



Islamabad POST

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

High time to reverse the environmental damage: PM Imran

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Mountaineer Ali Sadpara's body found

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Saudi FM due in Islamabad

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud is visiting Pakistan on Tuesday (today) on the invitation of Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. He will be accompanied by a delegation comprising senior officials of the Saudi government. During the visit, the two Foreign Ministers will exchange views on the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional and international issues. The Saudi Foreign Minister will also call on other dignitaries as well during the visit.

Bilawal lauds PPP AJK team

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Monday said that his party has emerged as largest opposition party in Azad Kashmir despite irregularities. Bilawal Bhutto, in a tweet, said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) resorted to violence and rigging in the elections and Election Commission failed to take action against PTI for violating electoral rules. Bilawal also lauded PPP Azad Kashmir team and said that he is incredibly proud of them for putting up a good fight and securing 3 more seats from last time.

Role of G20 crucial in climate action

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for leadership of Group of 20 industrialized countries on the key issue of climate action, saying that he sees no pathway to reach Paris Agreement's 1.5 degrees Celsius goal without them. "The world urgently needs a clear and unambiguous commitment to the 1.5 degree goal of the Paris Agreement from all G-20 nations", he said on Sunday.

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Pak, China to continue high quality construction of CPEC
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Safe passage for Afghan soldiers

The assistance was made after ANA's local Commander requested Pak Army as they were unable to hold military posts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Army on Monday provided refuge and safe passage to 46 Afghan National Army (ANA) soldiers and Border Police including five officers, unable to hold their military posts along Pak - Afghan International Border, due to evolving security situation in Afghanistan. The assistance was made after ANA's local Commander opposite Arundu Sector, Chitral requested Pakistan Army as they were unable to hold their military posts, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. Pakistan Army contacted Afghan authorities for information and necessary formalities whereas these Afghan soldiers arrived at Arundu Sector, Chitral late last night, it added. The ISPR statement further said that after contact with Afghan authorities and necessary military procedures, 46 soldiers including five officers were given refuge and safe passage into Pakistan. The Afghan soldiers, it said have been provided food, shelter and necessary medical care as per established military norms. "These soldiers including officers will be returned to Afghan government authorities in a dignified manner after due process," it said. It also underlined that on July 1, 2021, that 35 Afghan soldiers had also requested Pakistan Army for refuge and safe passage due to inability to hold their military post along Pak- Afghan International Border. They were also given safe passage into Pakistan and handed over to Afghan government after due procedure, it added.

Fencing along border to be completed by August 14

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday said fencing along the Afghan border would be completed by August 14 while 46 to 48 percent fencing on the border with Iran had been completed. Addressing a news conference here, he said there have been thousands of foreigners living in the country over the last many years without renewal of visa. He asked these foreigners to leave Pakistan before August 14 or get their visas renewed through online application, adding, no fine would be imposed on those who apply for the renewal of visa. The minister said the cyber-crime wing of Federal Investigation Agency would also be developed on modern lines to improve its performance and efficiency. A new policy of verification, renewal and correction was being introduced in NADRA for the computerized national identity cards, he said adding that action had been taken against 39 NADRA officials in Karachi for their alleged involvement in issuance of fake identity cards. He said the same action would be initiated in other cities including Lahore and Multan. The minister said India and Israel have started a hybrid war against Pakistan, and wanted to put a question mark on the data of NADRA.

'Nawaz-Mohib meeting cost PML-N AJK polls'

Chaudhry said the PML-N and PPP must demand resignation from Maryam and Bilawal



SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Monday said that the recent meeting of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif with Afghan National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib was one of the major factors behind the party's "humiliating defeat" in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) general elections. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, according to unofficial results, clinched majority

seats in the AJK general elections held on Sunday and is likely to form the next government in the region. "The meeting of Nawaz Sharif with RAW agent Hamdullah Mohib was felt by the Kashmiris and it reflected in the election results," the minister said at a press conference in Islamabad. He said it was surprising that the PML-N had not given any clarification about whether Nawaz met the Afghan NSA with the party's permission. Chaudhry, flanked by fed-

eral Minister for Kashmir Affairs Ali Amin Gandapur, said it was strange of the PML-N to expect victory in the AJK elections and win the confidence of Kashmiris, especially when their leaders were meeting Indian officials. Chaudhry said the PML-N and PPP must immediately demand resignation from Maryam Nawaz and Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari over the parties' AJK election defeat. "They have no grounds to remain chairpersons of their parties after their humiliating defeat in the polls," he added. The minister said the claims of rigging were meaningless given the huge magnitude of the victory PTI had bagged. "Such triumphs are only possible when you have public support, and it stands proven that people of Kashmir have trust in us," he stressed.

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan planting an Avocado sapling to launch Monsoon Plantation Campaign 2021 at F-9 Park. – DNA

High time to reverse environmental damage

The PM said the plantation under the Ten Billion Tree Programme would help the country gain its required forest cover

ANSAR M BHATTI

PM Imran thanks AJK people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday said as Pakistan faced the impending challenge of climate change, massive plantation was the solution to reverse the negative impacts of environmental degradation. Addressing at the launch of nationwide monsoon tree plantation drive, the prime minister said deforestation had resulted in an increased levels of air pollution and temperatures in the country, which required a special focus on planting trees. At the capital's Fatima Jinnah Park, the prime minister planted the sapling of Avocado (Persea Americana) fruit tree to kick off the plantation

campaign. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said the plantation under the Ten Billion Tree Programme would help the country gain its required forest cover, which was unfortunately quite less compared with other countries in the region. He said ruthless tree-cutting during the previous governments had led to rising pollution in big cities and emphasized that trees were the natural remedy to absorb the airborne pollutants. Sharing his vision to make every city of Pakistan green, he asked the local administrations including Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners to ensure proper implementation of

Continued on Page 06

Highest positivity ratio since July 1

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded as 57,799 on Monday with 3,752 more people testing positive for the deadly virus and 1,641 people recovering from the disease during the last 24 hours.

32 corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 31 of whom were under treatment in the hospitals and one of them perished in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the NCOC. Most of the deaths occurred in Sindh followed by Punjab. Out of the total 32 deaths occurred, 21 of them died were under treatment on ventilators. There were 2,677 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition with 104 of them admitted during past 24 hours in various Covid dedicated healthcare facilities of the country. – DNA

Record Afghan civilian casualties

UN says it had documented 5,183 civilian casualties between January and June

AGENCIES

Afghan situation threatens security interests: China

KABUL: At least 2,400 Afghan civilians were killed or injured in May and June of this year ever since the fighting between Taliban and Afghan security forces escalated, United Nations said on Monday.

The UN's Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA) said in a report it had documented 5,183 civilian casualties between January and June, of which 1,659 were deaths. The number was up 47% from the same period last year. The figures underscored the dire situation for Afghan civilians as intense fighting picked up in May and June after US President Joe Biden announced American

troops would withdraw by September, bringing an end to 20 years of foreign military presence in the country. "Of serious concern is the acute rise in the number of civilians killed and injured in the period from May 1, with almost as many civilian casualties in the May-June period as recorded in the entire preceding four months," UNAMA said in a statement.

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Tapping Gawadar's economic potential to the maximum

Notable Chinese investors expressed their commitment via video link to tap Pakistan's huge economic potential by investing more than \$100 Billion in Gawadar Free Zones in various projects

OPINION

ABDUL RASHID SHAKIR

GAWADAR: Gawadar, a port city with breathtaking and mesmerizing coast line can undoubtedly be developed into a major tourist attraction of Pakistan. Concealed as a natural deep water port in early nineties, its scope has increased manifold over the years. In 2015, with the launch of CPEC, a pilot project of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Gawadar assumed a crucially important strategic place in connecting Western China with Middle East, Central Asia, Africa and Europe for materializing optimal benefits of shared development by easing trade, tourism and cultural ties in the region. Rightly dubbed as 'Jewel of CPEC', it is an ideal location for industry, business and tourism to thrive, with huge potential of generating economic activities and numerous employment opportunities. According to a conservative estimate, once developed fully, Gawadar free economic zones may generate economic activities worth \$13 Billion dollar annually. Gawadar South Free Zone covers 66 acres of land; whereas North Free Zone, inaugurated by Prime Minister during his recent visit to Gawadar on 5th of July 2021,

is planned to be developed over more than 2200 acres of land, making it almost 35 times greater than the South Free Zone. It would offer huge investment opportunities to the business community, both local and foreign. Notable Chinese investors expressed their commitment via video link to tap Pakistan's huge economic potential by investing more than \$100 Billion in Gawadar Free Zones in various labor and investment intensive projects. On this occasion, other projects inaugurated by the Prime Minister under CPEC framework included establishment of Agriculture Industrial Park, Gawadar Expo Center, Gawadar Animal Vaccine Plant, Lubricants Plant and Gawadar Fertilizer Plant. Moreover, two MOUs were also

signed between Government of Pakistan and Chinese companies for the installation of a desalination plant and a power house to provide clean drinking water and affordable clean energy to address two of the major issues plaguing the area. Besides all this, the construction of East Bay Expressway would go a long mile in improving upon connectivity of Gawadar port with Karachi, the leading industrial and business center of the country for the promotion of economic activities in the region. In short, Prime Minister's recent visit to Gawadar would usher in a new era of economic growth in the region by boosting efforts to connect Gawadar with rest of the country by improving upon communication infrastructure, mas-

sive industrialization by roping in foreign direct investment, and taking on board all major neighboring countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Egypt and Kenya. One window facilitation process to ensure ease of doing business is need of the hour to lure in foreign investors. Cognizant of the fact, Federal Government is taking practical steps to clear hiccups in the process by developing a robust mechanism with the help of Balochistan's provincial government. Besides all these development initiatives aimed at the development of Gawadar as a hub of business activities and a buckle in the belt of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).

– The writer is the PRO to Prime Minister of Pakistan.

COVAX grants 3m doses of Moderna vaccines

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The second consignment of 3 million doses of Moderna (mRNA-1273) COVID-19 vaccines donated by the Government of the United States to the COVAX Facility arrived in Pakistan during early hours of Monday, bringing the total doses donated by the US Government to Pakistan through COVAX to 5.5 million since 8 May. According to a press statement by the UN Information Center here, the donation is part of the 870 million additional COVID-19 vaccine doses pledged by the G7 through the COVAX Facility.

Briefs

6,000 acres
state land
retrieved

FAISALABAD: Punjab Minister for Colonies Khayal Ahmad Kastro said that more than 6,000 acres of state land worth Rs 50 billion has been retrieved from illegal occupants in the district. He was addressing a 'Lambardar' Convention held at Metropolitan Corporation Hall here on Monday. Senior Member Board of Revenue/ Relief Commissioner Punjab Babar Hayat Tarar, Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, Parliamentarians Mian Waris Aziz, Adil Pervaiz Gujar, President Lumbardar Association Punjab Abdul Rehman Rana, AC Sadar Umar Maqbool and lambardars from district also attended the Convention. The minister asked the lambardars to identify illegally occupied state land which would also be retrieved. He said that under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab, the govt is taking all measures for the betterment of lambardars and in this connection a provincial convention would be held soon. Senior Member Board of Revenue Babar Hayat Tarar welcomed the lambardars and said that they are village officers. He shared the initiatives of Board of Revenue and said that recovery system is being streamlined to achieve the targets. Divisional Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner also spoke on the occasion and asked the lambardars to play their active role in achieving the target of coronavirus vaccination drive. — APP

Monsoon
plantation
drive in full
swing

DNA

PESHAWAR: Monsoon plantation drive is in full swing at different places and all public sector organizations are fully participating in it. This was told during a meeting regarding monsoon plantation drive held here with Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Peshawar, Gul Bano in the chair. Besides, Assistant Commissioner (AC) Dr. Ihtesham-ul-Haq, AC Obaid Doggar, Additional Assistant Commissioners (AACs) Anwar Akbar Khan and Habibullah the officers of forests, agriculture, health, education, Social Welfare, Revenue and local government departments attended the meeting at large. The meeting was told that trees would be planted at all public places including public parks, public sector offices, schools, colleges, universities, sides of roads and canals. According to Deputy Commissioner (DC), Khalid Mahmood all necessary arrangements regarding monsoon plantation drive have been completed. He appealed the people of Peshawar to protect plants planted during the campaign to turn Peshawar into a clean and green city.

