



Islamabad POST

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Taliban expected to play role in process of peaceful reconciliation

Detailed News On Page-01

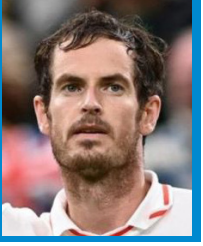
PM's vision is to link region with CA, EU

Detailed News On Page-08



Andy Murray eliminated in Quarterfinals

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

Maryam Nawaz tests positive for Covid-19

LAHORE: PML-N Vice-President Maryam Nawaz has tested positive for coronavirus, the party's spokesperson Marriyum Aurangzeb confirmed Wednesday, as fears of a fourth coronavirus wave loom large. Maryam has gone into self-quarantine after testing positive, the Aurangzeb said, as she appealed people to pray for the PML-N leader and other people infected with the virus. Later, the PML-N vice-president, responding to a tweet, said was being treated at home and has symptoms like "fever, cough, and flu".

PPP, PML-N hid their accounts

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib has demanded scrutiny of the bank accounts of PML (N) and the PPP. Talking to the media persons in Islamabad, he said both the parties hid their accounts from the Election Commission of Pakistan. Farrukh Habib said the PTI is the only party which provided details of its bank accounts to the Election Commission of Pakistan. He said the PML (N) used the party accounts for money laundering and whitening the black money.

IMF report a slap on Opp face

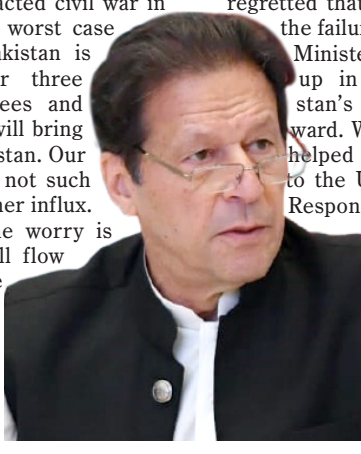
ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Political Communication, Dr Shahbaz Gill on Wednesday termed the recent IMF report as a slap on the face of corrupt opposition and fake economic analysts. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has amended Pakistan's GDP growth projection for 2021 and validated the government's GDP projection, he said adding, earlier in April 2021, the IMF had estimated 1.5%.

Pak will not be part of Afghan strife

Prime Minister Imran Khan calls for an inclusive political settlement; says protracted civil war in Afghanistan will be a worst case scenario

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has emphasized for an inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan. In an interview with a US media outlet he said the Afghan government that includes all sorts of different factions will be the best outcome. He said there is no other outcome as the military solution has failed. The Prime Minister said from Pakistan's point of view, a protracted civil war in Afghanistan will be a worst case scenario. He said Pakistan is already hosting over three million Afghan refugees and we fear the civil war will bring more refugees to Pakistan. Our economic situation is not such that we can have another influx. Secondly, he said, the worry is that the civil war will flow into Pakistan, because the Taliban are basically ethnic Pashtuns and those on our side will be drawn into it. He said this is last thing we want.



Reaffirming support to the Afghan peace process, the Prime Minister made it clear that Pakistan want to be a partner in peace but not in conflict. Imran Khan recalled that Pakistan was devastated by joining the US war on terrorism. He said seventy thousand Pakistani people died in this war and the economy suffered losses to the tune of 150 billion dollars. He said the aid provided to Pakistan was minuscule compared to the amount of money the country lost in the economy. He regretted that Pakistan still is blamed for the failure in Afghanistan. The Prime Minister said the US really messed up in Afghanistan. He said Pakistan's position is very straightforward. We want to help and we have helped getting the Taliban to talk to the U.S. We have done our bit. Responding to a question, the Prime Minister said Islam gives great respect and dignity to women. He said his comments on rape were taken out of context, clarifying that anyone who commits rape is solely responsible for the crime.

KSA, Pakistan to continue working for peace: COAS

The COAS thanked Saudi leadership for KSA's support to Pakistan and its Armed Forces

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa Wednesday said the relations between KSA and Pakistan are based on bonds of brotherhood and mutual trust as both nations would continue to play their part for peace and stability. The Army Chief expressed these views during a call on paid by Foreign Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud here, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release. The COAS thanked Saudi leadership for KSA's support to Pakistan and its Armed Forces. The Saudi Foreign Minister while assuring Pakistan of unflinching support, appreciated sincere efforts and role Pakistan played for promoting peace and stability in the region. Matters of bilateral interest, evolving security situation of the region including Afghanistan Peace



Process and collaboration for regional peace and connectivity were discussed during the meeting. Earlier on Tuesday, Prime Minister Imran Khan received Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan at his office. Prince Faisal conveyed the greetings of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to the premier and the government and people of Pakistan, while Khan conveyed his greetings and appreciation to the king, the crown prince, and the government and people of Saudi Arabia. During the meeting, they reviewed the historical and well-established relations between the two countries and ways to enhance them in all fields, through the Saudi-Pakistani Coordination Council, which aims to enhance effective partnership and intensify coordination on issues of common interest. Pakistan had also requested Saudi Arabia to take steps in order to facilitate the Pakistani workers who had returned to Pakistan after Covid-19 pandemic but have failed to go back to the kingdom due to the strict Covid related restrictions imposed by Riyadh. The issue was flagged both by Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi in separate meetings with visiting Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan al Saud.



ISLAMABAD: The Belgian embassy in Islamabad organized a very insightful exchange on regional security and the place of NATO /EU missions in Islamabad. Senator Mushahid Hussain Chairman of the Senate Committee on Defence was the chief guest. - DNA

Cloudburst: PM puts NDMA on high alert

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed the relevant agencies, including the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), to remain on high alert with rapid emergency response actions ready in view of heavy monsoon rains likely to continue in the days ahead. In a tweet on Wednesday after heavy rains caused urban flooding in Islamabad and killed two people, the premier also asked the people to stay alert and take special care. The Federal Capital woke up to heavy rains today that wreaked havoc in the twin cities, forcing the authorities to seek the military's assistance in rescue efforts. While Islamabad Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafiqat said that a cloudburst triggered flooding, the Pakistan Meteorological Department contradicted the statement.

Pakistan reports over 4000 cases

The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 7.8 percent

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The national tally of total active COVID-19 cases was recorded as 56,952 on Wednesday with 4,119 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 7,020 people recovered during the last 24 hours. Forty-four (44) corona patients have died during past 24 hours, 39 of whom were under treatment in

Asad eyes a million vaccinations every day

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar expressed the hope on Wednesday to cross the target of one million COVID vaccinations in one day. In his tweet, the minister who also heads National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said that on July 27, a new record of daily vaccination in the country was set when 778,000 vaccines were carried out. "New record for first dose also... 5 lakh 61 thousand," he added.

Pakistan returns 5 Afghan soldiers

These Afghan Soldiers were given safe passage into Pakistan, on their own request



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Five Afghan Soldiers have been returned to Afghan government authorities Wednesday evening at Nawapass, Bajaur at 17:45 after due procedure, a statement from Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. According to the statement,

these Afghan Soldiers were given safe passage into Pakistan, on their own request, by Pakistan Army in Arundu Sector of Pak-Afghan International Border, Chitral, on 26th Jul. After necessary clearance, the Afghan soldiers crossed into Pakistan. The said soldiers have now been returned to Afghan authorities on their request.

UK ends quarantine for fully vaccinated arrivals

NEWS DESK

LONDON: People who have been fully vaccinated in the EU or US will not need to isolate when coming to England from an amber list country. The change will come into force at 04:00 BST on Monday. Currently, only people who received their jabs in the UK can avoid quarantine when arriving from amber list countries, except France. The government said the rule change would help to reunite family and friends whose loved ones live abroad. Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said it would apply to people who have been fully vaccinated with a jab approved by the EU or US.

PTI wins PP-38 by-election

STAFF REPORT

SIALKOT: After a close contest in Sialkot PP-38 by-polls, ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate Ahsan Saleem Baryar unofficially won with a margin of 7,117 votes on Wednesday. According to unofficial results, the PTI candidate bagged total 60,588 votes against Tariq Subhani of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz who received 53,471 votes in the by-elections. PTI workers started celebrations at their election campaign offices across the constituency and distributed sweets to the supporters and other citizens. The PTI candidate retained his lead over the PML-N candidate almost in all 165 polling stations in the constituency.

China jails a billionaire

NEWS DESK

BEIJING: A Chinese court on Wednesday jailed a billionaire farming tycoon for 18 years on charges of "provoking trouble" after a two-week trial shrouded in secrecy. Judges in Gaobeidian near Beijing said Sun Dawu was found guilty behind closed doors of a range of crimes, handing him a fine of 3.11 million yuan (\$480,000, 406,000) in addition to the custodial sentence. They included "gathering a crowd to attack state organs, obstructing government administration, and picking quarrels and provoking trouble."

