security personnel, the minister said, adding that a PMSA boat has been stationed 24/7 in case of an emergency.

Protests across Tunisia

FOREIGN DESK

TUNIS: Hundreds of protesters rallied in the Tunisian capital and other cities on Sunday demanding the government step down after a spike in COVID-19 cases that has aggravated economic troubles. In Tunis, police used pepper spray against protesters who threw stones and shouted slogans demanding that Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi quit and parliament be dissolved. Witnesses said rallies numbering several hundred also gathered the cities of Gafsa, Sidi Bouzid, Monastir and Nabeul. Demonstrators in Sousse tried to storm the local headquarters of the biggest party in parliament, the moderate Islamist Ennahda. In Touzeur, protesters set fire to the Ennahda headquarters. The protests raise pressure on a fragile government that is enmeshed in a political struggle with President Kais Saied, who is trying to avert a looming fiscal crisis amid a weeks-long spike in Covid cases and increased death rates. The pandemic has hit Tunisia as it struggles to lift an economy that has suffered since its 2011 revolution, undermining public support for democracy as unemployment surged and state services declined.

E-bus, a Pakistan-China coop model to fight climate change

DNA

ISLAMABAD: BYD China, the world's leading electric vehicle manufacturer, has joined hands with Pakistan's Sapphire Group for market development and manufacturing of electric vehicles in the country. According to a Gwadar Pro's report, the first electric bus was imported in Oct 2020 to Pakistan from BYD, and the E-bus has made its debut and started operations in Karachi in March this year. Sapphire is running this bus in partnership on a 36 km two-way existing route. The idea is to scale up the number of EV buses to 100 in Karachi. Talha Tariq, Project Manager (Business Development) Sapphire Energy Pvt, said that electric vehicles were introduced due to global warming and climate change. "In Pakistan, we have introduced them and this is the future. This is a way to switch Pakistan from hydrocarbon fuel to electric vehicles for transport," he said. Since several months have passed after E-bus started operation, the 12-meter-long

bus, with 35 passenger seats, has received positive feedback from local passengers. According to a passenger, "The bus is air-conditioned and the handicapped with a wheelchair can easily sit here. It is a unique thing that we have not seen in other buses. "As the climate of Karachi is very hot so there is AC in the bus. The mask and hand sanitizer are available on the bus. The service is good," a passenger Mushtaq Ahmad said. "There is no tiredness felt in it. There is no pollution of any type. There is no smoke, no diesel, no noise. It is such a silent vehicle that we perform our duty peacefully," said Afaq Ahmad, an E-bus driver. As per Sapphire Group, the operational cost is going to be lower than half of the routine buses running in Karachi. The bus has an improved capacity of 324 kWh (kilowatt-hours) and a range of 250 km in one charge with full load under regular city traffic. At a cost of Rs20/Kwh, the running cost will come at Rs26/km and will do six rounds in full charge. As in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, there is transportation congestion going on, the way diesel buses are functioning

is again being reviewed. Some believe the rise of E-bus in the city can be a solution to transport jams as well. What E-bus has brought to Pakistan is more than a better life for locals. As Ahmed Jaudet Bilal, director of strategy and special projects, Sapphire Group, put it, "basically what we are trying to do is that we want to electrify the transport system in Pakistan as a strategy." Pakistan's annual import of oil and gas accounts for about 80%. "If all 240,000 buses in Pakistan were changed into electric ones, it would save a lot of fuel, and the dependence on imports will be largely reduced. 40-50% of traffic emissions pollution can be lessened," said Liu Xueliang, General Manager of Asia Pacific Auto Sales Division, BYD. With regards to renewable energy, Liu particularly mentioned the potential in solar energy. Pakistan enjoys sunlight more than 3,000 hours a year on average, with Baluchistan getting sunlight 8 to 8.5 hours per day, which stands out in global terms. Liu also mentioned E-bus's function as a tool for balancing power networks. Now the E-bus can run 250 to 300 kilometers on a

full charge which requires about four hours. As the country's overall electricity usage is at a peak during the day and low at night, charging at night can help keep a balance, and in return can send out power when an emergency occurs. "Thus the EVs not only affect your travel but also change living habits, providing a good tool for a comprehensive energy structure of the country," he said. Rather than offering a single product, BYD aims to provide a full range of technologies and products for national industrial development. "With electrified public transportation in place, a new ecological chain will be developed." "We have a plan to add more buses on our routes and other different routes as well. Similarly, we will look at Lahore, Peshawar, Sialkot, Multan, and other big cities and will start electric buses there," he said. Liu Xueliang, on the other hand, mentioned that after E-bus's running for some time, they'll adjust facilities according to market feedback. Besides, after-sales service such as spare parts supply and maintenance will be improved.