'Rs1.5bn
being spent
on uplift of
Peshawar'

PESHAWAR: Provincial Minister for Local Government, Elections, Rural Development and Parliamentary Affairs Akbar Ayub Khan Monday said that development of Peshawar was one of the top priorities of KP government. He said this while talking to a delegation here at his office. The LG Minister said that development works of Rs 1.5 billion would be completed within one year in Peshawar while hundreds of beauty projects in provincial capital were to be completed soon to improve the living standards of the citizens in health, sanitation and other sectors. The minister said that KP government wanted to make Peshawar again the city of gardens and flowers. He said that the establishment of a zoo in Peshawar, the construction of Bab-e-Peshawar, BRT and other mega project were the big achievement of PTI government. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan chairing a review meeting on price control. — DNA

HC can't amend terms of
appointment orders: SC

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Monday announced a decision in a service matter and stated that the court was supposed to interpret the law and apply it in letter and spirit and it could not go beyond the law as courts lack jurisdiction to provide remedies which were otherwise not in the law or the Constitution by inventing remedies of their own and termed it a dangerous trend which threatened to weaken the very fabric of constitutionalism and rule of law and, this must be discouraged. The High Court could not alter, amend or renegotiate the terms and conditions of the appointment orders of the Respondents for the simple reason that it did not have jurisdiction to do so. A three-member SC bench comprising Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar had reserved a decision over a petition

filed by the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through Secretary Agriculture, Livestock and Co-operative Department Peshawar against Saeed-ul-Hassan and others. The provincial government had challenged the judgments of different benches of the Peshawar High Court the Respondents had, through their Constitutional Petitions, challenged the decisions of the appellants to terminate the services of the respondents from their respective posts. Their Petitions were allowed, and the Appellants were ordered to reinstate and regularize the Respondents against their respective posts. The 15-page judgment authored by Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan stated that "the high court in all the appeals had applied the principle of similar treatment of similarly placed persons and had found the Respondents eligible for Regularization. It was settled principle of law that each case turned on its own facts and circumstances. When the record

was clearly suggestive of the fact that the Respondents could not be regularized, and there were valid and sustainable reasons to do so, the principle of similar treatment of similarly placed employees could not blindly and indiscriminately circumvent the record to regularize those employees who were otherwise not entitled to regularization. Further, some judgments were mechanically rendered without examining the specific facts and circumstances of individual cases by relying on earlier judgments directing regularization and those too in incorrect and erroneous basis. This, by itself, furnished justification to set aside such judgments. Even otherwise, the rule of similar treatment for similarly placed persons has wrongly and incorrectly been applied in the instant cases." The court observed that the respondents had themselves conceded that they were employed in different projects on temporary

basis and this fact had been admitted before the Supreme Court and the employment of the Respondents was governed by the Project Policy which specifically provided that ex-project employees could not claim regularization and that the posts in questions would be filled as per the rules of the KPPSC or the DSC. "We are therefore of the view that the learned High Court has erred in law in ignoring the Project Policy and ordering regularization of the Respondents without relying on any statutory instrument which may have created a right in their favour. Discretionary Jurisdiction under Article 199 of the Constitution cannot be exercised in a vacuum. It must be grounded on a valid basis of violation of specific and enforceable legal or constitutional rights. The discretion must be exercised in a structured and calibrated manner with due regard to parameters put in place by the Constitution as well as by this Court. The impugned judgments

are unfortunately lacking all the aforementioned factors and are found to be unsustainable," it added. The court order stated that the Additional Advocate General (AAG) had submitted that all of the respondents were appointed on temporary posts as stipulated in their employment contracts and the apex court noted that the high court had not adverted to this aspect of the case and has simply applied the principle of similarly placed employees to give relief to the Respondents. It has been specifically mentioned in the appointment orders of the Respondents that they cannot claim regularization and further, that they are employed on contract for a specific period of time. In this view of the matter, the learned High Court has incorrectly applied the law to the cases of the Respondents and as such, we find the view of the learned High Court to be erroneous and not in consonance with the settled principles of law on the subject, it added.

3 new grid
stations to
be functional
soon: KP CM

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan Monday said that three new grid stations recently completed in the provincial metropolis would be functionalized soon. He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting relating to power-load shedding and low-voltage issues in some areas of the province. The meeting held with discussion on various matters to resolve the issues of low voltage and load-shedding of electricity of the province. Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) chief Engr. Mohammad Jabbar Khan and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The forum was given a detailed briefing about the progress so far made on the ongoing developmental projects aimed at improving power infrastructure across the province. The chief minister said that all the matters of PESCO related to provincial government would also be settled down on priority basis. He added that these matters related to federal government would soon be taken up with the Prime Minister Imran Khan who has already promised to allocate funds for the improvement of power infrastructure in the province. He directed the quarters concerned to ensure timely completion of all ongoing developmental projects for improving electricity infrastructure in the province.

Kamoka,
Commissioner
visit low lying
areas

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: National Assembly's Standing Committee for Finance and Economic Affairs Chairman Faizullah Kamoka accompanied by Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan here on Monday visited various low lying areas of the city and reviewed the arrangements to drain out rainwater. They visited Jaranwala road and Madina Town and inspected the drainage of rain water. They also met residents of the area and assured them that rainwater would be disposed of soon as WASA teams were present in the field day and night. On the occasion, Faizullah Kamoka said that steps had been taken to provide relief to the people by improving WASA performance. He said that he was continuously working with the administrative officers to resolve the problems of citizens by conducting field visits. He said that capacity of WASA was being enhanced to meet the challenges during monsoon season. The Divisional Commissioner urged the teams to take immediate steps for drainage of water from the rain-affected areas. He said that all available resources were being utilized to resolve the issue and for this purpose, it had been decided to seek services of WASA Lahore and Multan.

PDMA
issues rains
alert at KP

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday issued a rain alert to all the district administrations in the province and advised be prepared for any emergency as heavy rains are likely to hit different parts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa from Tuesday to Thursday. In a letter, the PDMA said as per the Meteorological Department forecast, rain and wind-thunderstorms with few heavy rains are expected in KP from Tuesday to Thursday. Heavy rains may cause flash flooding in local nullah and streams of the province, urban flooding in Peshawar and landslides in the vulnerable areas of province from Monday to Thursday. PDMA urged the people to take all precautionary measures and directed all departments to ensure availability of emergency service staff, machinery and other resources. — APP

Gerry's dnata
recognised for
safety excellence

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Gerry's dnata, Pakistan's largest ground services provider, has won a prestigious award for achieving the highest safety standards. The company has been recognised for its industry-leading health & safety risk assessment and control procedures at the 7th International Environment, Health & Safety Awards. Syed Haris Raza, vice president of Gerry's dnata, said: "Safety is a fundamental, uncompromising tenet of our business, and one of our six corporate values. We've integrated safety in all aspects of our operations and engage our people at all levels of the organisation in continuous improvement."

"This award is a testament to our team's hard work and industry-leading achievements. I am immensely proud of my colleagues and thank them for their relentless commitment to ensuring the highest level of safety for our customers and their passengers, every day." The International Environment, Health & Safety Awards are organised by the Professionals Network with the aim of honouring leadership and best practices across various industries in Pakistan. The awards are supported by the Pakistan Safety Council (PSC). A trusted partner of over 20 international airlines, Gerry's dnata provides quality and safe ground handling and cargo services at seven airports in Pakistan.

7 textile mills of Faisalabad
included among top 25

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Seven textile mills of Faisalabad have been included among top 25 mills that contributed 21% share in total national export of 25 billion dollars. Appreciating the role of Faisalabad in overall national economy, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed said that out of total 25 billion dollar export, the share of textile group is 15.5 billion dollar. He

thanked the Government and particularly Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce & Investment and said that the government has extended maximum facilities and its textile sector has responded positively by giving a quantum jump to the national exports. He said that if the current trend continued, textile exports could increase up to 25 billion dollars just within the next couple of years. He also appreciated the Interloop, Nishat, Masood Textile, Sadaqat, Kalash, Gohar

and Kamal Ltd and said that these groups are further expanding their production lines which will have a salutary impact on the national economy.

FCCI president expresses gratitude President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed has expressed his gratitude on the nomination of Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad of Inland Revenue as member to the UN Tax Committee for International Cooperation. He said that Dr. Ashfaq Ahmad is a versa-

tile and prolific tax manager who has proven his skill and expertise during his long association with FBR. He also quoted his visit to FCCI during June this year and said that he tactfully handled the chronic issues of taxation and played a pivotal role in broadening the tax base. He said that his tenure posting for a period of four years will provide him an opportunity to promote Pakistan as an efficient tax collecting country in addition to harmonizing our tax system and culture with the international requirements.

Tourism comes back in Gilgit Baltistan

ISLAMABAD: Tourism comes back in scenic Gilgit Baltistan (GB) where so far up to 700,000 local and foreign tourists thronged during the ongoing summer season to enjoy its mesmerizing weather and eye-catching mountainous terrain. Gilgit-Baltistan's Minister for Tourism, Sports, Culture, Archeology, and Youth Affairs Raja Nasir Ali Khan informed APP on Monday that the significant surge in tourists' footfall in GB had helped the sector revive, which was affected last year due to coronavirus related travel curbs. The statistics shared by the minister was of the last three months, as tourism season started this year after Eid-ul-Fitr when the restrictions on the sector lifted, provided that the anti-coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs) would be observed in letter and spirit at all tourist destinations. The National Command and Operation Centre has recently declared vaccination certificate mandatory for hotel bookings for tourists visiting Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu

and Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "We are allowing any tourist to GB and there is no plan for imposing ban on tourism," said Raja Nasir who asserted that implementation of anti-coronavirus

SOPs in the area was being ensured to keep the virus at bay. He said the GB government, in collaboration with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), was taking multiple initiatives to

boost tourism by improving air access to the area. The minister said PIA was carrying four to five flights from various cities to GB every week, adding that negotiations were underway with

Nepal and Gulf countries to start one international flight to the area as an experiment. He said short-term strategy was opted to improve infrastructure in the area, citing home stay financing as an example to meet accommodation need of tourists and empower locals through soft loans. Road infrastructure was being upgraded, he said, adding incomplete road projects left by the previous government was being completed on war-footing to improve tourists' access to the new and unexplored tourist sites in GB. He said the GB government's main focus was to promote the valley as winter sports and adventure tourism destination by arranging festivals and competitions. Ice hockey tournament, skating and skiing competitions, and K-2 winter summit arranged last year in GB got overwhelming response from local and foreign tourists, he added. Highlighting decline in foreign tourists' arrival to the destination, he said around 40 per cent of adventure tourist groups cancelled their tour due to the pandemic. — APP



Briefs

Tough action awaits against illegal oil shops

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A number of Illegal oil and gas shops are working alongside Golra Sharief Road in rge federal capital but still no action has been taken against them. Talking to media on this matter here on Monday, an official within the Deputy Commissioner office on the condition of anonymity said that the city administration repeatedly takes action against such illegal shops but their owners establish them again. When asked why they don't come hard on such killers of self as well as others, he was of the view that he may make hollow claims on the matter, but indeed when some influential personality pays his role in getting such criminal elements free, the officials concerned become armless. When asked would he like to share the name of such personalities with this scribe, he remained tight-lipped. "Obviously putting forth the truth at the cost of his job is not a lucrative option. Why should I unfold bare facts? This is not my duty to shed light on such thorny issues," he said, when pressed further. Though he said that these shops routinely face action because these are operating illegally and there is no safety measures, adding there is no fire extinguisher available to meet any emergency at such places. He said that the illegal petroleum agencies, mini petrol pumps and illegal LPG decanting shops have been causing loss to the national kitty and at the same time endangering human life and properties this is why such crackdowns are carried out for the sake of public interest.

SECP asks companies to facilitate vaccination

ISLAMABAD: To support the national campaign to prevent COVID-19, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has advised over 146,000 companies registered with it, to ensure that their employees and workers, including their families, get vaccinated as soon as possible. In this regard, the SECP has issued a Circular to all public listed companies, public unlisted and private companies, associations, trade bodies, chambers, non-bank micro-finance companies, modarabas, insurance companies, NBFIs, brokers, intermediaries etc. The companies were also advised to encourage their business suppliers, vendors and customers to get themselves and their families vaccinated, at the earliest, said a press release issued here Monday. The companies were informed that in order to speed up the vaccination drive, the government of Pakistan has made vaccination mandatory for office workers. It is reiterated that vaccination is seen as the only viable way to counter this global health crisis, as those who have not received the vaccine are seven times more likely to contract the virus than those inoculated. The companies were also encouraged to spend their Corporate Social Responsibility Funds for vaccination of their employees and their families. As per the circular, all companies are required to submit the details of vaccination of their employees and their families to the SECP by July 26, 2021. – APP

Husband, wife fire at each other

ISLAMABAD: Husband and wife Monday fired at each other after exchanging hot words over a domestic issue near Ghauri Garden - an area located in the federal capital. According to the police, both of them, resultantly, received bullet injuries, reported a private news channel. The police after receiving information reached on the spot and shifted the injured to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. Further investigation is underway. – APP

Chairman lauds excellent performance of NAB Karachi

Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi informed that under dynamic leadership of Chairman NAB from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB Karachi received 36,940 complaints out of which 36,368 complains were disposed off during the said period

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review the latest performance of NAB Karachi under dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB from 11th October, 2017 till to date at NAB Headquarter. Hussain Asghar, Deputy Chairman NAB, Zahir Shah, DG Operations NAB, and other senior officers of NAB were present at the meeting. Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi also participated in the meeting through video link. During the meeting Dr. Na-

jaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi informed that under dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB Karachi received 36,940 complaints out of which 36,368 complains were disposed off during the said period. DG NAB Karachi also informed the meeting that from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB Karachi authorized 1182 Complaint Verifications (CVs), out of which 1008 Complaint Verifications, were completed by the Bureau while 232 Complaint Verifications are under process at present.

DG NAB Karachi further informed the meeting that from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB Karachi authorized 481 Inquiries, out of which 322 Inquiries were completed by NAB Karachi while 320 Inquiries are under process at present. He further informed that from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB Karachi authorized 153 Investigations and completed 172 Investigations while 102 Investigations are under process at present in the Bureau. Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi informed the meeting that from 11th October, 2017 till to date NAB

Karachi filed 107 References in various Learned Accountability Courts, while 262 references are under trial at various respected Accountability Courts. DG NAB Karachi also informed that during the said period 219 accused persons were convicted by the Learned Accountability Courts under section 10 of NAO-1999, while 215 accused persons were convicted by the Accountability Courts under section 25 (B) of NAO-1999. Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi further informed that under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed

Iqbal, Chairman NAB from 11th October 2017 till to date NAB Karachi recovered Rs. 8.14831 billion through direct recovery while NAB Karachi recovered Rs. 324.174 billion through indirect recovery. The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that eradication of corruption is the top most priority of NAB. NAB officers are performing their duties considering it as their national duty. He said that NAB Karachi has always played an excellent role in contributing towards the overall performance of NAB. The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chair-

man NAB appreciated the performance of NAB Karachi under the supervision of, Dr. Najaf Quli Mirza, DG NAB Karachi and hoped that NAB Karachi will continue to perform its responsibilities with the same commitment and dedication as per law in future. He said that NAB is committed to the logical conclusion of mega corruption cases in order to recover looted money from big fish and bring them to justice as per law. He said that NAB is a human friendly organization which always believes in ensuring self respect of every person as per law.