Taliban visits China to gain government support

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the Taliban are expected to "play an important role in the process of peaceful reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan"

SPECIAL REPORT

BEIJING: China told a visiting Taliban delegation on Wednesday it expected the insurgent group to play an important role in ending Afghanistan's war and rebuilding the country, the Chinese foreign ministry said. Nine Taliban representatives met Foreign Minister Wang Yi in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin on a two-day visit during which the peace process and security issues were discussed, a Taliban spokesperson said. Wang said the Taliban are expected to "play an important role in the process of peaceful reconciliation and reconstruction in Afghanistan", according to a read-



BEIJING: Head of Taliban delegation posing for a picture with the Foreign Minister of People's Republic of China Wang Yi. - DNA

US very much engaged in Afghanistan: Blinken

NEW DELHI: Afghanistan would become a "pariah state" if the Taliban take control of the country by force and fail to respect the rights of its people, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said. "An Afghanistan that does not respect the rights of its people, an Afghanistan that commits atrocities against its own people would become a pariah state," Blinken told reporters in India. He said reports of "atrocities" committed by the Taliban in recent weeks as they made advances across the country were "deeply, deeply troubling" and "certainly do not speak well to the Taliban's intentions for the country as a whole." He added that the United States "remain very much engaged in Afghanistan, in support of the government through the various forms of assistance we're providing, including to the security forces, as well as the diplomacy that we're engaged in to try to bring the parties together in a meaningful way to resolve the conflict, peacefully." - APP

Inside...

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Briefs

RMI starts free medical camps

NEWS REPORT

PESHAWAR: Rahman Medical Institute (RMI) has started free medical camps series in the region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to target vulnerable communities.

First medical camp has been launched in rural areas of Peshawar near northern bypass at Samar Bagh. RMI has provided free medicine, free hepatitis B&C screening, free physiotherapy, medical checkups to more than 1000 patients.

Also launched free dental treatments in its medical camps where RMI is committed to provide major and minor dental treatment to vulnerable communities which will be completely free cost at RMI dental hospital.

New born twins recovered

FAISALABAD: Police claimed on Wednesday to have recovered newborn twins after a few hours of their abduction from General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad.

A woman gave birth to twin girls in General Hospital Ghulam Muhammad Abad where an unidentified woman impersonating herself as paramedic of the hospital took them in the pretext of getting them checked in nursery ward. When the suspected woman did not return, the mother of the newborn girls raised alarm and reported the matter to the hospital administration. The hospital admin immediately called the area police which after lodging a complaint started investigation on scientific lines. The police with the help of CCTV cameras and forensic evidences traced out the hideouts of accused in Bismillah Town. However, the police recovered the newborn babies safe and sound after a successful raid. The police have also arrested the suspected woman and four others. Further investigation was underway. — APP

Commissioner pilgrimages largest Quran

DNA

FAISALABAD: A citizen of Faisalabad has got the honor of writing the world's biggest Holy Quran with Urdu translation. 40 feet long and 5 feet wide Quran Pak has 31 pages and written in 425 days. Pir Intiaz Haider Noorani Mujaddidi has written it in different colors. It may be recalled that Pir Intiaz Haider Shah had earlier set a world record by handwriting 3411 feet long Quran also. Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan pilgrimages the Longest Quran Pak in Iqbal Stadium. Caretaker Iqbal Stadium Naveed Nazir and others were also present on the occasion. Divisional Commissioner appreciated the passion of writer and said he made a history in world.

Woman commits suicide

FAISALABAD: A young woman has committed suicide over domestic dispute in the area of Thikriwala police station. Police spokesman said on Wednesday that 24-year-old Nida Kanwal wife of Sajid Javid resident of Chak 241/R-B Chinchal Wala became dejected after quarrelling with her in-laws over a domestic dispute. Over this issue, she reportedly committed suicide by hanging herself with a rope at her room. The police took the body into custody and started investigation. — APP

ANNOUNCEMENT

I have purchased a Toyota Corolla Altis model 2018, Registration No. PZ-626 Chassis No. ZRE172R-7035944, Engine No. Q336845 and wish to transfer it to my name. Anyone who has any claim to this vehicle may contact me or Islamabad Excise within 10 days. Contact: 0313-8303040

Businessmen laud PM Imran's government economic policies



ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Government is formulating long term policies for different sectors and we must give positive and productive input for each segment to harvest the maximum economic benefits in the years to come.

Addressing a joint meeting of the standing committees on Liaison with Trade Associations, Agriculture and Allied Engineering, Foundry & Light Engineering, Chaudhry Talat Mahmood Senior Vice President Faisalabad Chamber of Com-

merce & Industry (FCCI) said that Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood Advisor to Prime Minister on Commerce & Investment during his last visit to FCCI had categorically announced to arrange a meeting of industrialists with Prime Minister Imran Khan and we must carve out a strategy to convey our concerns explicitly so that Prime Minister could direct concerned departments to redress the same in our future policies.

Chaudhry Talat Mahmood also stressed the need to work on membership growth. "In this connection every sector must convince

their relevant persons and firm members to get the membership of FCCI which is a supreme body representing the entire business", he said and added that its recommendations are given due consideration at the highest level.

Rana Sikandar Azam Khan Chairman Standing Committee on Liaison with Trade Associations said that more than one hundred organizations are directly affiliated with FCCI while the number of its members are around 7 thousand. He said that we must expedite work to further enhance our membership. He appreciat-

ed the efforts of the Senior Vice President and said that any member who has problems with social security and Employees Old Age benefits Institution (EOBI) could contact him for the resolution of their genuine problems.

Mr. Ashfaq Ashraf Chairman Standing Committee on Foundry said that the Government has given out of proportion incentives to the industries in FATA which has played havoc with the foundry sector already working in other parts of the country. He said that the rate of iron sheet has increased manifold due to

this policy of favoring FATA and the Government must intervene to bring down the prices in order to save this important sector from total collapse. He further said that the scrap rate was only Rs. 87 per kilogram on 1st July which has now jumped to Rs. 107 per kilogram. Mr. Attaullah Chairman Standing Committee on Agriculture & Allied Engineering thanked Mr. Faizullah Kamoka and said that he had played a major role in reverting back the sales tax on agriculture machinery and appliances from 17 to 5 percent.

Mirza Zahid Iqbal, Chair-

man Standing Committee on Light Engineering expressed concern on re-implication of professional tax and said that this decision should be withdrawn in the best interest of this sector.

The meeting was also attended by Mr. Abdul Rauf, Abdul Rahman, Mohammad Shakir, Mohammad Qasim, Mohammad Zahid, Mudasar Ali, Haji Abdul Razzaq, Mohammad Abid, Mohammad Ismail, Mohammad Shahbaz, Sanaullah, Rana Naveed Khan, Mohammad Azam, Syed Mohammad Javed, Mohammad Shoab Baig, Nadeem Mughal and Mian Mohammad Mushtaq.



ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

Bilawal condemns Yasin's political victimization

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari condemned the political victimization that PPP leader Chaudhry Yasin and his family in Azad Kashmir are being subjected to. He stated that Chaudhry Yasin also survived an attempted assassination attack and when he tried to register an FIR, instead of writing a case against the attackers, the police filed a case against Chaudhry Yasin.

In a statement issued from the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said that if political retaliation against the Pakistan Peoples Party workers did not stop, he would protest in Azad Kashmir himself. "Imran Khan has not been able to digest the victory of PPP in Kash-



mir and uses disgraceful tactics to take revenge. The selected Prime Minister is taking political revenge by interfering unconstitutionally in Kashmir's affairs," said Chairman PPP. He also stated that Imran Khan had directly blamed the PPP candidate for the tragic incident of killing of two PTI workers in the Charhoi Tehsil. "What sort of Riasat e Madina is this where NAB sends you a notice when you make a speech against Imran Khan and accuses you of murder if you win a seat?" questioned Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

GCWUF holds art exhibition 2021 at Art Gallery

DNA

FAISALABAD: Students of Fine Arts Department under Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences GCWUF arranged their third degree show 2021 in Art Gallery of GCWUF at 12:30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 28, 2021. Prof. Dr. Robina Farooq, Vice Chancellor Government College Women University Faisalabad was the chief guest of the event. She was warmly welcomed to the department by the chairperson Miss Nadia Zafar and her faculty members. Worthy Vice Chancellor was accompanied by Registrar GCWUF Dr. Zilli-Huma Nazli, Coordinator Faculty of Management and Administrative Sciences Ms. Nousheen Syed, Coordinator Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Dr.

Samina Tahira, Chairperson Psychology Department Dr. Riffat Sadiq, and many other faculty members and students. Every artist presented her concept and technique in

the most unique way. The students displayed innovations in artistic techniques through their work. The visitors applauded the quality of their presentations and appreciated the

selection of delicate and sensitive issues of society and human life through art by these emerging future artists. The exhibition will continue tomorrow as well.



Faisalabad: Crackdown intensifies against profiteers

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has directed the Price Control Magistrates of the district to conduct at least 30 inspections daily to crack down against profiteers of essential commodities and register cases against shop keepers who do not sell items as per the price list and consumers should get relief from the actions of the price control magistrates. He presided over a meeting and reviewed the individual performance of the price control magistrates and stressed that daily inspections should be uploaded on the Qeemat Punjab app. He said that 100 percent implementation of fixed prices of flour, sugar, pulses, potato, onion, tomato and other food items in

the markets and bazaars should be followed. In this regard, zero tolerance policy should be followed. The Deputy Commissioner said that daily performance of price

control magistrates will be monitored and those who do not show relevant results in implementing price control mechanisms would be answerable. He also directed

to take action against hoarders of essential items.

890114 people vaccinated so far
Faisalabad: District Health Officer

Dr. Bilal Ahmed said that as many as recorded 36483 people vaccinated yesterday and till now 890114 general public and Health Care Workers have administered corona vaccine at 37 centers and camps. He said that the process of vaccination of citizens under Corona Vaccination Centers, Mobile Campus and Special Campaign of the district is underway.

He said that 36212 general public and 271 health care workers have been vaccinated yesterday out of which 29077 general public have been vaccinated first, 7135 second and 66 health care workers administered the first dose and 205 administered the second dose.