Russian navy can carry out 'unpreventable strike'

WEB DESK

MOSCOW: The Russian navy can detect any enemy and launch an "unpreventable strike" if needed, President Vladimir Putin said on Sunday, weeks after a UK warship angered Moscow by passing the Crimea peninsula. "We are capable of detecting any underwater, above-water, airborne enemy and, if required, carry out an unpreventable strike against it," Putin said speaking at a navy day parade in St Petersburg. Putin's words follow an incident in the Black Sea in June when Russia said it had fired warning shots and dropped bombs in the path of a British warship to chase it out of Crimea waters. Britain rejected Russia's account of the incident, saying it believed any shots fired were a pre-announced Russian "gunnery exercise", and that no bombs had been dropped. Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 but Britain and most of the world recognise the Black Sea peninsula as part of Ukraine, not Russia. Putin said last month Russia could have sunk the British warship HMS Defender, that it accused of illegally entering its territorial waters, without starting World War Three and said the United States played a role in the "provocation".

Inter exams to take place accordingly: Ghani

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Sindh Education and Literacy Minister Saeed Ghani has said that all schools in the province are being closed due to the Covid-19 situation, though exams will take place according to schedule. He was speaking during a press conference at his camp office here in Clifton on Saturday. "The schools may close but the examination schedules will remain unchanged," he said. "For the upcoming intermediate examinations, there will be around 115,000 students appearing in two shifts at more than 125 centres. We will try our best to hold the exams while observing the standard operating procedures," he said. "If we don't hold these exams, the students' entire year will be wasted as all the admissions to universities and foreign academic institutions depend on the results of these exams only," he added. He said that the Covid situation in Sindh was going from bad to worse with each passing day, but they were not sitting around doing nothing about it. "It is also true that we are working as fast as we can to control and contain the disease. But it is not true that the situation is so bad that there are no beds for Covid-19 patients available in our hospitals," he said.

Chaman border reopened for three hours

DNA

CHAMAN: Pakistan on Sunday reopened a key border crossing with Afghanistan for three hours (8am to 11 am) to facilitate the stranded Pakistani and Afghan nationals to come back to their respective countries. Authorities say the border crossing is only open for stranded Pakistani and Afghan nationals. It is pertinent to note that all kinds of trade activities are still closed at the Chaman border. Earlier on Thursday, Pakistan reopened the Chaman border after a two-day closure following the Taliban capturing Spin Boldak from Afghan government forces on July 14 leaving thousands of people stranded on both sides and trade at a standstill.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Germany bids farewell to the outgoing Head of Press Section of the Germany embassy Christine Rosenberger and welcomes her successor Dorota Berezicki. - DNA

Sharif's meetings with enemies expose him

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Spokesperson and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on political communication, Dr Shahbaz Gill on Sunday said the three secret meetings of Nawaz Sharif with enemies of the country in a week has exposed his real face. The meeting with Mohib Hamdullah was planned off-camera as an Indian personality was also present in the first part of the meeting, Shahbaz Gill tweeted. After the departure of Indian personality, some pictures were taken as Mohib Hamdullah was eager to make and get published the pictures, he said. Mohib by getting published the pictures and news, ex-

posed Nawaz Sharif, Shahbaz Gill said. After this episode, no one would vote for Nawaz Sharif in Kashmir or in any part of Pakistan, he said and added that Nawaz Sharif who was trying to get National Reconciliation Ordinance, had made an unforgivable mistake. The most secret meeting of the three took place with an Indian government official at a restaurant near Chelsea old town hall in Chelsea area of London, Shahbaz informed. Nawaz Sharif would have to give account of the conspiracy against Pakistan to masses, Shahbaz Gill added.



Iraq no longer requires US troops: PM

AGENCIES

BAGHDAD: Iraq's prime minister says his country no longer requires American combat troops to fight the Islamic State (IS) group, but a formal time frame for their redeployment will depend on the outcome of talks with US officials this week. Mustafa al-Kadhimi said Iraq will still ask for US training and military intelligence gathering. His comments came in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press ahead of a planned trip to Washington, where he's slated to meet with President Joe Biden on Monday for a fourth round of strategic talks. "There is no need for any foreign combat forces on Iraqi soil," said al-Kadhimi, falling short of announcing a deadline for a US troop departure. Iraq's security forces and army are capable of defending the country without US-led coalition troops, he said. But al-Kadhimi said any withdrawal schedule would be based on the needs of Iraqi forces, who have shown themselves capable in the last year of conducting independent anti-IS missions.