ISLAMABAD: An attractive view of clouds hovering over the skies of Federal Capital. – APP

ICCI asks MPC to further reduce policy interest rate

President, ICCI said that countries around the world had made drastic cut in policy interest rate to enable businesses to combat the impact of pandemic



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) has called upon the State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to make decent cut in policy interest rate while reviewing the monetary policy on July 27, 2021 and bring it down to 3-4% in order to stimulate the economic activity and turn around the economy.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that countries around the world had made drastic cut in policy interest rate to enable businesses to combat the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, but the State Bank of Pakistan was still maintaining interest rate at 7%, which was considered quite high as compared to many other countries. Giving a comparison, he said that policy interest rate in Japan was -0.10%, European countries zero percent, Thailand & South Korea 0.50%, Philippines 1.50%, Malaysia 1.75%, Indonesia 3.50%, China 3.85%, India 4% and Pakistan 7%, which has made the credit cost quite high for businesses in our country and was considered a major constraint for expansion and smooth growth of business activities. ICCI President said that due to Covid-19 pandemic, business community was facing many challenges in Pakistan in promoting business activities smoothly and it was the best time that the SBP Monetary Policy Committee should reduce interest rate to at least 3-4% that would produce multiple benefits for the economy as it would provide cheap credit to the private sector of expansion of existing businesses and making new investment, bring down high inflation to provide relief to the common man, reduce cost of doing business and boost the business and economic activities across the country. He said that the low interest rate would facilitate the business class in expanding their business ventures and making new investments in potential sectors of the economy that would ultimately lead to fast recovery of the economy. It would also make Pakistan an attractive destination for FDI.

President orders refund of Rs 1.1 mn to aggrieved

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Monday ordered a refund of Rs 1.1 million to the complainant, who was denied return of the conversion fee deposited to CDA for setting up a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) station. Complainant Maj (retd) Masood Bajwa had filed a representation with the President of Pakistan asailing the order of the Waqfi Mohtasib, which had turned down his plea on the grounds of limitation and also on the basis of CDA's Board's decision declaring the fee paid for obtaining the No Objection Certificate (NOC) as non-refundable. The President, in his decision, stated that the complainant's money, deposited for a specific purpose, could not be forfeited nor confiscated without the backing of the existing laws. He said the Board was not empowered to act of its own whims especially when its actions deprive a citizen of his own money. As per details of the case, Major (r) Masood Bajwa, after getting permission to install a CNG station in 2007 by CDA, had deposited a conversion fee amounting to Rs. 1,111,111. – APP

CDA to ensure proper EMP during I.J.P project: EPA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (Pak-EPA) on Monday directed the Capital Development Authority officials to ensure implementation of proper environmental management plan during I.J. Principal Road rehabilitation and widening project. Addressing the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIA) public hearing of the I.J. Principal Road rehabilitation and widening project held here at the Pak-EPA office, Director EIA Monitoring Ahsan Rafi Kiani said the CDA officials had to provide Traffic Diversion Plan, camp office location and baseline data revived report. He said that all this data should be shared for finalisation of the EIA Report approval. Kiani snubbed the CDA officials for missing out details pertaining to project cost, flyovers and pedestrians bridges to be built during the project. He also rejected the CDA proposal to dump surplus

material or waste generated at I-12 sector location during construction work at the project. "The issue of I-12 sector is already under consideration at EPA as residential sector that could not be used as a dumping site," he said. He suggested the CDA officials to ensure necessary arrangement particularly the machinery related to transplantation of 1265 trees to be shifted from the project. Kiani added that it was a dire need to study survival rate of the plants earlier transplanted in the federal capital and availability of the machine which as earlier borrowed in the development of G-7 underpass. He also directed the CDA officials to devise a better location and working mechanism for batching plant operation during the project implementation. While briefing on the project, the CDA official briefed that the total road length was 10.2 kilometers that would be rehabilitated and widened after adding two additional lanes on both sides of the already dual carriage way thoroughfare.

Two day physical remand of accused in Noor case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A judicial magistrate of Islamabad Monday granted further two-day physical remand of main accused Zahir Jafar allegedly involved in murder case of ex-ambassador's daughter Noor Mukadam to the police. The accused was produced before the court of judicial magistrate Sohaib Bilal Ranjha amid foolproof security arrangement. At the outset of hearing, prosecutor Sajid Cheema told the court that the police had recovered pistol from the accused's custody. Mobiles and others things were yet to be recovered from him, he said and prayed the court to grant further physical remand of the accused. The counsel for the plaintiff, Shah Khawar Advocate pleaded that the recovery of mobile phone and its forensic was also very necessary in this case. After listening arguments from the counsels, the court subsequently granted further two-day physical remand of the accused. Noor, 27, daughter of former Pakistani diplomat Shaukat Mukadam, was found murdered at a residence in Islamabad's Sector F-7/4 on July 20. A first information report was registered on the same day against Jaffer, who was arrested from the site of murder under Section 302 (premeditated murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code on the complaint of the victim's father.

ICT police arrest 35 beggar-handlers

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad police have accelerated it's campaign against professional beggars and their handlers and arrested 35 handlers, 546 professional beggars during the ongoing month. Following orders of IGP Islamabad, Qazi Jamil Ur Rehman, under supervision of SSP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer, Islamabad police have launched a massive campaign against professional alm-seekers and their handlers to curb this menace from federal capital, Islamabad. The police officials said that this campaign will continue in the Capital until elimination of the menace. They said the officials got the tip through Safe City Cameras and other intelligence sources about presence of the network of beggars' handlers and got the information about their locations and kept them under the watch. They said that these nabbed persons had divided different residential areas, signals and main chowks for begging activities. "They also used to pick up men, women and children from Katchi Abadies and drop them at various traffic signals, residential areas and chowks in a mazda van, taxi and motorcycles" they added.

356 vaccination points set up

RAWALPINDI: As many as 356 points have been set up in 178 Union Councils (UCs) of Rawalpindi district to administer corona vaccine to citizens. According to District Health Officer Dr Ehsan Ghani, on the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Bazzdar, Corona community vaccination campaign has been launched in five major districts of Punjab including Rawalpindi. On first day of the campaign on Monday, the mobile teams became fully active in seven tehsilhs of Rawalpindi district to vaccinate the citizens against coronavirus. The campaign would continue till Aug 10. District Health Officer visited different areas of the city and inspected performance of the teams. Dr Ehsan Ghani on the occasion said that special teams would also visit homes, markets and business centers to persuade the citizens to get vaccinated against corona from their nearest points. The citizens can visit two points established in each Union Council to get vaccinated against corona, he added. – APP

Efforts underway to address traders' problems

Nadeem Sheikh, President, Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, said on the occasion that if the traffic crisis in Rawalpindi is not resolved by these development works the business environment in Rawalpindi will be ruined

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General, United Business Group, said that apart from traders from all over the country, special efforts would be made to solve the problems of traders in Rawalpindi and Islamabad. Parking's plaza, Lai expressway and Ring Road will be built to solve traffic problems in Rawalpindi. Efforts will be intensified to expedite the work for parking plazas, Lai Express and Ring Road projects. He expressed these views today at the Central Secretariat of UBG Islamabad while meeting President of Rawalpindi Chambers of Small Traders and Small Industries and Former Vice President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry Nadeem Sheikh today along with his delegation.



Zafar Bakhtawari added that efforts to extend the term of the federation president from one year to two years were not appropriate. He said that the Ministry of Commerce has not consulted any chamber in this regard. This has caused a wave of concern in the business community that government agencies are also becoming part of the unilateral action. Nadeem Sheikh, President, Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, said on the occasion that if the traffic crisis in Rawalpindi is not resolved by these development works the business environment in Rawalpindi will be ruined. He further said that his delegation would soon meet the Commissioner of Rawalpindi and request him to expedite the work on these vital issues for business activity in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Briefs

Pakistan
IT exports
reach at
\$ 2.12 bn

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment, Abdul Razak Dawood on Monday said that Pakistan Information Technology (IT) exports have reached at USD \$ 2.12 billion in Fiscal Year 2020-21. "I want to commend our IT exporters for crossing the \$2 billion export mark for the first time in our history" the Adviser said this on his official twitter account here. During FY 2020-21, IT exports grew by 47.4 percent to USD \$ 2.12 billion as compared to USD\$ 1.44 billion in FY 2019-20, he said. "I have always believed in the abilities of our IT professionals and entrepreneurs." The Adviser said that IT exporters have done a remarkable job and "I encourage them to market their exports even further to achieve more".

FGEI,
ABCTE sign
LoU

RAWALPINDI: Federal Government Educational Institutions (FGEI) Cantts / Garrisons Directorate and American Board for Certification of Teaching Excellence (ABCTE) Monday signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) to entertain FGEI faculty members for international teaching certification course free of cost. The LoU was signed by Director FGEIs and ABCTE Vice President Iftikhar Qadir on behalf of FGEIs & ABCTE respectively. FGEI DG, Director School Affairs and other senior officials were also present at the occasion. The FGEI DG said the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has reshaped the whole world, changing social elements and obligations for educational organizations. He stressed the need for the public and the society at large to adapt to the changing health scenario. ABCTE Vice President Iftikhar Qadir appreciated the efforts of FGEIs and termed the LoU an initiative that would go a long way in training and building capacity of teachers to cope with emerging trends in teaching methodologies and earn an internationally recognized certification. The FGEI DG also appreciated the honourable guest about the special education institutions working under the emblem of FGEIs setup, on which, Iftikhar Qadir enlightened on ABCTE certification designed for teachers of differently-abled students. The ceremony concluded with the aim of collateral cooperation between the organizations. — APP

1173 fined,
128 bikes
impounded

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) issued violation tickets to 1173 motorcyclists and impounded 128 motorbikes for one wheeling and other stunts during Eid holidays. The fine was imposed by ITP special squads constituted to prevent one wheeling on main avenues of the city during Eid-ul-Azha. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Syed Karar Hussain has appreciated the police personnel for performing duties on Eid-ul-Azha responsibly and awarded commendation certificates to them. Syed Karar said such steps were being taken to provide safety to the citizens. He said traffic violations might cause loss of precious lives, therefore, ITP was adopting measures and taking strict action against the violators. The SSP (Traffic) stressed upon the parents to refrain their children to involve in dangerous activities like one wheeling and racing. He said ITP would take stern action against those found indulged in such practices.

COMSTECH organizes event on
developments in drug discovery

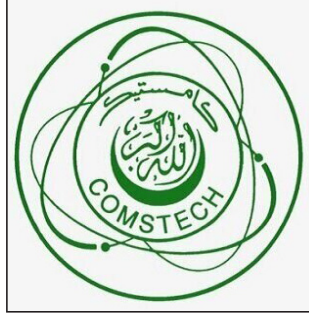
The event consists upon eleven an hour long lectures that will be given by experts from USA, China, Turkey and Pakistan on recent development of drug discovery and medicinal chemistry

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A 2-day online meeting on Recent Developments in Drug Discovery and Medicinal Chemistry organized by COMSTECH in collaboration with H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry, and International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, University of Karachi, Karachi. The event consists upon eleven an hour long lectures that will be given by experts from USA, China, Turkey and Pakistan on recent development of drug discovery and medicinal chemistry. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH said in his inaugural address that this event is a continu-

ation of various activities of COMSTECH that has been conducted for last one and half year. Prof. Choudhary said that capacity building is a very important aspect and we need to develop it to absorb technologies to use them. He said medicinal chemistry has been the very important subject throughout the history, it started from development of drugs from natural products. It was initially developed as a tool for generating tremendous quantities of chemical space, expanding it for high throughput screening, and combinatorial chemistry to use

with new space that medicinal chemistry has generated. Prof. Choudhary mentioned that medicinal chemistry has actually moved forward and acquired a new shape and magnitude. It has emerged as multidisciplinary science, and now we understand many diseases at molecular level and the molecular target has become the main emphasis of medicine. Medicinal chemists now look into the drug targets for different diseases and start designing molecules for them. He said today medicinal chemistry is



based on target, and designing structures which fits well with molecular drug target and it has given medicinal chemistry a new phase and rationale. Prof. Choudhary informed that according to World Health Organization there are 650 drugs in the pipeline of development, within a year or two medicinal chemists will be able to architect new entities that could treat COVID19, which I feel would be a major solution to COVID19, he hoped. On the first day of the meeting eight lectures were delivered. Researchers, scientists and scholars from around the OIC member states joined the meeting online. Due to the recent COVID19 spike, physical participation was not allowed.



ISLAMABAD: A volunteer distributing free food among deserving outside PIMS Hospital. — APP

70 % of district
population to be
vaccinated

DNA

RAWALPINDI: A two-week long anti-Covid drive kicked off here Monday to administer the COVID-19 vaccine to people above 16 years of age in all tehsils of the district. Presiding over a meeting to review arrangements made for the vaccination campaign, Additional Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Abdullah said that a special drive has been started on the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar to vaccinate a maximum number of people against the lethal disease.

He said that 356 teams had been constituted to job 1,299,838 people above 16 years of age in seven tehsils and union councils of the district. ADC said that the target of vaccinating 70 per cent of the population of the district would be achieved by August 10. Abdullah informed that vaccination drive has been started in five districts of the province including Rawalpindi, Lahore, Multan, Gujranwala and Faisalabad. "Sufficient quantity of vaccine is available, and no stone will be left unturned in efforts to make the campaign a success," he added.