He said that under special campaign till 10th August the targets would be achieved with the cooperation of citizens.



FESCO issues shutdown program

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown program for Thursday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines.

According to the program issued by the company, power supply from Lathianwala, Saboana, Jaranwala Road, Arzo Mill, HSM, Fakhar Abad, MK Sons, Chawla, Wapda City, Migna and ZA Corporation feeders emanating from 132-KV Khurrianwala grid station will remain suspended from 8 a.m. to 12 noon while FIEDMC, Hyundai Nishat and Coca Cola feeders originating from 132-KV FIEDMC grid station, Scarp-1 feeder emanating from 132-KV Chak Jhumra grid station, Meeranwala, Bahaduraywala, Industrial Estate-1, Industrial Estate-2, Mansooran, Industrial Estate-3 and STS feeders originating from 132-KV Industrial Estate grid station, Farooq Spinning, Rafiq Spinning and Forest Park feeders emanating from 132-KV Khurrianwala grid station and Pakka Anna feeder originating from 132-KV Nia Lahore grid station will observe shutdown from 6 a.m. to 11 a.m. on Thursday (July 29).

Similarly, electricity supply from HART Textile, Rasheed Fabrics and Five Star feeders emanating from 132-KV Chak 103/R/B grid station will also remain suspended from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on July 29, 2021. — APP

Police reviews arrangements for Muharram

PESHAWAR: The Capital City Police here Wednesday reviewed security arrangements being finalized for observing upcoming month of Muharram ul Haram in a peaceful manner following corona standard operating procedures (SOPs).

The meeting presided over by SSP Operation, Yasir Afridi attended by all Superintendents of Police, Deputy Superintendents of Police, and Moharrars. The SSP Operation directed all officers to ensure implementation of corona SOPs during mourning processions. He expressed satisfaction on arrangements and directed concerned police officers to take pragmatic steps for foolproof security at all ingress and egress points of the city.

SSP Operation said that a special security plan has been formulated for Muharram ul Haram adding that snipers would be deployed on buildings adjacent to Imam-bagh to deal with any untoward incident. — APP

APNS expresses grief on death of Salahuddin

DNA

KARACHI: The APNS expresses profound grief on the sad demise of Mr Salahuddin Haider a senior journalist and former Minister for Information Govt of Sindh. Mr Sarmad Ali President and Ms Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani Secretary General All Pakistan Newspapers Society in a press statement have acknowledged the services of Mr Haider for the newspaper industry during his tenure as Sindh Information Minister. The APNS office bearers offered their condolences to the bereaved family and prayed that Allah may rest the departed soul in eternal peace and give patience to his family and friends to bear the loss.

Training workshop for Measles drive held

FAISALABAD: A day-long micro-planning training of trainers (TOT) workshop on 'Measles Rubella Catch-Up Campaign' was organized at a local hotel on Wednesday. Director General Health Services Punjab Dr Haroon Jahangir was chief guest while Chief Executive Officer Health Dr Mushtaq Sipra, District EPI Dr Mukhtar Ahmed, District Health Officer Dr Bilal Ahmed and others were present. The representatives from World Health Organization and UNICEF especially participated in the technical session. — APP

Briefs**2 die as rains create havoc in ICT**

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: At least two people including a minor lost their lives as urban flooding caused by torrential rains inundated streets and main roads in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, creating immense difficulties for the residents. According to details, four children and their mother drowned in E-11 sector when a nearby drain overflowed and water entered their house. The administration rescued three children while one child and the mother died. Deputy Commissioner Muhammed Hamza Shafaqat said in a message that Islamabad has faced flooding in various areas. He requested to cooperate with teams clearing nullahs and roads. Videos from Islamabad's sectors E-11 and D-12 show cars floating in gushing waters after heavy rains that lashed the federal capital and Rawalpindi for hours. The twin cities received the highest rains during the current monsoon season. It is mentioned that sector E-11 in Islamabad is located next to the Margallah Hills that's why the hill torrents developed as the water made its way down. The rain started in Islamabad at night while the bridges and electricity poles have been damaged. Minister Sheikh Rasheed went to monitor work and said that all flood-related staff was at the spot.

AIOU offers 23 educational programs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has offered twenty-three educational programs for the overseas Pakistanis in autumn 2021 semester. According to the AIOU, the admission in matriculation, intermediate and I. Com programs have already begun, however, admission in other programs will commence from September 1, 2021. The university is offering these programs through on-line management system and all academic activities ranging from admission to the issuance of certificate/degree will be managed online. Overseas Pakistanis can download admission application form from the university website (www.aiou.edu.pk). For further information, they can contact International Collaboration and Exchange Office on these numbers +92519057165, +92519250175.

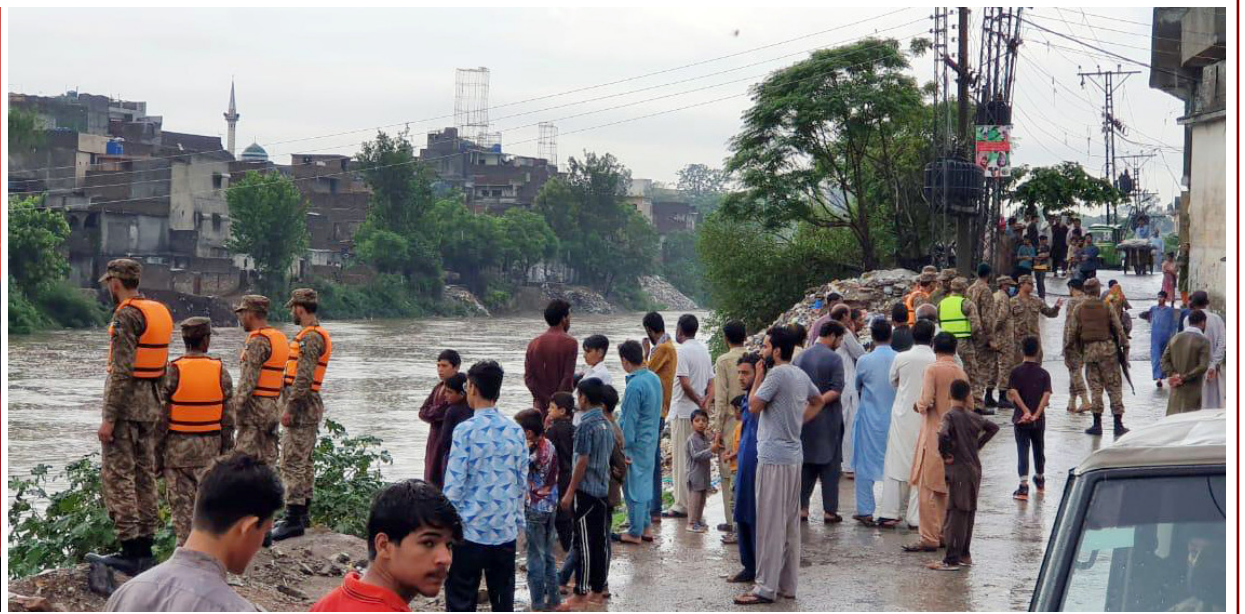
The programs to be offered on September 1 include Associate Degree in Arts, Islamic Banking, Human Resource Management and Marketing, BBA as well as BS in Accounting & Finance, Arabic, English, Gender & Women Studies, Library and Information Sciences, etc. Furthermore, certificate courses in School Leadership, French Language as well as six post graduate diplomas are, also, included in these programs.

NADRA for registration of PWDs

ISLAMABAD: National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has introduced multiple steps for registration of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) and ensured various facilities at its all centers with a purpose to encourage them for enrollment. According to the official source, NADRA has specified mobile registration vans to process PWDs at their doorsteps while separate as well as dedicated counter have been established at each Centre. Wheel chairs have been provided at each center while ramps are also being constructed to facilitate them. To ease out NIC issuance to PWDs, the source said that NIC is issued free of cost with life time expiry while the NADRA staff has been directed to give them priority during their visit to centers. To a question, the source said that 398,560 PWDs have been registered with NADRA while count of unregistered PWDs is not available with it. - APP

CDA clears all major areas of rain water in Islamabad

Heavy rains have caused high water level in Nullah Lai in Rawalpindi and water accumulation in E-11 sector of the federal capital, said an ISPR news release



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD, Capital Development Authority (CDA) has cleared all major roads and markets of rain water after an overnight heavy downpours on Wednesday in the federal capital that had caused flooding in various areas of the city. It was a cloud burst that caused flooding in various localities, now the situation is under control as teams were mobilized to respond the situation on war footing, said a senior official of the authority. He recalled that an unprecedented rainfall had occurred in Islamabad Rawalpindi in 2001, resulting in 620 mm of rain in a span of about 10 hours. On the contrary the federal capital received around 350 mm in three hours, he said adding it was a massive cloud burst since 2001 Rawalpindi flooding, but response by the authori-

ties was quick and water passed. "It was a challenge, a natural calamity, but we were on roads since 6 AM and clearing stuff wherever required," he said. Talking to media, he said the federal apex agency had tasked the Engineering Wing to supervise the drainage of water as results of rain spells. Similarly, he said various formations of the authority including Roads Directorate (North), Road Directorate (South), Markets and Road Maintenance Directorate and others remained busy in draining water accumulated due to heavy rain fall. All staff was on high alert as more rains are expected in coming days, while a flood cell has been established with the help of Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad and federal capital administration to swiftly respond any emergency situation, he added. The federal capital police was also deployed across the city to avoid any untoward situation. CDA management had removed wild shrubs and