"The war against IS and the readiness of our forces require a special timetable, and this depends on the negotiations that we will conduct in Washington," he said. The US and Iraq agreed in April that the US transition to a train-and-advise mission meant the US combat role would end but they didn't settle on a timetable for completing that transition. In Monday's meeting at the White House, the two leaders are expected to specify a timeline, possibly by the end of this year. The US troop presence has stood at about 2,500 since late last year when former President Donald Trump ordered a reduction from 3,000. The US mission of training and advising Iraqi forces has its most recent origins in former President Barack Obama's decision in 2014 to send troops back to Iraq. The move was made in response to the IS group's takeover of large portions of western and northern Iraq and a collapse of Iraqi security forces that appeared to threaten Baghdad. Obama had fully withdrawn US forces from Iraq in 2011, eight years after the US invasion.

PTI bags historic victory from Rawalpindi: Sheikh Rashid

RAWALPINDI: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Sunday congratulated the people over the historic victory of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections 2021 in Rawalpindi. For the first time, in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Polls, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) made a historic success, he said while addressing a public meeting here outside Lal Haveli. Rashid said the people of Rawalpindi had proved that they were supporter

of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He said the real elections of AJK had taken place in the valleys where PTI won the elections in Rawalpindi's constituency with a poor man, adding, the candidate who won the election was rickshaw driver. Sheikh Rashid said, "PTI is also going to form a government in Sindh." Hinting towards crackdown against fake identity cards issued to Afghan immigrants, he said fake ID card issuing officers in Karachi

would be evicted soon. The minister has said that Imran Khan would fight for liberation of Kashmir all over the world. He said that Kashmir would be liberated soon adding that sacrifices of Kashmiri people would not go waste. He said that Rawalpindi would be made a model city. "We believe in the politics of dignity and respect," he added. Rashid informed that Leh expressway, hospitals, colleges were going to be

built in the city. "Prime Minister Imran Khan initiated mega hydro power projects like Dasu and Bhasha dams will add 10,000 megawatts of electricity after completion," he added. The minister said that no one was above the law and the killers of a daughter in Islamabad would be brought to justice. The minister made it clear that Interior Ministry would wage a drug-free "jihad" all over the country. - APP



India monsoon death toll climbs to 127

The landslide flattened dozens of homes in a matter of minutes, leaving just two concrete structures standing and cutting off power

AGENCIES

MUMBAI: The death toll from flooding and landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains in India climbed to 127 Sunday, officials said, with rescuers searching for dozens more missing. The country's western coast has been inundated by torrential rains since Thursday, with the India Meteorological Department warning of further downpours over the next few days. Flooding and landslides are com-

mon during India's treacherous monsoon season, which also often sees poorly constructed buildings buckle after days of non-stop rain. Experts say climate change has caused the annual deluge to increase in frequency and intensity. In Maharashtra state, 117 people have been killed, including more than 40 in a large landslide that hit the hillside village of Taliye some 250 kilometres (155 miles) south-east of Mumbai Thursday. Villager Jayram Mahaske, whose relatives remained trapped, told AFP that "many people were

washed away as they were trying to run away" from the landslide. Another villager, Govind Malusare, said his nephew's body had been found after the landslide hit his family's home, but that his mother, brother, sister-in-law and niece were still missing. The landslide flattened dozens of homes in a matter of minutes, leaving just two concrete structures standing and cutting off power, local residents told AFP. In Posare village 210 kilometres south of Mumbai, the National Disaster Response Force said four

bodies were found overnight. In parts of Chiplun, water levels rose to nearly 20 feet (six metres) on Thursday after 24 hours of uninterrupted rain. The water levels have since started to recede. "Rain, floods, water are not new to the people here but what happened this time was unimaginable and they could not even save their belongings due to the rapid rise of water," Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray told reporters after visiting Chiplun on Sunday. Eight patients at a local Covid-19

hospital also reportedly died after power supply to ventilators was cut off. "The water level reached the ceiling of my shop, there was so much water inside," a shopkeeper told Indian news broadcaster NDTV, pointing to sludge and debris around him. "All the shops in this area have been completely damaged. The flood has left so much soil behind, we can't even resume work." Rescuers were working in waist-deep mud to search for 100 people still missing in the state with the help of excavators.