Pakistan-Bahrain will sign
agreement to enhance co-op

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Bahrain would be signed an agreement for enhancing the economic and trade co-operation during the 2nd session of Pak-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission (PBJMC). The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Board of Investment (BOI) of Government of Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Economic Development Board, the Kingdom of Bahrain would be signed during 2nd session of Pak-Bahrain Joint Ministerial Commission on July 28-29 in Manama, Bahrain, said a press release issued by BOI here on Monday. The objective of the MoU is to provide a framework within both countries where

it can develop and undertake collaborative activities and projects; share knowledge and have integrated technical exchange and assistance in areas of mutual interest. The Bahraini side will be



chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Abdul Latif Bin Rashid Al Zayani and co-chaired by Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi from Pakistan. The delegation from Paki-

stan will comprise several high officials from Board of Investment, Petroleum Division, Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development. The meeting will focus on bilateral cooperation in various sectors including political, defense, economic, commerce, finance and banking, industry, public health, overseas employ-

ment, higher education, science and technology, information, culture and arts, agriculture and livestock, cultural cooperation and parliamentary exchanges. In regards to promoting trade and business development, some sectors of interest included manufacturing, financial services, tourism, healthcare and education, logistics, information and communication technology and vocational training. Board of Investment (BOI) being the premier investment promotion agency of Pakistan working under the administrative control of the Prime Minister's Office was mandated to promote and facilitate both local and foreign investment and also initiated the MoU. — APP

ACCA publishes its
Report on Regulation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An overview of ACCA's regulatory activities for 2020 is published on Monday, covering qualifications and examinations, developing ACCA's continuing professional development framework, members' licensing, monitoring work, and the investigation of complaints and discipline of members, affiliates, students and firms. The report explains how the independent Regulatory Board, which provides general oversight of ACCA's regulatory ar-

rangements, works with the ACCA team to ensure arrangements are robust, transparent, proportionate and in the public interest. Lucy Winkell, Chair of the Regulatory Board says: 'Like all organisations, ACCA has felt the full force of the restrictions the pandemic has brought. Unsurprisingly, ACCA's regulatory activities, from examinations, to monitoring of firms, to complaints handling, to CPD compliance and monitoring, have been impacted. But ACCA has found new ways of working to mitigate risks where it can — such as

introducing remotely invigilated exams in June 2020 to ensure students can continue their journey to ACCA membership. 'Regulation is ultimately a risk management exercise and the Board's terms of reference now include an explicit reference to our role in monitoring regulatory risk to ensure that the balance between risk to the public interest and commercial opportunities is maintained.' The report explains that in response to the global pandemic, ACCA worked quickly to ensure it could continue to fulfil statutory responsibilities and protect

the public interest. It moved to virtual approaches across the range of its regulatory responsibilities to support the effective and efficient delivery of these activities — including the introduction of virtual hearings for all committees, embracing remote inspections for audit monitoring, approved employers and anti-money laundering activities. Maggie McGhee, executive director strategy and governance at ACCA adds: 'We are committed to shaping the future of our profession and the regulatory environment that supports this.

AIOU announces
sponsorship for
research projects

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced final year project grant for its students to promote and strengthen research culture in the country. This grant is aimed at encouraging high quality research which may lead to socio economic development of the country. BS/BSc (Honors), MPhil and PhD students can apply for this grant. The grant amounts to 80,000, 50,000 and 20,000 for the students of sciences, social sciences and other general cases respectively. Interested students are required to submit their application along with research proposal and expected expenditure statement in their respective departments which would be assessed by the faculty experts committee. Committee will recommend eligible cases to the Directorate of Students Affairs through the Dean of the respective faculty. After the approval of the competent authority, treasurer office of the university will issue cheques to the finally selected students of final research project grant.

IRSA
releases
269,000
cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 269,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 350,900 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1494.24 feet, which was 110.24 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 178,600 and 135,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1180.45 feet, which was 142.45 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 48,300 and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 159,600, 151,000 and 76,700 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 38,400 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 52,400 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.

IWF, PCA
organize
literary event
at PUCAR

RAWALPINDI: International Writers Forum (IWF), a literary organization, in a collaboration with Punjab Council of the Arts (PCA) organized a literary ceremony followed by a poetic recital here on Monday. The members of the presiding committee of the event included well-known and renowned poets Arshad Malik, Naveed Malik and Adil Zaman while Jahan Ara Tabassum was also present on the occasion. Certificates of appreciation were also distributed to renowned poets and writers. Forum founder Shahzad Afaq, addressing the gathering, said that the main purpose of the event was to encourage poets and writers. At the end, he thanked the guests and participants of the ceremony. — APP

RPO conducts
surprise visit
to Pirwadhi
police station

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Imran Ahmar paid a surprise visit to Pirwadhi police station to check the performance of officials here on Monday. On the orders of Inspector General of Police Punjab Inam Ghani, Regional Police Officer Rawalpindi Imran Ahmar has started a series of surprise visits to police stations in Rawalpindi region to check the quality of public service delivery in the police stations. RPO also reviewed of police station building, front desk, records, lock up to ensure the provision of all possible resources to police stations. He expressed dissatisfaction over poor sanitation arrangements in police station. The RPO also reviewed the facilities being provided to the public and directed that merit and justice be provided to the people. — APP

CEO IESCO
to hold online
Katchery

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to IESCO spokesman provision of best services and rectification of consumer's complaints in minimum time is our top priority. Continuing the same line, Chief Executive Officer IESCO Dr. Muhammad Amjad Khan will attend consumer's calls of all Operation Circles i.e. Islamabad, Rawalpindi City, Rawalpindi Cantt, Attock, Jhelum and Chakwal on 28th July 2021 (Wednesday) from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM. Consumers are requested to call on telephone number 051-9253105. IESCO requests to valued consumers to participate in on line Katchery.

Global Warming, "there's no other world"

MUNAZA KAZMI

YOU must have experienced an unexpected cool day in a burning hot day of summer, whereas a cozy evening in a chilly season. More or less now we are experiencing a new mild June and a dried December. Hasn't it felt as a change? "The Earth is under serious threat!" We have presented our beautiful planet with the disastrous gift of climate change. Rising temperature, reduction of the polar ice caps, deforestation, overpopulation, disease, war, famine, lack of water and decimation of animal

species. However, these are all solvable but so far have not been solved. Global warming is caused by all of us. We want cars, travel and a better standard of living. The trouble is, by the time people realize what is happening, it may be too late. As we stand on the period of unpredictable climate change; it can be reverted, only a responsible and determined will required. However, the danger is that global warming may become self-sustaining, if it has not become so already. The melting of the Arctic and Antarctic ice caps reduces the fraction of solar energy reflected back into space, and so increase the temperature further. Moreover, climate change may kill off the Amazon and other rainforests and so eliminate one of the main ways in which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere. The rise



ther. Moreover, climate change may kill off the Amazon and other rainforests and so eliminate one of the main ways in which carbon dioxide is removed from the atmosphere. The rise

in sea temperature may trigger the release of large quantities of carbon dioxide. Both these phenomena would increase the greenhouse effect, and so exacerbate global warming. Both effects could make our climate like that of Venus: boiling hot and raining Sulphur acid, but with a temperature of 250 degrees Celsius. Human life would be unsustainable. We need to go beyond the Kyoto Protocol, the international agreement adopted in 1997, and cut carbon emission now. We have the technology. We just need the political will. I believe, as leader the government have a responsibility, to inform the public about the perils

that humanity may face and take necessary actions. On the other hand, as a citizen of the world, we all have a duty to share the knowledge, to alert and advice the ignorant and become a helping hand of government in carry out the business. However, we can be ignorant, unthinking lot, hence on the cost of future, if not the immediate future but the future of the coming generations. Earlier when we have reached similar crises in our history, there has usually been somewhere else to colonize. Columbus did it in 1492 when he discovered the New World. But now there is no new world. No Utopia around the corner.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Member APNS / ABC Certified

Vol: 02 Issue: 70

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Initiative desired

IF there is to be any hope for better relations between India and Pakistan, the BJP government must take certain measures to cease its interference in our affairs. This sentiment was echoed by both top officials of the government, Shahzad Akbar and Dr. Moeed Yusuf—the PM's Advisor on accountability and National Security Advisor respectively. Outside of approaching the UN to investigate the use of spyware against PM Imran Khan by India, our neighbour has also been sternly urged to halt state-sponsored terrorism in IIOJK. According to Shahzad Akbar, India used the Pegasus software to spy on Pakistan and PM Imran Khan was found to be on the list of people who had been a target of such interference. Any time such an incident has been reported internationally, the perpetrator country has been hounded for breaching sovereignty and going against international standards of practice amongst nation states. However, the dispute between India and Pakistan is hardly held to the same practice. Islamabad even released a dossier that provides indisputable proof of Indian tampering within state-functions—something that India seems to do with exceptional regularity—but still, not much has been done to enforce accountability.

One would assume that a long-standing regional conflict like Kashmir, in which countless lives have been lost, freedoms curtailed and human rights abused, would garner support and sympathy from the international community, but very little has been shown. Still, Indian attempts to alter the demography of the region persist, along with state-sponsored terrorism and the violation of Kashmiris' rights. Surely, this aggressive tactic to lay claim to the region must be neutralised before the possibility of holding a dialogue is explored.

Time and time again, Pakistan has made attempts to encourage friendlier relations with India despite the unjust circumstances that prevail. No longer can we allow ourselves to concede ground, especially when unprovoked aggression, violence and tampering from India's side prevails. We have justifiable and rational prerequisites for the dialogue that must be endorsed by the global community, and be met by the Indian government.



The dynamic role of Uzbekistan for interregional co-op

Khalid Taimur Akram



The pace and scope of the transformation have never been this great. Countries are inclined towards cooperation and wider integration through economic connectivity in the multipolar world, pursuing their common goals

REGIONAL cooperation and integration have been the essence of diplomacy. Countries all around the world are trying to build connectivity and understand each other's cultures. Liberal and open policy regimes enable countries to cooperate in a number of areas. In this aspect, the grand initiative of Central and South Asian connectivity by His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev has proved to be a milestone development for regional integration. The ancient Silk Road passed through South and Central Asia, and several empires ruled large portions of this part of the world for centuries. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, most of the region was under colonial rule, with the British controlling a majority of South Asia and the Soviets Union occupying large areas of Central Asia. However, with the fall of the Berlin wall (end of the Cold War), certain major developments happened in the region. First, the colonial rule ended in Central and South Asia. Second, with the disintegration of the Soviets Union (USSR) in 1991, five Central Asian states (Uzbekistan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan) emerged as independent, sovereign nations. Third, in 2013, China announced its exceptional Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) for inclusive economic development and connect countries worldwide to work for a community with aspired future for mankind. Fourth, reinvigorating regionalism and cooperation among Central and South Asia countries in modern times to revive centuries-old historical relationship.

At present, the initiative of South and Central Asian regional cooperation by His Excellency Shavkat Mirziyoyev has emerged as a significant factor in reinvigorating centuries-old traditional and cultural linkages between countries. Pakistan and Uzbekistan enjoy cordial relations and for more than a decade, bilateral ties have been strengthening via multilateral collaboration and persistent diplomatic engagements. Both countries embarked on a new journey of prosperity, enhancing bilateral cooperation, joint ventures for regional peace and stability, and strengthening economic and strategic partnership, with the official visit of His Excellency, Prime Minister, Imran Khan to Tashkent, Uzbekistan, for the international conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness. Challenges and Opportunities." Pakistan's connectivity with Uzbekistan is vital, as improved trade would open up new avenues of regional prosperity and development. Moreover, the broader regional alignment would usher in a new area of joint ventures and cooperation. In this regard, new infrastructure projects such as the 573-km trans-Afghan railway project, connecting Termez-Mazar-e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar, will be crucial in improving regional trade and connectivity, offering the landlocked Central Asian region direct access to the Arabian Sea through Pakistan's seaports. Furthermore, Peace in Afghanistan acquires pivotal importance in advancing the connectivity agenda.

A Brief Prelude of the International Conference:

The two-day international conference at Tashkent was successfully organized/ hosted by Uzbekistan. The international conference was attended by the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, ministers of foreign affairs of the countries of Central and South Asia, delegations of 44 countries and about 30 international organizations, heads of authoritative research and analytical centers. The two-day international conference was amid three plenary sessions. The details of three plenary sessions are mentioned below:

- Trade and Transport Connectivity for Sustainable Growth
- Revival of Cultural and Humanitarian Ties as a way to Strengthen Friendship and Mutual Confidence
- Regional Security: Challenges and Threats

The third plenary session focused on the prospects of regional cooperation in combating new threats and challenges, as well as ensuring the security of the cross-border infrastructure.

Regional Security and Peace: South and Central Asia

It was honour for me to address the third plenary session. My speech reflected the regional security and peace cooperation between Central and South Asia. Central Asia has remained the hub of the world's attention in economic terms. One of the primary reasons for this region's progress was

the Old Silk Route that has made it the center of excellence, art, famous cuisine, innovation, spiritual land, and exceptional cultural norms. The wonderful architecture of Tashkent, Samarkand, Khiva and Bukhara reflect the ancient and varied nature of Central Asian historical heritage. For many years, Uzbekistan has been promoting cooperation to bridge the gap among South Asian nations and Central Asian Republics (CARs). In this aspect, Pakistan has been a major supporter in regional integration process. Central Asian countries, especially, Uzbekistan and Pakistan have developed a new equation of cooperation in contemporary times. In today's geo-political and geo-economic discourse, regional connectivity is a key catchword. It is significant for the socio-economic development of any country. The changing security dynamics of regional and international discourse allows nations to enhance cooperation in multiple fields. Regional integration helps countries to overcome gaps, division, and challenges.

The 21st century has many key determinants as it is the most revolutionary age in history. The pace and scope of the transformation have never been this great. Countries are inclined towards cooperation and wider integration through economic connectivity in the multipolar world, pursuing their common goals. Therefore, it is important to consider the complex balance sheet involving challenges and opportunities to access different aspects of security in the Central and South Asian regions.

More over, certain aspects are necessary to highlight for regional alignments for multilateral dialogue process amid cooperation with extra-regional partners:

- Enhanced Collaboration between Allied/partner Countries
 - Regional Unity and a holistic framework of cooperation to Counter Hostilities and Common Challenges
 - The Amalgamation of Enhanced Cooperation with other regional countries and Goodwill
 - Broader Regional Alliances and Accepting Culture Diversities
 - Joint Ventures and Enhanced Academic Cooperation
- In a nutshell, the idea of Central-South Asian connectivity encapsulates broader paradigms, i.e., economic growth and revival of cultural and humanitarian relations. It will further strengthen friendship and confidence, ensuring the security of cross broader infrastructure and formulating effective policies for countering common threats. In general, by promoting socio-economic, energy, transport and communication projects and enhancing trade ties, Uzbekistan seeks to establish the transformative link between Central and South Asia. Pakistan, as a good ally, appreciates and supports this exceptional initiative. In this context, Pakistan is ready to enhance its cooperation in multiple fields to curtail the differences, bring regional peace, promote friendly relations, enhance cultural integration, unity, and combat common threats.