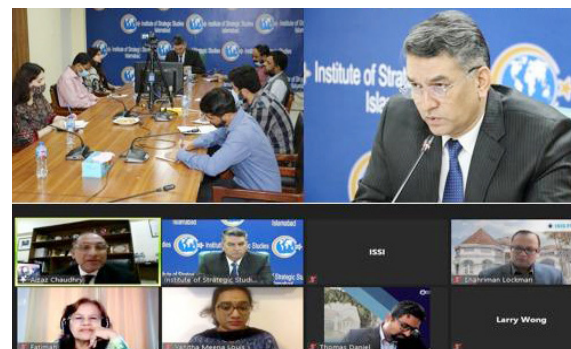
trimming of grass especially along the road drainage system which was affecting the proper drainage of rain water, he said. Meanwhile, at least two people, including a minor, were drowned when water entered homes in Islamabad's Sector E-11, confirmed an official of Islamabad administration. He said the administration rescued three children while one child and the mother died. The flood situation in Sector E-11 was created due to the poor performance of the management of a housing society, he added. "They do not have the machinery to deal with the flood situation," he said, adding that Islamabad's sector E-11 is not managed by the Capital Development Authority (CDA). CDA had managed to clear the accumulated water in sector E-11 without any support from anywhere. Meanwhile Islamabad administration has announced opening of Rawal Dam spill ways at 1500

hours as water level in Korang nullah has dropped in last two hours and blockages have been cleared by District Administration. Spill ways will be opening at minimum level to ensure smooth flow of water. All rescue teams are deployed along Korang Nullah to cater for any unforeseen situation. Meanwhile, Pakistan Army troops on Wednesday started relief and rescue efforts after heavy rainfall lashed out the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in order to assist the civil administration. Heavy rains have caused high water level in Nullah Lai in Rawalpindi and water accumulation in E-11 sector of the federal capital, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. The Army troops were busy in assisting civil administration in rescue and relief efforts, it said. It further said that the contingencies plans were in place to meet any flood situation.

ISSI-ISIS Malaysia hold bilateral dialogue on food security

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) held its first bilateral dialogue with the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) based in Malaysia today. The theme of the dialogue was Food Security Cooperation under the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) framework. ISSI side was led by Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry and ISIS Malaysia was led by Mr. Shahrman Lockman, Director of Chief Executive's Office ISIS. Meanwhile, distinguished panel of speakers included; Assistant Professor Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi; Professor Fatimah Mohamed Arshad Head Agriculture and Food Security Cluster, Academy of Professors of Malaysia (APM); Ms. Yanitha Meena Louis Researcher at ISIS; and Ms.



Ume Farwa, Research Associate ISSI. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Center (CPSC) at the Institute moderated the dialogue. Aizaz Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, in his opening remarks stated that earlier "OIC focused more on political issues but recently there has been much talk on non-traditional issues, and food security is one such topic which is a win win subject for discussion and dialogue". For ensuring food security, Ambassador Chaudhry stated that, "we need to increase yield, supplies and for that we need to invest more in R&D in the context of food sufficiency, crop production, climate change etc." Meanwhile, Mr. Shahrman Lockman, Director of Chief Executive's Office ISIS, speaking on behalf of Mr. Herizal Hazari Chief Executive said that "COVID-19 pandemic has been the worst nightmare for food

security in several conflict ridden OIC countries". And for OIC countries critical challenge is ensuring "supply chain stability". Earlier in his welcome remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir Director CPSC, said that sustainable food security is at the core of economic development of any country, and OIC-2025 Plan of Action strongly emphasizes on the development of agriculture sector to attain food security and enhance growth and prosperity across the Muslim world. This was followed by a working session where four learned experts made presentations and exchanged views on the theme. Speaking at the occasion, Ms. Ume Farwa, Research Associate, stated that "the most important source of food security is agriculture, yet in many countries agricultural sector is still not utilized to its potential.

Four years on, PML-N yet to submit party funding record in ECP

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Wednesday said that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) had failed to submit any financial record of its party funding to Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) despite passage of four years. Talking to the media persons outside the ECP, he said that the foreign funding case against both the PML-N and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was initiated in 2017, but the former kept 12 bank accounts secret, whereas the latter did not disclose seven bank so far. He challenged the PML-N to submit its party funding record in ECP so that the public could know how they used their party accounts either to launder money or to whitewash their black money. Transactions amounting to millions of rupees were done through both the opposition parties' bank accounts, he said, adding that those facts were needed to be brought to the fore as it was not only the requirement of Political Parties Order 2002 and Election Act 2017, but also of one of the apex court's judgment in Hanif Abbasi case. The minister called upon the ECP to allow its financial experts for perusal of all the financial documents of both the PML-N and PPP, submitted with scrutiny committee. - DNA

Court grants remand of accused in Noor's case

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: A Judicial Magistrate of Islamabad on Wednesday granted a further three-day physical remand of alleged murderer of former ambassador's daughter Noor Mukadam. The main accused Zahir Jaffer was produced before the court of judicial magistrate Shoaib Akhter amid foolproof security arrangements by the police after expiration of his remand period. Case Prosecutor Sajid Cheema informed the court that the police had collected CCTV footage of the incident and it required further physical remand of the accused to take him to Lahore for forensic of the said material. However, the defence lawyer opposed the request and adopted the stance that weapon and mobile had already been recovered from the accused.

Briefs

SUPARCO
to organise
poster
contest

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) has invited the children to participate in the "Poster Making Contest 2021" under the theme "I am an Astronaut" being arranged by the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum (APRSAF). The Asia-Pacific region, the Space Education Working Group (SEWG) of the APRSAF holds a poster contest every year for children of ages 8-11 years with the aim of nurturing creativity and interest in space among children. SUPARCO nationally coordinates the space education and awareness activities of APRSAF through providing the students of Pakistan an international forum to compete and participate. According to the SUPARCO, the contest is open for participation by children in Asia Pacific region at the age from 8 up to 11 years old as of 31 Dec 2021 (Date of Birth: from January 1st, 2010 to December 31st, 2013). A poster must be created by a single student and submit till the deadline August 06. All posters submitted for competition would be the property of SUPARCO and the winning posters shall be sent for international poster contest. The form available on the web link <https://www.sead.pk/announcement/detail/4087> should be filled in block letters and no column should be left empty.

COVID-19
claims 2 lives
in 24 hours

DNA

RAWALPINDI: As many as 141 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 28,684 in the district while two lost their battle of life against the deadly virus. As per the latest data released by the District Health Authority here Wednesday, the total infected cases included 26,471 from Rawalpindi and 2213 from other districts. The report said among the new cases, thirty-four reported from Rawal Town, thirty-seven from Potohar town, thirty-eight from Rawalpindi Cantt, five from Gujjar Khan, three from Kahutta, nine from Kotli Sattian, two from Kalar Syeda, six from Islamabad, three from AJK and one each from Murree, Taxila, Chakwal and KPK. "Presently 127 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 30 in Holy Family Hospital, 20 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 48 in Institute of Urology, 26 in Fauji Foundation Hospital, 2 in Bala Hospital and one in Attock hospital," the health authority report said. District Health Authority updated that so far 26,827 patients were discharged after recovery while 2105 were quarantined including 1396 at home and 709 in isolation centres. The report said that so far 1,103,216 people including 35,610 health workers and 1,067,606 senior citizens have jabbed themselves against the lethal coronavirus (COVID-19) across the district since the vaccination drive launched on March 10.

Media urged
not to publish
unconfirmed
news of
Noor Case

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Police (IP) Wednesday urged the media to avoid publishing unconfirmed news related to Noor Muqadam case as such acts could affect the investigation process. The IP spokesperson said some television channels and social media were involved in spreading unverified news having no truth in them. The spokesperson clarified that United States official had not met with accused Zahir Zakir or police while the parents of accused were being treated as per law. The police was performing its duties very well and all details would be shared with media after the completion of investigation, the spokesman added. - APP

Nigeria keen to boost trade relations with Pakistan

ICCI President said that Pakistan's electric motorbikes, tractors, batteries, agriculture equipment & machinery, marble & stones, gems & jewelry could also find a good market in Nigeria

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Muhammed Bello Abiye, High Commissioner of Nigeria to Pakistan said that his country was keen to promote trade and economic relations with Pakistan as both countries have great potential to promote bilateral trade in many areas for achieving mutually beneficial outcomes. He highlighted agriculture equipment, information technology, pharmaceuticals, tourism, textiles as potential areas of cooperation between Nigeria and Pakistan. He said this while interacting with the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry. The High Commissioner said that Nigeria was allowing business e-visa on arrival to Pakistani citizens and emphasized that Pakistan should also streamline its visa policy for Nigerian businessmen that would help in improving bilateral trade relations. He said that Pakistan and Nigeria should focus on direct flights and establish strong air links to boost trade and exports. He said that setting up banking channels between Pakistan and Nigeria was a key requirement to facilitate business transactions between the two countries. He said that Indian firms have made



significant presence in Nigeria and emphasized that Pakistan should also work on strategies to get better penetration in Nigerian market. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pak-Nigeria bilateral trade in 2020 was around USD 146 million, which was negligible given the huge

market size of both countries. He said that Pakistan could export many products to Nigeria including pharmaceuticals, textiles, rice, sports goods, IT products & services, surgical instruments, leather products, electronic gadgets & equipment, fruits & vegetables at competitive prices and urged that Nigeria should focus on increasing imports from Pakistan. He said that entre-

preneurs of Pakistan and Nigeria should explore setting up joint ventures and business partnerships in areas of interest to promote business relations.