Salient Features of the International Conference:

History has marked the efforts of H.E. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to provide platform to all regional countries to strengthen partnership, resolve differences, revive cultural linkages, and establish an integrated framework of future cooperation. In the international conference "Central and South Asia: Regional Interconnectedness. Challenges and Opportunities" His Excellency, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has provided significant ten-points agenda to enhance regional cooperation and combat challenges. The details of the ten-points agenda are mentioned below:

- Expansion of scientific, cultural, and humanitarian exchanges. In this regard, it was proposed to hold an international forum on the historical heritage of Central and South Asia under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in Termez.
- Strengthening peace and friendship, trust, and good-neighbourliness.

- Building an open and constructive policy to meet the common interests of all countries of Central and South Asia.
- Strengthening trade and economic cooperation and an annual interregional forum was proposed to discuss topical issues of expanding the economic agenda of cooperation and investment interaction between the countries of two regions.

- Building a transport and logistics infrastructure that will effectively and safely connect Central and South Asia. In this regard, the Termez-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar railway is to become a key element of the entire architecture of the interconnectedness of regions.

- To develop specific measures to implement digital connectivity in trade, transit, and border crossing to adopt a Joint Action Strategy. In this aspect, the H.E. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev proposed to hold a meeting of regional agriculture ministers under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) Food and Agriculture Organization to develop a joint program of measures.

- Measures to strengthen security and stability in the region to combat terrorism and extremism.
- Environmental protection and the development of a green economy.

- Formation of a single platform of tour operators to enhance the tourism potential of Central and South Asia within the framework of the World Tourism Organization.

- Reinvigorate cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation. The importance of stimulating joint research and exchange programs, as well as introducing a simplified visa regime for scientists and researchers were emphasized.

Interregional Cooperation: Reviving Ancient Contacts between South and Central Asia

Central and South Asia have interacted with each other since ancient times. Unfortunately, in the 19th century, the interconnectedness was broken. Multiple obstacles arose, and the era of cooperation was replaced by a period of confrontation and mistrust. However, the 21st century has witnessed important developments and transformations in the regional political and economic landscape. The initiative of Uzbekistan under the visionary leadership of H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev to connect Central and South Asian countries has proved to be a milestone development.

In this aspect, the successful conduct of the two-day international conference at Tashkent proved to be a significant step in the right direction to harness economic potentials, integrate nations at one platform, enhance trade-transport connectivity, revive historical and cultural ties, strengthen international/regional security infrastructure, curtail differences, and bring peace to the regional. Thereby, expanding mutually beneficial cooperation, building an open and constructive policy to meet common interests of all Central and South Asian countries, are the dire need of time. Moreover, it has been planned to develop a special draft resolution, which will be submitted for consideration to the United Nations General Assembly as a result of the two-day international conference.

Climate change and Pakistan

Aqsa Soomro



Pakistan The Land of Pure" is witnessing a scale of destruction and devastation. Long live Zindabad Pakistan is at the utmost terrifying stage. It is among the countries that are going to see catastrophic consequences if temperatures continue to rise

ASSERTING "Architects of our destruction" is not wrong for this issue. Lands, waterbodies and seasons are our world's greatest treasures. They are critical to our climate and provide a livelihood to around a billion people in and around them.

Climate change is the greatest threat to our planet basically, it is expounded as the average temperature and weather conditions at a particular place over time about 11 to 40 years. It is comprised of several factors which consist behavior of winds, air pressure and temperature etc. Today human activities have influenced climate change directly or indirectly on this planet. The major contributors of climate abnormalities are emissions of combustion of fossil fuels and industrialization which affects the composition of the global atmosphere.

Thus it became distinctively clear how human activities have contributed to global warming over the years. Ever since the industrial revolution man has kept advancing, over a century and a half of industrialization, deforestation, large scale agriculture, we have reached the point where the amount of greenhouse gases in the air is more than what it ever was in three million years. These greenhouse gases increase the temperature of our environment, resulting in large amounts of glaciers melting all over the world risking massive floods, threats of extinction of wildlife and in general a hotter environment all around the globe.

Pakistan "The Land of Pure" is witnessing a scale of destruction and devastation. Long live Zindabad Pakistan is at the utmost terrifying stage. It is among the countries that are going to see catastrophic consequences if temperatures continue to rise. Land of beauty has moved from water affluent country to stress country, plains to barrens. Though our nation contributes less than 1 percent of the world's greenhouse gases, it is most likely to be affected by changing climate. It is at greatest risk for a fact it is lagging in 13th SDG ; Climate Action, one of the main targets of Sustainable Development Goals. Pakistan is at

the point where any slight increase in temperature will have harsh results.

Southern Pakistan (Sindh in particular) has been facing heat waves for many years which is a symptom of Global Climate Change. Similarly, droughts have reduced the river flow resulting in disruptions of agriculture which in turn affected Pakistan's economy, food production and necessities of life. Climate change has emerged as an important driving force behind floods in Pakistan.

Floods have not only displaced about 20 million people and their properties but also affected the Indus River basin by heavy monsoon rains. Coastal areas of Karachi, Badin and Thatta have also been threatened because of rising sea levels by global warming. Shivering effects of Climate Change on Pakistan such as the recession of Himalayan glaciers, monsoon rains, extreme events of heat strokes, floods, droughts, destruction of the irrigation system, low yield of crops, degradation of ecosystems and shifting of biomes has been multiplying day by day.

The major sources of GHG (Greenhouse Gases) emissions in Pakistan are the Energy and agriculture sector. It has been our government's prime responsibility to have laws and procedures in place to follow for the reduction of GHG emissions and control the amount of pollution in the air. We should take major steps towards this cause. These are essential building blocks on which the foundation of our industry will survive for the decades to come.

In Pakistan, various initiatives such as Green Pakistan Program, Billion Tree Tsunami Program, Sustainable Forest Management Rehabilitation of Indus Delta Mangroves for Future Program are underway to deal with deforestation to promote sustainable forest management across the country. Both adaption and mitigation are reflected in the country's policy and implementation approach.

Moreover, programs such as "Clean and Green Pakistan" and "Recharge Pakistan" have been launched. Several projects are also working side by side as Project Clean-Green

and Green Hope under British Council Citizens Program, that aims to create awareness among youth and communities on climate crisis. Thus, these countrywide tree plantation drives provide a natural solution to restore depleted forest and mitigate climate change.

For the mitigation of GHG emissions, many companies and institutes host a green drive every month, where they plant trees in their vicinity. Planting more and more trees is the most natural solution to the growing environmental threats to our planet. The new regulations set by certain governments force the big car manufacturers like Toyota to design cars that pass their carbon emission requirements. Those models are then sold across the globe benefiting everyone. Nowadays we do not see cars with smoke coming out of their tailpipes, this was not a regular feature until a decade ago.

Factories are not planted in the vicinity of residential areas but rather in the outskirts of cities to provide cleaner air for people to breathe. GHG emissions not only contribute to climate change but the harmful toxins in the air cause many respiratory issues as well. These steps are surely slowing down the process but are not enough to stop and restore the balance of our environment. We must proceed towards a cleaner future. Electric vehicles, improved methods of agriculture production, a new sustainable renewable energy source, these are just a few things which will ensure a better future for generations to come, provided we act now.

It has taken man centuries of ignorance to bring us to a point where we cannot avoid it anymore and it will take several decades to fix it – if we act now. Global warming is a worldwide occurring phenomenon and it affects the whole world, and this is a time we truly accept it and do act towards a better tomorrow than today for long live Pakistan.

– The writer is student of BS (Centre of Environmental Sciences) University of Sindh, Jamshoro

Briefs

Medal Count				
Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Japan	8	2	3	13
USA	7	3	4	14
China	6	5	7	18
Russia	4	5	3	12
GB	3	3	1	7

Rojer tests positive for Covid at Olympics

AGENCIES

TOKYO: Dutch tennis players Jean-Julien Rojer and Wesley Koolhof have pulled out of the Olympic men's doubles tournament after Rojer tested positive for coronavirus, the International Tennis Federation announced on Monday. "The ITF has been informed that the athlete Jean-Julien Rojer... has tested positive for Covid-19 and placed in isolation as per the set procedures," the federation said in a statement. Rojer and Koolhof, the eighth seeds, won their opening match in Tokyo and were due to face New Zealand's Michael Venus and Marcus Daniell in the second round. Venus and Daniell will receive a walkover into the quarter-finals. The virus has cast a shadow over the Olympics, with a total of 148 Games-related cases in Japan so far. Sixteen of those are athletes.

France, UK sign accord

PARIS: Britain and France on Monday signed a new security deal aimed at protecting the public in the event of a terror attack in the Channel against a large vessel such as a passenger ferry, the British government said. The UK-France Maritime Security Treaty was signed in Paris as the defence and foreign ministers from both sides met for talks on shared security interests. The British government said in a statement that the treaty is the foundation for "seamless joint and coordinated action to be taken by UK and French forces in response to an incident, such as a terrorist attack on board a ferry or other large vessel in the Channel." The treaty includes provisions which will enable Britain and France to share information concerning potential threats, mount swift responses to serious incidents, and coordinate more efficient joint responses. "As close allies it is vital the UK and France work together to protect our citizens and values," said British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab. The treaty "will reinforce our ability to jointly respond swiftly and effectively to terrorist threats in the Channel," he said. There was no immediate communication on the new treaty from the French government. The British government emphasised that the treaty was aimed at fighting terror threats and incidents in the Channel and was not intended to tackle illegal migration. "The intelligence and security tools this new cooperation provides will give law enforcement and our emergency responders the additional support they need to protect us all," said British Interior Minister Priti Patel. - APP

Six police killed in border battle

GUWAHATI: The chief minister from the north-eastern Indian state of Assam on Monday accused police from a rival state of killing six of his security forces in a rare internal border clash. The leaders of Assam and neighbouring Mizoram, which have been wrangling about their border for decades, blamed each other for the deadly violence. Tensions have been building between the two states since last month when officials in Mizoram alleged that Assam police had taken over a border post. Monday's clash took place near the town of Vairengte. Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Twitter that six Assam police had "sacrificed their lives while defending constitutional boundary of our state". - APP

Olympics-Hockey: Belgium, Britain secure 2nd win

"They did four or five sliding tackles, which is a yellow card every time," said Belgian veteran midfielder John-John Dohmen, who has more than 400 caps

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: Belgium's men's hockey team secured a 3-1 victory over Germany in a scrappy match on Monday for their second win of the Tokyo Olympics, while Britain also won their second match of the tournament with a triumph over Canada. The world champion Belgians took early control of the game, with forward Cedric Charlier netting the ball behind the German goalie twice in the first quarter. "It's true that scoring here is a great feeling," said Charlier. "As long as we are working well offensively together, that's what matters the most for the team." Emotions ran high on both sides in the second half, with Belgian defender Alexander Hendrickx adding to Germany's pain by scoring his fourth goal of the tournament through a penalty corner. "They did four or five sliding tackles, which is a yellow card every time," said Belgian veteran midfielder John-John Dohmen, who has more than 400 caps. "Even when they tackled us, they came to us to have a fight. "We stayed really calm and I'm re-



ally proud of that."

By the end of the match, Germany had been given two yellow cards and a green one. Belgium had col-

lected one yellow and two green cards. In field hockey, green cards result in two-minute suspensions for players and yellow cards bring

five-minute suspensions. The Germans could not penetrate their rivals' defence effectively enough to level the score after

scoring a penalty corner in the fourth quarter.

Amid an overcast sky, the pitch was still sprayed with water during the half-time break to keep it fast and smooth. Officials stuck to the usual two-minute quarterly breaks after extended breaks on Sunday to allow players to cool down in sweltering conditions.

In another men's match, Britain defeated Canada 3-1, with the goals scored by forwards Liam Ansell and Sam Ward. Britain started the game nervously against the Canadian underdogs but grew in confidence after netting the first goal.

"You have to understand when you're playing teams that rank lower than you, they have nothing to lose. It's a win-win for them," said the team's head coach Danny Kerry. In the women's tournament, gold medal favourites the Netherlands brushed aside Olympic debutants Ireland 4-0, while Australia beat China 6-0.

The goal scorers for the Netherlands were rookie ace Felice Albers, who also scored twice in the opening match, Marlou Pheninx, Laurien Leurink and veteran striker Frederique Matla.

Momiji Nishiya, 13 becomes Japan's youngest gold medalist

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: On a scorching afternoon in Tokyo, a pair of 13-year-old skateboarders turned the world's biggest sporting event into their own personal playground. They darted around the park, hopped over obstacles and grinded down rails in a show of skill and youthful exuberance. Many sports are children's games at their cores after all, you just don't always see kids rising up quite like this on the world stage. Thirteen-year-old Momiji Nishiya gave host nation Japan more to cheer about in the Olympic skateboarding competition, out-dueling Brazilian Rayssa Leal, also 13, and Japan's Funa Nakayama, the elder stateswoman at 16, for the

women's street gold medal Monday afternoon at Ariake Urban Sports Park.

"I'm really happy," an understated Nishiya said. With skateboarding making its debut at the Tokyo Games, Nishiya is the first woman to win an Olympic gold medal in the sport. She is also the youngest athlete to win an Olympic gold medal for Japan. The previous record was set by swimmer Kyoko Iwasaki at the Barcelona Games in 1992, when she became the youngest swimmer to win an Olympic gold medal at 14. Nishiya fell on her first two attempts in the best trick portion of the finals before bouncing back to surge into the lead. "I didn't think I was going to be able to win, halfway through," she said in a televised interview with NHK

shortly after the results were announced. "But the other skaters were encouraging me so I felt like I could go on."

Nishiya finished with a score of 15.26 points to claim the gold. Leal took silver with 14.64 points and Nakayama claimed bronze with 14.49. Nishiya made it a perfect 2-for-2 for Japan in the street skateboarding competition at the Tokyo Games. Yuto Horigome won the men's title on Sunday. "His performance was amazing," Nishiya said. Despite her age, Nishiya already knows her way around the podium. She earned a silver medal at the Summer X Games in Minneapolis in 2019 and was the runner-up to Aori Nishimura at the world championships in June. The young Olympic medalists

were the last three skaters of the day and were already assured of medals before their final tricks. The only thing left to decide was the color. Leal, who was in second place, went first but tumbled to the ground after attempting a backside smith grind down the 12-stair handrail. Nishiya was in the lead, but instead of playing it safe she capped her run with a stylish gap to lipslide that netted her 3.43 points.

"I did my best and I won a gold medal," Nishiya said. The final order was set when Nakayama fell on her last attempt. Afterward, the Japanese medalists said they were hopeful their accomplishments would lead to a more welcoming environment for skateboarders. "I hope we will see many more parks to practice in," Nakayama said.

IPL to resume in UAE from Sept 19

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian Premier League will resume the remainder of its tournament in September after it was brought to a halt earlier this year in May due to a Covid-19 outbreak.

It was announced by the BCCI that the remaining matches left of the tournament would be played in the UAE in September and October. The IPL was suspended on May 4, with 31 matches still left to be played, after multiple players and staffers tested positive for Covid during India's lethal second wave. The first match will be played between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians on September 19 in Dubai, followed by Royal Challengers Bangalore facing the Kolkata Knight Riders in Abu Dhabi the next day.

Osaka & Garbine reach third round

AGENCIES

TOKYO: Japan's Naomi Osaka cruised into the third round of the Tokyo Olympics women's singles with a 65-minute victory over Viktorija Golubic. Second seed Osaka, the favourite for the gold medal following Ashleigh Barty's first-round exit, beat the Swiss 6-3 6-2. She will face Marketa Vondrousova, who beat Mihaela Buzarnescu 6-1 6-2, for a quarter-final spot. World number one Novak Djokovic beat Bolivia's Hugo Dellien 6-2 6-2.

Serb Djokovic needed only 61 minutes to set up a second-round meeting with Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff. Great Britain's Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski were knocked out of the men's doubles in the second round, losing 6-3 6-4 to Japan's Kei Nishikori and Ben McLachlan. Osaka took an eight-week break before the Games in order to protect her mental health.

She described making her comeback in the Olympics as being an "interesting" experience. "The flag is next to my name no matter what tournament I play, but I feel like the scale of this is much bigger," she told American TV. "It's something I've been waiting for for eight years." There were also speedy victories for Garbine Muguruza and Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova. Spain's two-time Grand Slam champion Muguruza saw off China's Wang Qiang 6-3 6-0 in 61 minutes. French Open runner-up Pavlyuchenkova, representing the Russian Olympic Committee, took only 54 minutes to beat Germany's Anna-Lena Friedsam 6-1 6-1.

Japan upsets China for table tennis

The Chinese pairing had beaten the French duo, Emmanuel Lebeson and Jia Nan Yuan, 4-0 in the semi-final to set up the gold-medal match, while the French headed to the bronze medal game against Chinese Taipei

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japanese pair MIZUTANI Jun and ITO Mima ended the People's Republic of China's recent dominance in the sport by beating XU Xin and LIU Shiwen 4-3 for the mixed doubles title. The upset comes five years after China swept all four table tennis tournaments at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games. It's also the first time China has not won gold in singles, doubles or team table tennis since 2004. Hopes were still high for Japan entering the match, though. Mizutani won the bronze in the singles in Rio 2016, and some consider Ito to be China's biggest threat in the female ranks. China got off to a fast start, winning the first two games 11-5 and 11-7. Japan fought back in the third game, winning 11-8, and then took two more close games, 11-9 in the fourth and 11-9 in the fifth. China then won the sixth game, 11-6, to set up a deciding seventh game, which Japan dominated, taking an 8-0 lead and holding on for an 11-6 win - and the gold. China's table tennis team is so strong that Liu, the women's world champion, didn't even make the women's singles' team and is only playing team events.



TOKYO: Nishiya Momiji of Japan competes during Tokyo 2020 women's street final of skateboarding in Tokyo, Japan. - DNA

Mountain climber Ali Sadpara's body found

DNA

GILGIT: Legendary mountain climber Ali Sadpara's dead body has been found over K2's Camp 4. The mountaineer's son Sajid Sadpara, along with Canadian filmmaker Elia Saikaly and Pasang Kaji Sherpa, were on a trek to find the bodies of his father, John Snorri, and Juan Mohr. The team reached Camp 4 this morning and flew a drone around the area in search of the bodies, sources said. Through the drone, the team was able to detect a body above Camp 4 near the bottleneck. Sadpara, Snorri and Mohr had departed for their journey on February 3 this year, after Sadpara's birthday. They had started their attempt for the final sum-

mit in the early hours of February 5, hoping to accomplish the herculean feat by afternoon. According to updates posted on Snorri's Facebook the GPS stopped working and subsequently a search and rescue operation was launched after contact could not be recovered. The group was officially presumed dead at K2 bottleneck on 18 February 2021.

Alpine Adventure Guides also confirmed the development. "The dead body of [the] late legendary climber [and] national hero Muhammad Ali Sadpara [has been found] below 300m from Bottleneck. Rest in peace," it wrote on the microblogging site. It added that two more bodies were also spotted at "Camp 4 below 300m

from Bottleneck", which is known as the most treacherous trek of K2. G-B Information Minister Patahullah Khan has confirmed that the body found earlier today is of Sadpara, according to a private TV channel. Muhammad Ali Sadpara, along with two colleagues - John Snorri Sigurdsson from Iceland, and Juan Pablo Mohr Prieto from Chile - were declared dead on Feb



18, nearly two weeks after they went missing on the 'Savage Mountain'. The trio had lost contact with Base Camp on Feb 5 while attempting an unprecedented winter ascent without supplemental oxygen. K2, nicknamed the 'Killer Mountain', had never been scaled in winter until a Nepalese team accomplished the feat less than a month before the Sadpara expedition.

Ali Sadpara's son, Sajid Sadpara, who was accompanying the three, had to withdraw after his oxygen regulator malfunctioned and he returned to Base Camp. He is confident the trio had scaled K2 and might have met an accident while descending. Quoting sources at the Base Camp, Everest Today says that legendary Sadpara's body was spotted by Madison Mountaineering sherpas "just above CIV on K2 w/ black and yellow suit". In another tweet earlier in the day it said that "Elia Saikaly, Sajid Sadpara among many others reached CIV on K2 (8611m) today. Multiple summits expected tomorrow. #K22021". There is no official confirmation of the development thus far. However, Sadpara's son

tweeted two days back that he was hopeful of finding a trace and answers.

"We have started our climb again. Will resume search, both physical and by drones; above 8000m and beyond bottleneck. I am hopeful of finding a trace and answers #MissionSadpara #K2Search," he wrote on his Twitter handle.

Winds on K2's peak can blow at more than 200 kilometres per hour (125 miles per hour) and temperatures drop to minus 60 degrees Celsius (minus 76 Fahrenheit).

With Pakistan's borders open and with few other places to go, this winter an unprecedented four teams totalling around 60 climbers have converged on the mountain, more than all previous expeditions put together.

High time to reverse environmental damage

FROM PAGE 01

the plantation drive and also preserve the green covers. Imran Khan mentioned that the world was acknowledging Pakistan's role in leading the efforts against climate change, particularly meeting the Bonn Challenge of planting trees.

The event was attended by Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed, Planning Minister Asad Umer, State Minister for Climate Change Zartaj Gul, PM's Special Assistant on Health Dr Faisal Sultan and Senator Faisal Javed. A large number of volunteers were present to plant saplings in the premises of the Park.

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 and the Capital Development Authority (CDA). In the next few weeks, the CDA 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. However, the green graph is gradually showing an upward trend after the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan carried out a massive tree plantation campaign under the Clean and Green Pakistan Initiative.

'Nawaz-Mohib meeting costed...

FROM PAGE 01

He claimed that the PPP would also be wiped out from Sindh in the 2023 general elections. "This is their last tenure, especially in the wake of their below-par performance," he said. He pressed upon the rival parties to bring in new leadership. Chaudhry also regretted a statement by a PML-N candidate about seeking India's help, saying it was "shameful". "The PML-N was in power in AJK and it faced a defeat because of its policies," he added. He said India desired to have dialogue with Pakistan, and "we also wish to improve our ties as it benefits people on both sides. But there is a condition that India withdraw its order of Aug 5, 2019, [in occupied Kashmir]."

Record Afghan civilian casualties

FROM PAGE 01

Heavy clashes around the country have taken place in the past two months as the Taliban launches major offensives, taking rural districts, border crossings and surrounding provincial capitals, prompting Afghan and US forces to carry out air strikes to try and push back the group. Negotiators have been meeting in Qatar's capital of Doha in recent weeks but diplomats have cautioned there has been little substantive progress since peace talks began in September.

"I implore the Taliban and Afghan leaders to take heed of the conflict's grim and chilling trajectory and its devastating impact on civilians," said Deborah Lyons, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan. "Unprecedented numbers of Afghan civilians will perish and be maimed this year if the increasing violence is not stemmed."

Diaz wins first-ever gold for Philippines

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: Hidilyn Diaz has become the first Olympic gold medalist from the Philippines after winning the women's 55-kilogram weightlifting category. Diaz overtook LIAO Qiuyun of People's Republic of China on her last lift in the clean and jerk to win with a total 224 kilograms, one more than Liao. China had won all three events so far and was hoping to sweep the gold medals in the eight competitions its athletes have entered.

Briefs

Indonesia loosens Covid-19 curbs

JAKARTA: Small shops, streetside restaurants and some shopping malls reopened in coronavirus-battered Indonesia on Monday after the government loosened a shutdown despite warnings it could unleash another Covid-19 wave.

President Joko Widodo said Sunday that a partial lockdown imposed in early July would continue until August 2 even as the highly infectious Delta variant tears across the vast archipelago nation, which has overtaken India and Brazil to become the global pandemic epicentre. But restrictions on many small businesses, including traditional markets and ubiquitous open-air eateries known as warungs, were loosened even in the worst-hit areas.

"We're opening for dining in again," Syaifur-Rehman, a seafood eatery owner who like many Indonesians goes by one name, told AFP.

"I hope Jakarta recovers quickly because this busy place is where we make a living." Shopping malls and mosques in less affected parts of the Muslim majority nation also got the green light to open their doors to limited crowds and shorter hours. Offices were still under shutdown orders, although there have been widespread reports of employers flouting earlier lockdown rules. — APP

Tourism picks up in Kenya amid COVID-19

NAIROBI: The tourism industry in Kenya, which is the second-largest source of foreign exchange earnings after agriculture, is finally picking up after being brought to its knees by the pandemic.

On Monday, Germany's flag carrier Lufthansa's "Eurowings Discover" plane completed its maiden flight from Frankfurt to the Moi International Airport in Kenya's southeastern coastal city of Mombasa.

The airline will operate two weekly direct flights from Frankfurt, Germany, to Mombasa in Kenya.

Speaking during a reception for the inaugural flight at the Moi International Airport Mombasa, Kenya's Minister for Tourism and Wildlife Najib Balala said the flight is proof that Kenya is making progress in tourism activities, which were minimal due to COVID-19 restrictions. He added that the Kenyan coast was a popular destination for European tourists, adding the flight would create a link between Kenya and Europe.

"Kenya has been making great progress as a destination is attracting tourists from different markets, and especially from Europe. This flight is yet another milestone in the recovery of activities in the country," Balala said. — APP

Iranian MPs postpone internet restriction bill

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's parliament has suspended its review of a highly controversial bill that a minister, citizens and businesses say will only lead to more internet restrictions in the country.

The bill, first proposed three years ago, is titled "Protecting Users in Cyberspace and Organising Social Media" but critics say it is aimed at introducing more controls in a country where most prominent global services are already banned.

An online petition calling for the legislation to be scrapped has already garnered close to half a million signatures.

Minister of Information and Communications Technology Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi denounced the bill in letters to parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and President-elect Ebrahim Raisi that surfaced on Sunday.

The outgoing minister said the bill will limit users' free access to information, weaken the government's role in cyberspace decision-making, and make the ministry practically obsolete.