ICCI President said that Pakistan's electric motorbikes, tractors, batteries, agriculture equipment & machinery, marble & stones, gems & jewelry could also find a good market in Nigeria. He said that both countries could promote cooperation in many other areas including exploration of oil & gas, mines & minerals. He stressed that Pakistan and Nigeria should facilitate the business community in holding trade fairs and exhibitions on reciprocal basis to exploit all untapped areas of trade promotion. He assured that ICCI would cooperate in connecting Nigerian businessmen with right partners in Pakistan.

Fatma Azim Senior Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Aslam Khokhar, Shaikat Hayat Khan and Muhammad Saeed said that dissemination of trade related information held key importance in strengthening mutual trade relations. They said that Nigeria and Pakistan shared a lot of commonalities that should be used to promote business relations. They said that the unique geographical locations of both countries provided them a good opportunity to strengthen trade and economic relations.

Stringent
measures
urged against
drug use

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Force Commanders Conference of Anti-Narcotics Force on Wednesday recommended stringent measures against drug use in educational institutions. The conference was held at Headquarters ANF Rawalpindi under the chairmanship of Director General ANF Major General Muhammad Arif Malik, said a news release. Force Commanders of all ANF Regional Directorates and Senior Staff Officers attended the conference.

Director General ANF directed to accelerate the ongoing nationwide drive for apprehension of elements involved in distribution of drug in educational institutions. He also directed to come hard on absconders and proclaimed offenders in drug offences, and emphasized on taking proactive and innovative steps to curb the drug trafficking and disruption of drug supply. Director General showed satisfaction on the overall performance of ANF. Progress on counter narcotics operations, international commitments, drug prevention, awareness programs, and treatment of drug addicts at ANF Model Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (MATRCs) was comprehensively reviewed.

Lai Nullah
experiences
high flood
flows: FFC

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that high flood flows were generated in Lai Nullah and water level at Kattarian Bridge was 21 feet at 0810 hours (Evacuation Level) and 17 feet at Gawal Mandi Bridge at 0910 hours (Evacuation Level) on Wednesday morning, owing to heavy rainfall in the twin cities of Islamabad-Rawalpindi.

According to daily FFC report on Wednesday, good monsoon rains are being experienced particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Punjab and AJ&K over the last 48 to 72 hours. At present, all main rivers of the Indus River System are flowing Normal with no riverine flood situation. Owing to healthier rainfall in the catchment areas of the Western Rivers (Indus, Jhelum & Chenab), appreciable increase in the storage of country's major reservoirs during last 2 weeks is being experienced.

The Combined Live Storage of major reservoirs (Tarbela, Mangla & Chashma) is 6,832 MAF (i.e. 50.54% of the total value of 13,516 MAF). According to Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, a fresh Monsoon Low has developed over Northern Bay of Bengal (India) with moderate moist currents from Arabian Sea & Bay of Bengal are penetrating into upper parts of the country up to 5000 feet. Yesterday's trough of Westerly wave over Northern parts of Afghanistan is now prevailing over Northern parts of Pakistan with seasonal low continues to persist over Northern Balochistan. - APP

IRSA releases
310,900
cusecs water

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Wednesday released 310,900 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 464,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1502.36 feet, which was 118.36 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 263,200 and 150,000 cusecs respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1183.60 feet, which was 145.60 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 50,600 and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 163,400, 151,500 and 56,200 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 42,300 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 75,300 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala.



ISLAMABAD: Pre-Medical students and their parents hold a protest against the non-extension of MD-CAD registration by the Pakistan Medical Council, they demanding an extension of the last date Atleast four days in the registration front of NPC. - DNA

European Union could
play a role on Kashmir

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Renowned British historian, Professor Ian Talbot, urged the Government of Pakistan to explore its relations with the European Union (EU) for facilitating a dialogue with India on Kashmir. He was speaking at a webinar organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) here on Wednesday. Prof Talbot cautioned, however, that any external actor could only facilitate a dialogue process for which there was a will on both sides. He spoke about the greater possibility of a role for the EU on Kashmir in the context of Brexit. He was of the view that the European Union could no longer pass on the responsibility related to issues like Kashmir to Great Britain and British external influence had diminished since Brexit. The author of A History of Modern South Asia and

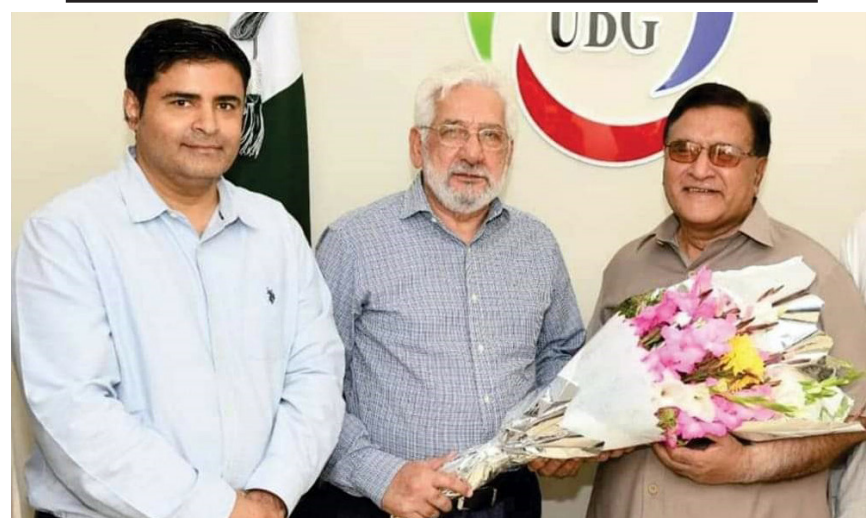
Pakistan: A New History regretted that the immense potential of South Asia was held hostage to India-Pakistan rivalry. He called Kashmir the core issue and flashpoint in the relations between India and Pakistan and, therefore, called for its resolution. He also termed it multidimensional and multi-layered and, thus, difficult to resolve. Prof Talbot urged greater involvement of Kashmiris in any dialogue process on the future of Kashmir and alleviation of their plight to help in easing some of the fixed stances on the Indian and Pakistani sides. "Any resolution has to be acceptable to the Kashmiris," he said. However, he expressed his concern over the lack of trust and political will in the two capitals to move past the status quo on Kashmir. Prof Talbot was of the view that the volatility in India-Pakistan relations had increased since the coming into power of the more belligerent BJP government in

India and some other developments in the region like the uncertainty arising out of the US withdrawal from Afghanistan, the Indo-Chinese border tensions, and the Indo-US partnership for containment of China. He urged the Government of Pakistan to take the initiative on resolving outstanding disputes with India, especially Kashmir. He called for what he called 'ring fencing' of the Kashmir dispute. Commenting on the 5 August 2019 actions of the Indian government on Kashmir, Prof Talbot was of the opinion that India had created an untenable situation for itself as well as the people of Kashmir with those changes. He called for creating conditions for India and Pakistan to work together on common challenges such as climate change, pandemic response, etc. "There has got to be opportunities for working together to get past the longstanding divides," he added.

Precaution is best way to avoid
hepatitis: Ahsan Bakhtawari

ISLAMABAD: President D Watson Lion Club Islamabad Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that if the patient is treated continuously with timely diagnosis of hepatitis, it is possible to eradicate it in a few weeks. Precaution is the best way to avoid hepatitis. The government's measures for the prevention of the disease are commendable. Citizens should cooperate with the health department officials who have come for vaccination. He expressed these views while addressing an awareness campaign and

free tests at the Islamabad D-Watson Lion Club on World Hepatitis Day. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that we must all work together to support the government's efforts to prevent hepatitis. With the provision of accurate information and awareness, we can prevent the further spread of hepatitis. Special programs for prevention and treatment are underway, in addition to door-to-door immunizations, vaccinations are being conducted in every hospital, to prevent the disease. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Former President FPCCI, Zubair Ahmad Malik felicitating Gen. Secretary UBG, Zafar Bakhtawari for creating a Central Secretariat. Former Vice President ICCI, Ahsan Bakhtawari is also with them. - DNA

Chairman NAB chairs EBM at NAB Headquarters

NAB Chairman Justice Javed Iqbal has said that bureau's priority is to take mega corruption cases especially sugar, flour, money laundering, fake accounts case, abuse of authority, and assets beyond means, illegal housing societies and modarba scams

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau's (NAB) Executive Board Meeting held at NAB Headquarters which was chaired by Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB. The meeting was attended by Mr. Hussain Asghar, Deputy Chairman NAB, Syed Asghar Haider, Prosecutor General Accountability (PGA), Director General Operations and senior officers of the NAB. It is a yearlong policy of NAB to share the details of EBM with the public which does not aim to hurt the feelings of anyone as all inquiries and investigations are initiated on the basis of alleged allegations, which are not final. NAB decides to go ahead with case after obtaining the point of views of complainants as well as accused person in accordance with law. NAB is a human friendly institution which strictly believes in ensuring self-respect of every person. The EBM authorized filing of cor-

ruption reference against Syed Tammam Hussain on the allegations of giving the advertisement of fake recruitments through illegal testing Company despite having no posts in the concerned departments on ground. He looted the people at large and also received huge money from candidates on the pretext of fake advertisements for fake jobs just for the sake of minting money illegally. The EBM authorized con-



ducting four inquiries against various personalities including Miftah Ismael, former finance minister and others, two inquiries against officers and officials of NHA and others, officers and officials of Irrigation and Revenue Department, Peshawar and others. The EBM was informed that in Malam Jabba case on the writ petition of Samon Group, the Honourable Peshawar High Court ordered for constitution

of a committee which was headed by Additional Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The EBM committee pointed some irregularities in tendering process. The EBM decided to refer irregularities to Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to have departmental action as per law after affording hearing opportunity to concerned officials with the condition that in case any restraining orders by the Court, the case could be taken up after approval of the competent authority.