Clashes erupt in Tunisia after President suspends parliament

AGENCIES

TUNIS: Supporters of president as well as those of major political party Ennahda mobilise on streets across Tunisia, leading to violent confrontations threatening to draw in security forces or prompt a military power grab. Street clashes have erupted outside Tunisia's army-barricaded parliament, a day after President Kais Saied ousted the prime minister and suspended the legislature, plunging the young democracy into a constitutional crisis. Supporters and opponents of the president threw stones at each other outside parliament on Monday morning leading to injuries with one man sitting on the pavement bleeding from the head. Tunisia's hard-currency bonds tumbled. Saied sacked Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi and ordered parliament closed for 30 days, a move the biggest political party Ennahda decried as a "coup", following a day of angry street protests against the government's handling of the Covid pandemic. The army, which has yet to comment on Saied's moves, deployed to the government palace in the Kasbah and stopped workers from entering the building on Monday. Saied's dramatic move — a decade on from Tunisia's 2011 revolution, often held up as the Arab Spring's sole success story — comes even though the constitution enshrines a parliamentary democracy and largely limits presidential powers to security and diplomacy. It "is a coup d'etat against the revolution and against the constitution," Ennahda, which was the biggest party in Tunisia's fractious ruling

Ghannouchi vows to fight

FOREIGN DESK

TUNIS: Speaker Rached Ghannouchi, head of Ennahda party, says he and other legislators consider state institutions as operational as per constitution after President Kais Saied ousted PM Hichem Mechichi and suspended legislature for 30 days. Tunisia's parliament speaker Rached Ghannouchi has accused President Kais Saied of "misrepresenting the truth", branding his suspension of parliament and dismissal of Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi's government "a coup." "If this [coup] continues, it is going to go against the pluralistic and democratic principles of our country," Ghannouchi, who is also the head of the largest party in parliament, the religious leaning Ennahda, said in an interview with TRT Arabic on Monday. "It is aiming to remove the legitimacy of government institutions and of the state," he said. In a statement late on Sunday, Saied invoked the constitution to dismiss PM Mechichi and decree a freeze of the parliament for a period of 30 days, saying he would govern alongside a new premier. It came after protests against the government and Ennahda following a spike in Covid-19 cases, and growing anger over Tunisia's chronic political dysfunction and economic woes. Saied's announcement brought cheering crowds onto the streets of the capital Tunis. The president has rejected accusations he has conducted a coup, saying his actions are based on Article 80 of the constitution and are in response to Tunisia's years-long economic and political paralysis. However, a special court required by the 2014 constitution to adjudicate such disputes between Tunisia's branches of state has never been established, after years of wrangling over which judges to include. "They are trying to hegemonise the interpretation of the constitution," Ghannouchi argued.

coalition, charged in a Facebook post, warning that its members "will defend the revolution". The crisis follows prolonged deadlock between the president, the premier and Ennahda chief Rached Ghannouchi, which has crippled the Covid response as deaths have surged to one of the world's highest per capita rates. "I have taken the necessary decisions to save

Tunisia, the state and the Tunisian people," Saied declared in a statement on Sunday, a day that had seen Covid street protests flare in multiple cities.

The president's announcement sparked jubilation rallies by many thousands of his supporters who flooded the streets of the capital late Sunday to celebrate and wave the national

flag, as car horns sounded through the night and fireworks lit up the sky.

Before the president's announcement, thousands had marched in several cities protesting against Ennahda, criticising the lead party in Tunisia's government for failures in tackling the pandemic. A senior Ennahda official, speaking to AFP news agency on condition of anonymity, alleged that the protests before Saied's announcement, and the subsequent celebrations, had all been choreographed by the president. "We are also capable of organising large demonstrations to show the number of Tunisians who are opposed to these decisions," this official said.

Since Saied was elected in 2019, he has been locked in a showdown with Mechichi and Ghannouchi, who is also house speaker. The rivalry has blocked ministerial appointments and diverted resources from tackling Tunisia's many economic and social problems.

"We are navigating the most delicate moments in the history of Tunisia," Saied said on Sunday. He said the constitution did not allow for the dissolution of parliament, but did allow him to suspend it, citing Article 80 which permits it in case of "imminent danger".

In a later Facebook post, he clarified the suspension would be for 30 days. Saied said he would take over executive power "with the help" of a government, whose new chief he would appoint himself. He also said that parliamentary immunity would be lifted for deputies. In the 10 years since Tunisia's popular revolution toppled dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the North African country has had nine governments.

Bahraini FM visits Pak embassy

DNA

MANAMA: His Excellency Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Alzayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain went to the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Bahrain today and signed the Book of Condolences on behalf of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, the King of the Kingdom of Bahrain and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain. H.E. Muhammad Ayub, Ambassador of Pakistan received the Foreign Minister at the Embassy.

The Book of Condolences was opened on 25 July 2021 in honour of the deceased former President Mammoon Hussain who served as the 12th President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan from September 2013 to September 2018.



MANAMA: Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Alzayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Bahrain went to the embassy of Pakistan, Muhammad Ayub, ambassador of Pakistan received the Foreign Minister at the embassy. — DNA

IFC's support promotes energy efficiency in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A new investment will help increase the availability of hydrogen peroxide and boost competitiveness of the Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) and base chemicals sector, while tackling climate change in Pakistan. IFC's \$15 million investment in Engro Polymer & Chemicals Limited (EPCL) is also expected to create jobs, improve resource efficiency, and drive economic growth in the country. IFC's support will allow EPCL—the only vertically integrated PVC and chlor-alkali producer in the country—to expand its product range to include hydrogen peroxide, supporting the growth of textile, buildings, and construction sectors in Pakistan. Further, IFC's long-term investment will contribute approximately \$57 million to the nation's economy through efficient linkages to the local supply chain and an additional \$28 million through induced effects. IFC's funding will enable EPCL to reduce the usage of imported ethylene in the

raw material mix for PVC production. While reducing PVC manufacturing costs, it will help the company enter the hydrogen peroxide market—with a capacity of 28,000 metric tons—as the lowest-cost producer in the country. The climate change mitigation project is also expected to reduce GHG emissions of around 23,074 tons of CO2-equivalent annually and 3,540,000 m3 of natural gas use annually. "Our investment in EPCL will help in cost-efficient production of critical raw materials that are used across sectors in the economy, including construction, agriculture packaging, and fast-moving consumer goods. This will contribute to the sectors' growth momentum backed by a growing population, infrastructure development, and public infrastructure projects," said Nadeem Siddiqui, IFC Senior Country Manager for Pakistan. He added, "IFC's investment will also support resource efficiency—through raw materials savings—at the firm level while reducing the usage of oil-based products at the sector level."

Selfridges transforms façade of iconic Birmingham store

DNA

BIRMINGHAM: Selfridges has officially unveiled a new monumental public art commission by multi-disciplinary artist Osman Yousefzada at its Birmingham store. The iconic building, famous for its bulbous blue shape and large silver disks is now covered by the world's largest canvas showcasing Osman Yousefzada's black and pink patterned design. This new art installation, co-commissioned with Ikon, Birmingham, entitled Infinity Pattern 1, is dramatically changing the Birmingham skyline as it stretches over 10,000 sq. metres (nearly 50 metres in height and 250 metres in length and weighing 5 tons).

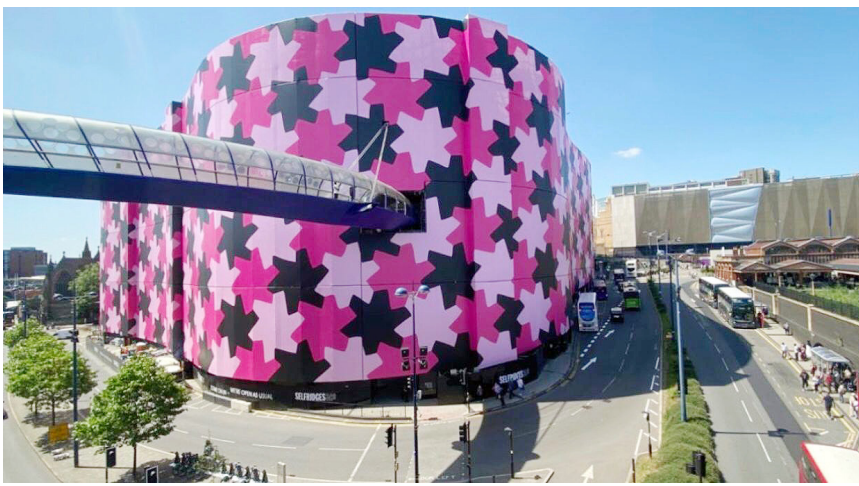
A radical new landmark for the city, Infinity Pattern 1 addresses the issues of race, labour and migration, which have shaped Birmingham's past and present, but also carries a deep sense of optimism, connectivity and hope. For Osman, who is Birmingham-born, and the son of Pakistani-Afghan migrants,

the work contains some autobiographical elements, but at its core it stages the concept of a world without borders, whether physical or imaginary, represented by the endlessly tessellating pattern. This major public artwork — part of Selfridges long-established commitment to supporting creativity in the cities its stores call home — will remain in its completed state until the end of the year. It will be dismantled progressively next year whilst major renovation work to the store, started last winter, come to an end just ahead of the Com-

monwealth Games. Osman's design was chosen following an international competition led by Ikon, Birmingham, the highly esteemed art gallery. The commission is complemented by an in-store art exhibition, shop and art trail (also opening on 26th July) all co-designed and co-curated with Ikon, as part of an ongoing creative relationship between the gallery and the store. The art exhibition and trail will expand the conversation around some of the topics raised by Infinity Pattern 1, through further new works

by Osman, as well as pieces by Birmingham artists Hira Butt, Farwa Moledina and Maryam Wahid, to discover within Selfridges Birmingham store.

Osman's additional output was developed through a recent residency at Birmingham's School of Art in Fine Art Printmaking and Sculpture. The new pieces are anchored by a series of mixed-media works on paper, challenge the stereotypes of 'The Model Migrant' and the perception of the role of Brown Bodies in the Western world.



China urges U.S. to change misguided mindset

AGENCIES

TIANJIN: The China-U.S. relationship is in a stalemate, fundamentally because some Americans portray China as an "imagined enemy," said Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Xie Feng, urging the United States to change its highly misguided mindset and dangerous policy. Xie made the remarks on Monday during talks with U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, who is on a visit to north China's port city of Tianjin from July 25 to 26. For quite some time, when talking about conflict with China and challenges facing the United States, the "Pearl Harbor moment" and the "Sputnik moment" have been brought up by some Americans, Xie said. Some international scholars, including some U.S. academics, perceive this as comparing China to Japan in the Second World War and the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

It seems as if by making China an "imagined enemy," a national sense of purpose would be reignited in the United States. The hope may be that by demonizing China, the United States could somehow shift domestic public discontent over political, economic and social issues and blame China for its own structural problems, he said.

It seems that a whole-of-government and whole-of-society campaign is being waged to bring China down. It is as if when China's development is contained, all U.S. domestic and external challenges would go away, and America would become great again and Pax Americana would continue to go on, Xie said. In terms of the United States' "competitive, collaborative and adversarial" rhetoric, Xie said this is a thinly veiled attempt to contain and suppress China. The Chinese people feel that the real emphasis is on the adversarial aspect, the collaborative aspect is just expediency, and the

competitive aspect is a narrative trap, he said. The U.S. policy seems to be demanding cooperation when it wants something from China; decoupling, cutting off supplies, blockading or sanctioning China when it believes it has an advantage; and resorting to conflict and confrontation at all costs, he added.

"It seems that the United States only thinks about addressing its own concerns, getting the results it wants and advancing its own interests. Do bad things and get good results. How is that even possible?" Xie said.

What the world needs most is solidarity and cooperation, for humanity are passengers in the same boat, according to Xie. "The Chinese people cherish peace," said Xie, adding that what China hopes to build is a new type of international relations featuring mutual respect, equality, justice and win-win cooperation, and a community with a shared future for mankind.

"China wants to work with the United States to seek common ground while shelving the differences," he said. The U.S. side needs to change course and work with China on the basis of mutual respect and embrace fair competition and peaceful coexistence with China.

"After all, a healthy and stable China-U.S. relationship serves the interests of both sides. And the world expects nothing less from the two sides," he added. The U.S. side's so-called "rules-based international order" is designed to benefit itself at others' expense, hold other countries back and introduce "the law of the jungle," Xie said.

This is an effort by the United States and a few other Western countries to frame their own rules as international rules and impose them on other countries. The United States has abandoned the universally-recognized international law and order and damaged

the international system it has helped to build, he said. "It is trying to replace it with a so-called 'rules-based international order.'"

"The purpose is to resort to the tactic of changing the rules to make life easy for itself and hard for others, and to introduce 'the law of the jungle' where might is right and the big bully the small," Xie added.

The United States is the "inventor and patent and intellectual property owner" of coercive diplomacy, Xie said. The Chinese believe that one must not do to others what one does not like to be done to himself. The desire to seek hegemony or territorial expansion is simply not in the Chinese DNA, according to Xie.

"China has never coerced any country," he said, adding that China responds to foreign interference with legitimate and lawful countermeasures, and the aim is to defend the legitimate rights and interests of the country and uphold international equity and justice.

Sri Lanka's death toll from Covid reaches 4,099

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka has recorded 4,099 deaths from COVID-19 after 45 deaths were reported a day earlier, statistics from the Health Ministry showed on Monday. According to the ministry, 296,516 positive cases had been recorded in the country since the first local patient was detected in March last year while the current active patient count was 24,860.

The Health Ministry said that the Delta variant which was fast spreading in the country had been the reason for the sudden increase in deaths and new patients in recent weeks.

"It is of absolute importance that every individual above 60 years of age gets vaccinated irrespective of the preferred vaccine. In addition, people above 30 should also get their vaccine without hesitation," said Director General of Health Services Dr. Asela Gunawardena.

He further said that a total of 68 cases of the Delta variant had been detected in Sri Lanka so far. — APP

France reports 40mln with at least one jab

PARIS: The number of people in France who have received at least one jab against Covid-19 has crossed the 40-million mark, President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday.

After four million people received vaccines over the past two weeks, some 60 percent of the population are now partly or fully vaccinated, Macron tweeted during an official visit in French Polynesia.

"All together, we will beat the virus. We will carry on," he said. The health ministry added Monday that some 33.2 million people in France, close to 50 percent of the population, are now fully vaccinated.

The announcement comes a day after France's parliament voted to make vaccine passports a key part of daily life in the battle against Covid-19. Macron last week ordered the health pass — proof of full vaccination or a negative test — mandatory for visits to venues such as cinemas or nightclubs. His government has made vaccinations the top weapon against Covid-19 as new variants emerge, essentially requiring people to become inoculated if they want to continue daily routines. — APP

Malaysian parliament reopens

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's parliament convened Monday for the first time this year after being suspended under a coronavirus emergency, but critics have slammed the session as a sham that will not truly test the embattled premier's support.

Parliament was halted when the king declared the state of emergency in January to fight Covid-19, following the advice of Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin. But political rivals accused Muhyiddin of using the crisis to avoid a no-confidence vote in the legislature while shoring up his weak coalition government, which was on the verge of collapse.

Despite the emergency and a nationwide lockdown, the outbreak has only worsened, fuelled by the highly infectious Delta variant. Malaysia's caseload breached the one-million mark at the weekend. Facing mounting public anger at the closure of parliament and pressure from the king, Muhyiddin agreed to reconvene the legislature for a five-day sitting before the state of emergency ends in August. Lawmakers gathered in the 222-seat lower house Monday wearing masks and separated by transparent screens for the start of the session.

It will centre on the pandemic, with Muhyiddin and ministers expected to brief lawmakers on an economic recovery plan and other related matters.

But rival politicians have denounced the short sitting as a sham, as MPs are not expected to vote on anything. Ahead of parliament reopening, opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim told AFP the legislature was facing "one of its darkest moments". — APP

Briefs

Ashrafi
welcomes
resumption
of Umrah

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Special Representative on Interfaith Harmony and the Middle East, Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi on Monday welcomed Saudi Arabia's decision to resume the Umrah pilgrimage for international visitors, halted earlier due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to Saudi media, the Kingdom has decided to resume International Umrah from the first of the Islamic month of Muharram, likely to fall on August 10. "We welcome the decision of resumption Umrah for foreign pilgrims and whatever mechanism Saudi government will devise. Pakistan will follow that," Ashrafi said in an interview with Arab News. "Pakistani ministry of religious affairs and [Saudi] Ministry of Hajj and Umrah have in contacts and if there will be any issues, both will coordinate on that." Media reports suggested COVID-19 vaccinations would be mandatory for all pilgrims. Hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis would visit Saudi Arabia every year, mainly for Umrah and Hajj, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Greece
will start
vaccinating
12-15 yr-olds
in August

ATHENS: Greece will open Covid-19 vaccinations to youngsters aged 12-15 in August, Health Minister Vassilis Kikilias told local television on Monday. Vaccination for this group has been approved and will be optional, he said. The programme is expected to start from Friday. Maria Theodoridou, president of the country's vaccination committee, stressed that there had been a significant rise in infections among children and adolescents recently. "The constant contamination of children is going to lead to the appearance of new variants" of the coronavirus she warned. Some 30,000 appointments have already been made by teenagers aged 15 to 17, Kikilias said, as he called again for all Greeks to receive the jab. "They should all go and get vaccinated, even now in the summer," he said. The decision to extend vaccination to 12 to 15-year-olds comes as Greece grapples with a surge in coronavirus case numbers, in particular the highly infectious Delta variant. Earlier this month, Greece's parliament passed a bill introducing mandatory vaccinations of all health workers, including those working in retirement homes.

India begins
landslide,
flood clean-up

MUMBAI: Rescuers waded through waist-deep mud in western India Monday to reach injured residents and start a massive clean-up as the death toll from monsoon-triggered landslides and floods climbed to 198. In the worst-hit state of Maharashtra, rescuers halted search operations in the hillside village of Taliye, where 53 bodies have been recovered. Local authorities said efforts to retrieve the bodies of 31 others still missing - after a massive landslide brought down dozens of homes on Thursday - would cease, with their names counted among the dead. India's west coast was hit by severe rainstorms over several days, with a quarter of a million people evacuated from their homes in three states and power cut across vast areas. Experts say climate change is increasing the frequency and intensity of the annual deluge - which is critical to replenishing rivers and groundwater but also causes widespread death and destruction. - APP

Pak, China to continue high quality construction of CPEC

DNA

BEIJING: Pakistan and China have agreed to continue the high quality construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), flagship project of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and strengthen coordination on international and regional affairs during the third round of Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue held in Chengdu, southwest China's Sichuan Province, Chinese Foreign Ministry Spokesperson, Zhao Lijian said on Monday. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi led delegations of their respective countries during the dialogue. The two sides held in-depth, exchange of views on international and regional issues of common interest, Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing held here. He informed that State Councilor Wang Yi pointed out that since China and Pakistan set up diplomatic ties 70 years ago, the two countries have worked together to overcome many difficulties and obstacles and forged an iron-clad friendship and established an all weather strategic partnership of cooperation. "A high degree of mutual trust, mutual assistance, seeking peace and promoting development together are the most dis-



tinctive features of the bilateral relations and greatest strength in moving forward together," he added. He said the Chinese side is willing to work with Pakistan to take the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic ties as an opportunity to accelerate the construction of a closer community with a shared future in a new era and bring more benefits to the two peoples and make greater contribution to regional stability and prosperity. The spokesperson said that during the meeting, Foreign Minister Qureshi extended congratulations to the Chinese side on

the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China (CPC). "Pakistani side wished the Chinese government and people greater success in achieving a goal of socialist modernization in 2035 and built a modern prosperous beautiful democratic and culturally advanced and harmonious socialist country in 2049, under the inspiring and visionary leadership of the CPC with Comrade Xi Jinping at the core," he added. China is Pakistan's long standing strategic partner and strengthening iron-clad partnership is the common understand-

ing of the whole country and the basis of Pakistan's foreign policies, Foreign Minister Qureshi added. The foreign minister said, in the face of the major global challenges, it is important to enhance coordination and cooperation between the two sides. Pakistan is ready to join hands with China to respond to possible challenges and take bilateral relations to a new height. Zhao Lijian said, during the meeting, the two sides strongly condemned the terrorist attack targeting Chinese nationals in Pakistan, mourn the lost lives and express sincere condolences to the injured. Both sides spoke highly of the outcomes of the anti-epidemic cooperation, agreed to continue the high quality construction of CPEC, strengthen coordination on international and regional affairs, oppose hegemony and unilateralism, promote the common values of humanity, he added. The two sides agreed on continuing their ongoing support on issues concerning each other core national interests and underscored that a peaceful, stable cooperative and prosperous South Asia is in the interest of all countries. They decided to launch the joint actions of the issue and reaffirmed their commitment to facilitate and support the Afghan led and Afghan owned peace and reconciliation process, he said.

Govt fulfills
another
requirement
of FATF

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday fulfilled another requirement of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as the government started implementation on condition of inspecting the offices of property dealers across the country. In order to achieve the targets of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the government has taken an important decision and the offices of Pakistan Property Dealers will be inspected to collect information about suspicious investment. Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Inland Revenue Group will inspect the offices of property dealers, while the FBR has registered over 22,000 property dealers and the offices of registered property dealers will be inspected. According to the document, property dealers will be informed about the dubious investment, property dealers will be questioned about the training of dubious investment and records related to investors will also be obtained.

Schools
reopen in
Afghanistan
after Covid
closure

FOREIGN DESK

KABUL: Schools and other educational institutions started to reopen in Afghanistan on Monday after months of closure due to the coronavirus pandemic. According to the health and education officials, the reopening would be gradual in provinces in relation to the prevalence of COVID-19. Hamid Obaidi, an Education Ministry official, said the academic centers would be reopened in provinces where the ratio of positive cases is below 35%. "All university students, teachers, and staff would be vaccinated for this," he said. Back in May, Afghanistan suddenly closed down all universities, schools, and other academic institutions as the country recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the current third wave of the pandemic. With the closure of academic institutions, the annual university entrance examinations in the capital Kabul also got suspended. The Afghan government has repeatedly called for more international support to vaccinate at least 20% of the estimated 38 million population this year, and 60% by the end of 2022. Health Ministry officials told Anadolu Agency the administration of vaccines has gained momentum following a sudden rise in infections and corresponding deaths since April. According to the Ministry of Public Health, up to 40,000 people were getting the jabs daily across the country with officials aiming to take it up to 100,000 per day. The country's health minister said the Afghan government plans to acquire up to 12 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines by early 2022.

IPEMC
to decide
reopening of
schools

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Inter Provincial Education Ministers Conference (IPEMC) would decide about the reopening of educational institutions across the country in its next meeting to be held on July 28 (Wednesday). The IPEMC would be chaired by the Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood, said a news release. The suggestions to extend summer vacations till August 14 was also under consideration in view of COVID-19 situation.

6.2 magnitude
earthquake jolts
Sulawesi, Indonesia

AGENCIES

JAKARTA: An earthquake of 6.2-magnitude on Richter Scale struck near Indonesia's Sulawesi island on Monday, the United States Geological Survey said. The earthquake hit offshore Sulawesi island at around 5.39 PM but there is no tsunami warning as of now, news agency AFP reported. There were no immediate

reports of damage or loss of life. The epicenter of the quake was at a depth of 10 kilometres and at 97 km west-northwest of Luwuk, according to USGS. Tremors from the strong earthquake were also felt about 200 kilometres from the epicentre at Palu. Indonesia falls under the 'Ring of Fire' arc on the Pacific ocean that has an intense seismic activity throughout the year.



BAKU: Asad Qaiser, Speaker National Assembly of Pakistan along with Mustafa Şentop, speaker of The Grand National Assembly of Turkey for the Trilateral Speakers' meeting of Pakistan, Turkey, and Azerbaijan. - DNA

Trilateral speakers
moot starts in Baku

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan: A 14-member Pakistani Parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser has embarked for Baku to participate in the First Trilateral Meeting of the Speakers of Parliaments of Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Turkey. This parliamentary visit is on the special invitation of the Speaker of Mili Majlis of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova for participation in the first Trilateral Meeting of speakers of Azerbaijan, Pakistan, and Turkey which is going to be held in Baku Azerbaijan. The formation of the Trilateral Platform was the idea of the Speaker of Mili Majlis of Azerbaijan Sahiba Gafarova and it was endorsed by Speakers of Pakistan and Turkey as symbol of close and cordial relations between three countries. The Trilateral meeting will be preceded by the meeting of the Executive Committee of the Speakers of three Parliaments to be held on July 27, 2021 to deliberate upon enhancing regional cooperation and connectivity. The deliberations regarding the content of 'Baku Declaration', and determining the venue of the Second Trilateral Meeting would also be made during committee meetings. Apart from participating in the First Trilateral Meeting, the Pakistani Parliamentary delegation will have meetings with Azeri delegations; both Countries Azerbaijan and Pakistan will also sign a MoU on Inter-Parliamentary Cooperation.

Funeral prayers of Laswa
incident martyrs offered

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The funeral prayers (Namaz e Janaza) of soldiers who embraced martyrdom in Laswa after their vehicle plunged into a ravine while negotiating a sharp turn was offered at Muzaffarabad on Monday. The soldiers embraced shahadat (martyrdom) yesterday while on duty during employment in support of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections, said an ISPR news release. The bodies of shaheeds were being taken to their native towns where they would be buried with full military honour, it added.

Kashmiris say goodbye to
'corrupt' PML-N, PPP: Farrukh

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Monday said that the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) had buried politics of the 'corrupt' political parties by giving a mandate to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf in the general elections. In a statement, he said both the political parties Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan

People's Party (PPP) were already rejected by people in Gilgit Baltistan polls and general elections of 2018 in the country for plundering national exchequer. Farrukh said Kashmiris taught exemplary lesson to Modi's cronies, money launderers, fake account holders, certified liars and corrupt people and made the day of July 25 a part of history. The Kashmiri people through power of vote rejected those who made

deals on Kashmir cause, he remarked, adding that the Kashmiris could never forgive those who invited Modi on their wedding ceremonies and accepted gifts of 'Saris' and mangoes from him by ignoring Hurriyat leaders. Praising the people of Kashmir for bringing politics of bullying, rigging, accusations and criticism to an end, he extended gratitude to Kashmiris living in AJK and other parts of country for reposing confidence in Prime Minister Imran

Khan. He said PM Imran Khan being a true ambassador of Kashmiris would continue to fight their case and advocate the Kashmir cause at all international fora. The minister said the PTI would not only respect the mandate given by people of Kashmir, but also carry out massive development projects for welfare and prosperity of AJK people. He also chided Maryam Safdar and Bilawal Bhutto Zardari over their parties' worst-ever defeat in the AJK polls.

Zahir Jaffer's name
to be placed on ECL
- admits his crime

ISLAMABAD: The name of Zahir Jaffer, the man accused of the brutal murder of a former Pakistani diplomat's 27-year-old daughter Noor Mukadam, will be placed on the Exit Control List, Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed said on Monday. His name has already been added to the Provincial National Identification List (PNIL), the interior minister said, confirming that the father of the accused and his employees have been arrested. The names of the accused in the Noor-e-Mukadam case will be presented in Cabinet this week for inclusion in the ECL, Rasheed said. He said he wants Noor's killer to be sentenced to death. - DNA



Shafqat discusses educational collaboration with UK

DNA

LONDON: On the joint invitation extended by Prime Minister of the UK, President of Kenya and the Chair of Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Mr. Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education, Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture is on an official visit to London to attend the Global Education Summit, scheduled to be held from 28-29 July 2021. Led by Mr Shafqat Mahmood, the Pakistan delegation comprises Senator Saeed Ghani, Education Minister Sindh, Mr Sharam Khan Tarakai, Education Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ms Wajiha Akram MNA, Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Education and other federal and provincial officials. Prior to the Summit, the Federal Minister today held bilateral meetings with Ms. Alison Johns, CEO of Advance Higher Educa-



tion, and Ms. Christine Ozden, Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment International Education (CAIE). Educational collaboration was discussed in detail. Advance HE is a global not-for-profit char-

ity, headquartered in the UK, using their expertise and sharing best practices in improving higher education across the world. In the meeting with its CEO, the two sides exchanged views on global best practices

in higher education. It was agreed that Advance Higher Education would work closely with National Academy of Higher Education Pakistan in course-design to ensure quality of teaching and learning, leadership development, and governance and administration in Pakistan's higher education sector. Pakistan's first-ever international fellowship program was launched recently on 13 July 2021 with Advance HE, UK as a prime partner. In his meeting with Ms. Christine Ozden of Cambridge, the Minister discussed the Cambridge International exam system. In view of the ongoing pandemic, they held detailed discussion on future course of action regarding conduct of exams, and efforts to work together in ensuring a robust mechanism for gauging academic progress through online platforms. Ms. Ozden also appreciated Pakistan's efforts to smoothly conduct Cambridge exams in consultation with all national stakeholders.