NAB Chairman Justice Javed Iqbal has said that bureau's priority is to take mega corruption cases especially sugar, flour, money laundering, fake accounts case, abuse of authority, and assets beyond means, illegal housing societies and modarba scams. Bureau has recovered directly or indirectly Rs 533 billion from corrupt elements. Chairman said the bureau respects business community's contribution in progress and prosperity of the country. NAB Chairman has met business

community of Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad at NAB headquarters. Chairman has taken immediate measures to refer the cases of Income Tax, Sales tax and under invoicing to Federal Board of Revenue (FBR). NAB had established a special desk at NAB headquarters under the supervision of director for resolving the issues of business community, the leadership of business community thanked the chairman over this favor.

Chairman said bureaucracy is the backbone of the country. NAB not only respects bureaucracy but also honor their services. NAB Chairman Justice Javed Iqbal has served the country as acting Chief Justice of Pakistan, remained former Chief Justice Balochistan High Court and other institutions. He is well versed of the issues of bureaucracy. He addressed the provincial chief secretaries in Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and answered their questions after assuming the charge of chairman in year 2017.

Resurgent terror

THE security situation in Afghanistan has shown little signs of improvement as fighting between government forces and the Taliban continues. The militant group now claims to have taken control of a large majority of the country as government forces struggle to hold their ground. These struggles are evident as earlier this week 46 soldiers of the Afghan National Army (ANA) and Border Police were granted refuge and safe passage by the Pakistan Army. Reports revealed that a local ANA commander opposite Arundu, Chitral, sought help for the 46 soldiers as they were unable to hold their military posts along the Pak-Afghan border. Meanwhile, talks between the Afghan Taliban and the Ghani administration barely seemed to have progressed. While the Afghan government officials met with the Taliban in Doha on July 17, the meeting concluded without any substantial headway being made as promises were made of more talks in the future. This lack of momentum in talks is extremely concerning because the worsening situation is now posing serious threats to Afghanistan's neighbours. The 28th report of the UN Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team has stated that the TTP has about 6,000 trained fighters on the Afghan side of the border. The more alarming finding of the report is the fact that despite growing distrust between the TTP and the Afghan Taliban, relations between the two groups still exist for operational purposes. Apparently, a reunification took place in Afghanistan between the TTP and certain splinter groups in the period from December 2019 to August 2020. This moderation was reportedly facilitated by Al Qaeda which now maintains a presence in at least 15 Afghan provinces according to the UN report. The growing footprint of these groups and their alleged collaboration with the Afghan Taliban needs to be addressed by both regional and international stakeholders. The threats are particularly pronounced for Pakistan, especially considering Noor Wali Mehsud's (TTP leader) statement that their core objective is to fight the Pakistani security forces and gain control over the tribal regions. Pakistan should not be left to deal with this chaotic fallout on its own, and it is perhaps time to consider the formation of a regional security cooperative to counter this mutual threat.

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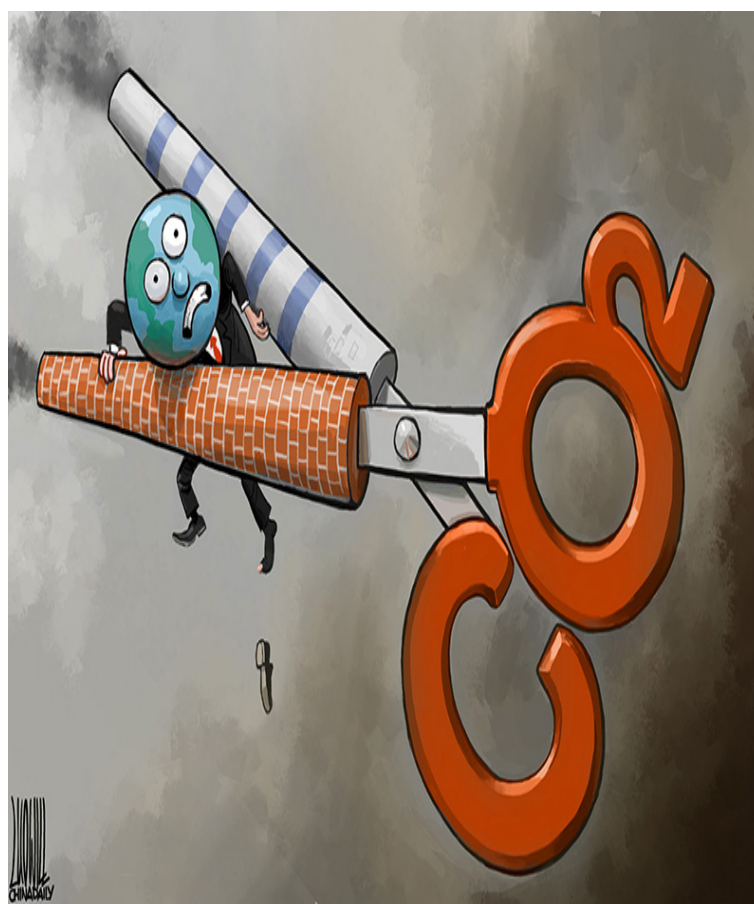
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ECP membership

THE Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) is an important component of the entire democratic machinery in the country. For its smooth functioning it is of vital importance that it remain well-oiled and complete with its full membership. Unfortunately, now a situation is emerging in which the ECP may remain incomplete for an inordinate period. Its members from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have retired on July 26, and their replacements the authorities have not announced yet. The law governing these issues stipulates that any new ECP members must take their positions within 45 days of the retirement of outgoing members. It is worth recalling that in the past too, the appointment of ECP members from Balochistan and Sindh took nearly a year – violating ECP rules. The constitution is clear about the composition of the ECP that must include a chief election commissioner and four members – one from each province. The delay in appointment to the ECP is not the only violation of the law. In 2016, three of the four ECP members assumed their offices in contravention of a constitutional provision that bars re-employment of judges of the superior judiciary within two years of their retirement. It is hoped that, this time around, the appointments do not violate any law. The prime minister – after consultation with the opposition leader – is responsible for sending three names for each position of an ECP member to a parliamentary panel for confirmation. When the opposition and the government fail to reach a consensus, the appointments get delayed, and this – at times – violates the law and hampers the work of the ECP. This practice has continued during the term of the present government when the appointment of the ECP members from Balochistan and Sindh consumed a year. There is a serious need to do away with minor squabbles while appointing ECP members and the government and the opposition must come together – setting aside their differences – and complete the process of ECP appointments as early as possible.

Power games: US Afghan policy and current scenario

Khalid Taimur Akram



Regional cooperation between Central and South Asia lies with peace in Afghanistan. The 21st century is an era of re-awakening and has many key determinants as it is the most revolutionary age in history. Countries are inclined towards cooperation and wider regional alignments through economic linkages in the multipolar worlds, pursuing their collective goals. CARs and Pakistan consider peace and stability in Afghanistan a pre-requisite for broader regional alignments

AFGHANISTAN, a land of breathtaking beauty, torn by ethnic, tribal and religious divisions, has been at the center of geopolitical contests for centuries. Almost two decades since America went to war in Afghanistan, it never provided a plausible explanation of its goals and how it planned to achieve them. As the Americas sought revenge for 9/11, what sentiment did they evoke? How many enemies did they spawn in the process of 'trying to help' Afghanistan? In retrospect, it is obvious that the invasion was an overreaction to the 9/11 terrorist attacks in which there was no direct involvement of the Taliban government or any Afghan national. Arguably, there were other ways in which Al-Qaeda could have been punished for its crimes. The Taliban leaders have famously said, "Americans have all the clocks, but we have all the time." It has been clear that now it is too late for the U.S. to destroy its own created "Frankenstein Monster" completely. In the global war against terrorism, U.S. was successful in dismantling and obliterating many of terrorist's offshoots and occupying Afghanistan, where the annihilation started.

In the present scenario, with the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan, the Taliban's footholds have been increasing while capturing the territories with little resistance from Afghan troops. This can wave strong feelings for Afghanistan Déjà vu moment in the air amidst surge of radicalization and extremist activities. The failure of the American military misadventure in Afghanistan despite the huge loss in blood and treasure raises significant questions about the rationale of the U.S. invasion of the country and the subsequent strategy pursued by it. Moreover, fundamental reasons contributing to the lack of progress in the intra-Afghan talks have been the myriad existing dichotomy among the Afghan factions and a reluctance to show flexibility to fulfill commitments. Both sides (the Afghan government and the Taliban), one who has to either give away authority or at least share it with others, and others who will likely to gain a foothold in the corridors of power with the chances of a complete take-over, have shown a high degree of intransigence in addressing the issues. Still, the two sides appear far apart on major issues such as future governance, women's rights etc. There are fears on both sides which plague the prospect of a

peaceful reconciliation among the warring groups.

Flawed U.S. Policies in Afghanistan:

Another important issue is the Afghan willingness to reach a consensus through intra-Afghan dialogue. Will that dialogue yield any consensus about the Afghan interim government followed by an election? But this will again not reflect the true interests of the Afghan people. America has failed to understand Afghanistan, and policies towards the country have not achieved positive results. The puppet regime in Afghanistan, Ashraf Ghani and top leadership in Kabul have been failed to deliver true emancipation to the Afghan people. The Kabul leadership and representatives are non-resident Afghans. They are not aware of actual needs and cannot advocate the true rights of the Afghan people. The future must be decided by the Afghan natives who have suffered a lot from this decades-long war, human rights violation, and civil unrest in the country.

US and NATO Troops Withdrawal:

Regional cooperation between Central and South Asia lies with peace in Afghanistan. The 21st century is an era of re-awakening and has many key determinants as it is the most revolutionary age in history. Countries are inclined towards cooperation and wider regional alignments through economic linkages in the multipolar worlds, pursuing their collective goals. Central Asian Republics (CARs) and Pakistan consider peace and stability in Afghanistan a pre-requisite for broader regional alignments. CARs and Pakistan have played a dynamic role in bringing peace to the region and resolving Afghan conflict. However, on the other side, the immorality of the U.S. invasion was aggravated by its flawed strategy pursued in the wake of its invasion. U.S. decided to pull out its troops when China has been connecting countries all over the world through its new narratives and exceptional Belt & Road Initiative (BRI). U.S. has neglected all the regional partners in the Afghan peace process and has been trying to sabotage China's rising influence in the region through its belligerent moves. U.S. has disturbed regional peace and stability as the Taliban are gaining potential grounds in Afghanistan with U.S. troops withdrawal. Now, this is a time that all regional players must be integrated, and the prerogative of plebiscite should be given to the Afghan people only. They have to decide their future and fate.

The Taliban Façade:

A resurgence of the Taliban insurgency could once again turn Afghanistan into a terrorist safe haven. Moreover, internal instability in Afghanistan could have larger regional security ramifications on Pakistan, Iran, CARs, Russia and adjacent countries. Afghanistan must stop blaming Pakistan for its civil unrest and appreciate Pakistan's efforts and potential role in durable and inclusive peace negotiating process. On the flip side, the Taliban can come up as a political force in the power game. However, they must stop bloodshed and terrorism on Afghan soil. It can be anticipated that days for the Kabul regime are numbered as the Taliban are not asking for a piece of land but full control over the country. They consider that the US/NATO and Kabul regime intend to win a war on the table, which they have lost on grounds. Obviously, without reaching a consensus on a new political setup, there will be no end to the civil unrest in Afghanistan even after the troop's withdrawal.

Despite the foreign invasion, the Taliban remained the de jure government in Afghanistan. They believe their de facto status will be revived and that it will only be a step away once the U.S. troops are gone. It has been anticipated that the Taliban take-over is no guarantee that peace would result. As a matter of fact, this could signal the advent of a fresh wave of hostility and radicalization. Warfare is still going on, and one cannot predict permanent circumstances. Afghanistan hovers between the two mindsets. The one in view of negotiated settlement exclusively on its terms, and the other asserting both its de jure and de facto legitimacy to rule the country. It is the fusion of clashes among the U.S., the Taliban and the Afghan government. It is the clash of ultimate power and resilience, clash of ego, and the quest for maintaining hegemony by the Taliban while achieving their vicious vested interests. The international community will not allow any terrorist group to operate from the Afghan territory against any other country. If the Taliban gain their influence over Kabul, it will not be possible for the international community to recognize such a radical regime under the auspice of international law. Against this backdrop, the people of Afghanistan may continue to suffer and bear the horrific outcomes of this brutal conflict.

To stop mass atrocities, follow the money

Mark Kersten



That is likewise the promise of linking the investigation and prosecution of mass atrocities with transnational organised crimes. Disrupting illicit trade networks and prosecuting perpetrators of transnational crimes would neuter the ability of genocidal regimes, terrorist organisations and rebel groups to fund their violence, thereby deterring atrocities

MASS atrocities don't come cheap. A common misconception is that everything must fail in order for international crimes – war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide – to be perpetrated against civilian populations. On the contrary, many things need to align for governments, terrorists, or rebel groups to commit atrocities. They need persuasive politics, organised institutions prepared to follow orders, and buy-in from key constituencies. And they need money – lots of it. After another year in which the demand for accountability for international crimes far outweighed the supply of justice, this July 17 – International Justice Day – is a useful time to highlight the importance of tackling the funding of atrocity perpetrators. One way to do so is to connect the prosecution of mass atrocities with the lucrative, transnational crimes that fuel them.

It is hard, if not impossible, to think of a conflict since the end of World War II where mass atrocities were perpetrated but in which transnational organised crimes played no role. The commission of transnational crimes, such as human and drug trafficking, money laundering, the illicit trade of oil, ivory and antiquities, and so on, has contributed mightily to filling the coffers of war criminals, terrorists, and genocidaires. Consider some examples. The notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group which operates in swaths of Central Africa, has committed a litany of war crimes and crimes against humanity since its war with the government of Uganda erupted in the mid-1980s. In recent years, the LRA has been able to survive and continue its abduction of children to fight in its ranks because of its illegal trafficking of ivory through Sudan.

In Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) has been accused of every international crime on the books, including the attempted genocide of the Yazidi population. ISIL's economy depended on transnational organised crimes, including the illicit sale of oil through Turkey and on to international markets. While its destruction of

culturally protected sites received significant media attention, ISIL also preserved some antiquities in order to sell them, illegally, on black markets. Such transnational crimes permitted ISIL to survive – and terrorise civilians – for as long as it did. On rare occasions, the link between illicit and lucrative crimes and mass atrocities has received attention from courts. In 2012, former Liberian President Charles Taylor was convicted and sentenced to 50 years in jail for aiding and abetting war crimes and crimes against humanity in Sierra Leone. Central to his conviction was Taylor's involvement in the trade of "conflict diamonds" in order to fund the rebel groups that terrorised Sierra Leonean civilians. More recently, the Kosovo Specialist Chambers and Specialist Prosecutor's Office was established, with many hoping it will shed new light on whether the Kosovo Liberation Army engaged in human organ trafficking following its war and alleged counter-ethnic cleansing campaign against Serbia in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

All of these examples illustrate that the very same perpetrators who commit mass atrocities are also and simultaneously involved in the commission of money-making transnational organised crimes. Given how complex and difficult it is to effectuate meaningful accountability for mass atrocities, as well as the glacial pace of international criminal justice, it is high time to consider placing a greater emphasis on investigating perpetrators of international crimes for their involvement in illicit trade networks. More can and should be done to destabilise the funding of perpetrators of mass atrocities. This would require a concerted effort on the part of state institutions as well as international organisations, like the International Criminal Court (ICC), to link the investigation of transnational organised crimes and international crimes. There is some progress on this front, with countries like Uganda establishing special divisions capable of investigating both crime sets. Others have promised to do

the same. The former ICC Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda raised the spectre of investigating human trafficking in Libya as a possible crime against humanity, although there is no evidence of concrete action on the matter to date.

One promising route would be to ensure that investigators examining mass atrocities are better equipped to collect evidence of transnational organised crimes. Where they are unable to use that evidence to build their own cases, they should share it with states and institutions who are able to do so and who can thus disrupt illicit networks. States should likewise explore the possibility of setting up a permanent international tribunal with the specific mandate of tackling transnational organised crimes, perhaps in conjunction with efforts to create an international anti-corruption court. Every year, transnational organised crime generates hundreds of billions of dollars. But it is not just costly in dollars and cents. It costs human lives. Tackling such illicit crime could thus help protect civilians from violence and atrocity. It has done so before. Few gangsters were as notorious in the early 20th century as Al Capone. Widely believed to have been responsible for numerous murders and violent crimes, Capone was ultimately convicted for tax evasion. Incarcerating "Scarface" for a crime he could more easily be prosecuted for meant that he was off the streets and no longer a direct danger to society. In other words, putting Capone behind bars for tax evasion deterred his ability to commit violent crimes in the future.

That is likewise the promise of linking the investigation and prosecution of mass atrocities with transnational organised crimes. Disrupting illicit trade networks and prosecuting perpetrators of transnational crimes would neuter the ability of genocidal regimes, terrorist organisations and rebel groups to fund their violence, thereby deterring atrocities. Follow the money and perhaps the perpetrators of atrocities around the world will meet their match.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs



Pos.	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Japan	13	4	5	22
2	China	12	6	9	27
3	USA	11	11	9	31
4	Russia	7	10	6	23
5	Australia	6	1	9	16

Pakistan reports over 4000 cases

FROM PAGE 01
the hospitals and five of them perished in their respective quarantines or homes, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCO). Most of the deaths occurred in Sindh followed by Punjab. Out of the total 44 deaths occurred, 20 of them died under treatment on ventilators. There were 2,898 Covid infected patients under treatment in critical condition with 176 of them admitted during past 24 hours in various Covid dedicated health-care facilities of the country. The National Covid positivity ratio during past 24 hours was recorded 7.8 percent. The Covid positivity ratio is the percentage of actual positive cases appearing in every 100 tests performed to identify infected individuals. The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major cities including Islamabad 34%, Lahore 20%, Peshawar 17% and Karachi 17%. Some 52,291 tests were conducted across the country on Tuesday, including 18,737 in Sindh, 18,029 in Punjab, 8,600 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 3,404 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 1,878 in Balochistan, 782 in GB, and 861 in AJK.

Taliban visits China to gain government support

FROM PAGE 01
"Afghanistan is an important military power and China is ready to play a constructive role in peace and reconciliation process of Afghanistan," Wang Yi said. During the talks, Wang Yi hoped that the relevant sides in Afghanistan could go ahead with peace talks, follow an inclusive policy. The relevant factions and groups in Afghanistan should implement the principle of Afghan-owned and Afghan-led approach and strive for substantive outcomes at an early date and build a political architecture suited to its own national conditions, he added. He expressed the hope that Taliban could draw a clear line between themselves and the ETIM, which would create a favourable condition to eradicating terrorism. Mullah Baradar expressed appreciation to the Chinese side and said China was a trustworthy friend. The head of Afghan Taliban delegation appreciated China's fair and positive role in the reconciliation process in Afghanistan and said Afghanistan had the sincerity in reaching reconciliation and would like to build architecture that was acceptable to all factions. He said Afghanistan would ensure rights of women and children, and added, "The Afghan people will not allow anyone to use the territory to do things that would undermine interests of its people." He said Afghanistan would like to have friendly ties with its neighbours and the Afghan Taliban would like to have more partners in its future development. "The Afghan Taliban would also create an enabling environment for incoming investment and would make relevant efforts in this regard," he added. On same day, China's Assistant Foreign Minister Wu Jianguo also held talks with Baradar and his delegation. They exchanged views on issues of common concern and improve mutual understanding and consensus. The Taliban visit to China was likely to further cement the insurgent group's recognition on the international stage at a sensitive time even as violence increases in Afghanistan. The militants have a political office in Qatar where peace talks are taking place and this month sent representatives to Iran where they had meetings with an Afghan government delegation.

PNS Zulfiqar visits Russia, reaffirms cooperation

The Pakistan Navy spokesman added that the visit of the Pakistani ship would further enhance bilateral maritime cooperation

DNA

SAINT PETERSBURG: Pakistan Navy ship PNS Zulfiqar returned to operational deployment after a successful visit to Saint Petersburg Russia participated in the 325th Russian Navy Day Parade. According to the DGPR Navy, during the ship stay, Mission Cdr & CO called on Cdr Leningrad Naval Base & Deputy Governor External Relations. During the meetings, matters of mutual interest were discussed. The dignitaries expressed goodwill & warmth for PN and thanked for its participation in the Russian Navy Day Parade. Mission Cdr also conveyed well wishes from CNS Adm Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi for the people of Russia. Earlier, Pakistan Navy ship PNS Zulfiqar has reached Russia as part of its overseas deployment (OSD) and participated in a bilateral naval exercise.



The spokesman of the Pakistan Navy said that on arrival at the Russian port of St. Petersburg, the host navy and Pakistani diplomatic officials received the ship of the Pakistan Navy. Senior naval officials, diplomats and local dignitaries, the Pakistani community were also present on the occasion.

A spokesman for the Pakistan Navy said that the audience was briefed on the role of the Pakistan Navy in maritime security in the region and that PNS Zulfiqar would also participate in Russia's Navy Day Parade. The Pakistan Navy spokesman added that the visit of the Pakistani ship would further enhance bilateral maritime cooperation.

Earlier on July 15, a Pakistan navy ship visited Portsmouth, UK as part of OSD. Upon arrival at the port, the ship was warmly welcomed by host officials. During the port stay, Mission Cdr along with CO called on Cdr Naval Base Portsmouth. During the interaction, matters of mutual interest were discussed. Pakistan Navy ship also conducted 3rd PN-RN Bilateral Naval Ex WHITE STAR-III with Royal Navy Ship off Portsmouth. Exercise encompassed advanced Maritime manoeuvre and was aimed to enhance interoperability & strengthen bilateral relations b/w two navies.

Andy Murray, Joe Salisbury out, Novak Djokovic wins



SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: Andy Murray's bid for an Olympic gold at a third successive Games ended as he and Joe Salisbury lost in the men's doubles quarter-finals in Tokyo. The British pair lost 4-6 (7-2) 10-7 against Croatia's Marin Cilic and Ivan Dodig in the quarter-finals. Murray, 34, and Salisbury, a doubles specialist who reached a career-high ranking of three last year, were playing their first event together. Liam Broady was the final Briton to fall after losing

in the singles. The 27-year-old was a late call-up to the British squad after Dan Evans tested positive for coronavirus, and marked his Olympic debut with two victories including a fine win over Wimbledon semi-finalist Hubert Hurkacz in the second round. However, beating France's Jeremy Chardy proved a step too far and he lost 7-6 (7-3) 4-6 6-1 in hot conditions at the Ariake Tennis Centre. Serbia's world number one Novak Djokovic also moved into the quarter-finals and praised a decision by the International Tennis Fed-

eration (ITF) to move the start of play to 3pm local time from Thursday. Djokovic had been among the players to complain about the stifling heat and humidity, with matches having begun at 11am. Russian second seed Daniil Medvedev had trouble with the conditions in his win over Italian Fabio Fognini. The 25-year-old took a medical timeout on court and called the trainer on two other occasions, and chair umpire Carlos Ramos asked Medvedev if he was all right during the second set. "I'm fine. I can finish the match but I can die. If I die will the ITF take responsibility?" Medvedev replied. Murray, who won the singles at London 2012 and Rio 2016, pulled out of the individual event with a minor thigh strain to focus on the doubles. The three-time Grand Slam singles champion forged an impressive partnership with 29-year-old Salisbury, who won his maiden major doubles title at last year's Australian Open. But they could not build on a lead of a set and a break as

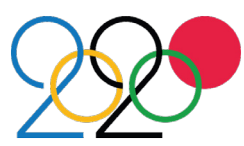
Cilic and Dodig turned the match around. "I don't know if I'll get the opportunity to play again," said Murray. "I've loved every minute of playing in the Olympics. I wished today could have gone differently. I had another chance with Joe to win a medal. We were so close, and that's what's disappointing. I would like to have done some stuff differently in the match to try to help out more. Very disappointed." The British pair broke serve in the first game of the match, maintaining that advantage as Salisbury clinched the opening set with an instinctive volley on a Murray service game. Murray and Salisbury broke again for 3-2 in the second set and consolidated the advantage for 4-2, only to lose serve for 4-4 and see their opponents win the tie-break to force a decider. Momentum stayed with Cilic and Dodig in the first-to-10 match tie-break, with the Croats taking the second of three match points when Salisbury volleyed long.



US wins gold of Olympic 3x3 women's basketball

TOKYO: The expected Olympic showdown between the top two women's volleyball teams in the world turned out to be a one-sided affair. The U.S. women swept defending gold medalist China 29-27, 25-22, 25-21 on Tuesday in a pool-play match that left the Americans at the top of Pool B and the Chinese seeking to win their first set of the tournament after two straight sweeps to open the Games. "When we play them, it's always a great competition," U.S. captain Jordan Larson said. "But ultimately, I thought we controlled what we could on our side of the net. I think it put them in a lot of trouble. Really proud of our team for imposing ourselves on them. But we know that the history of China and how they were in Rio, you just never know what could come." China was also swept by Turkey in the opener but showed five years ago in Rio de Janeiro how little the pool-play matches can mean after losing three of five of them before rallying to win gold. That's similar to what happened in London in 2012 when Brazil finished fourth in its pool before winning gold, as U.S. coach Karch Kiraly was quick to point out. "It's not unusual for a team to struggle in preliminary and then catch fire with a key win in the quarterfinals," he said. "I wouldn't count China out at all right now. They don't want to be down 2-0, but that doesn't mean they're not capable of doing major damage in this tournament." — DNA

Olympics host Tokyo sees record daily virus cases



AGENCIES

TOKYO: Host of the world's biggest games, Olympics 2020, Tokyo on Wednesday reported the biggest daily jump in COVID-19 cases. The number of virus cases crossed 3,000 today, Japanese government sources told Tokyo-based Kyodo News. It is the first time the capital recorded such a high number of daily infections since the coronavirus outbreak. The all-time high cases follow 2,848 coronavirus infections on Tuesday de-

spite a state of emergency in Tokyo and the surrounding provinces to stem the spread of the infections. The rise in infections comes at a time when Tokyo is hosting Olympics and Paralympics under strict COVID-19 measures since last weekend. However, the infection is also spreading among the officials and participants. At least 16 more cases were reported among the Olympic staff on Wednesday, but none of them were the athletes. Until today, 169 such cases have been reported. "We want to make a commitment to keep hosting a safe and secure games until the end," Masanori Takaya, a spokesman for the organizing committee, told a news conference.



TOKYO: Australian hockey player vies with Japanese layer in a match during Olympics-2020. — Agencies

Son retrieves bodies of Sadpara, two others

"I am thankful to whole nation for their love and prayers. I request everyone at K2 not to share any photo/video of the bodies, said Sajid Ali Sadpara

DNA

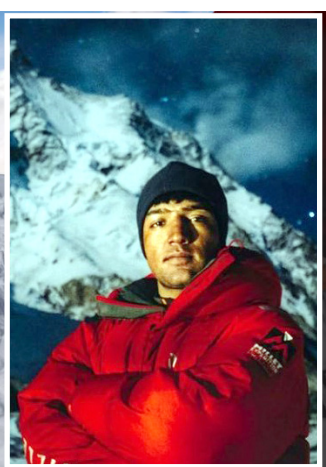
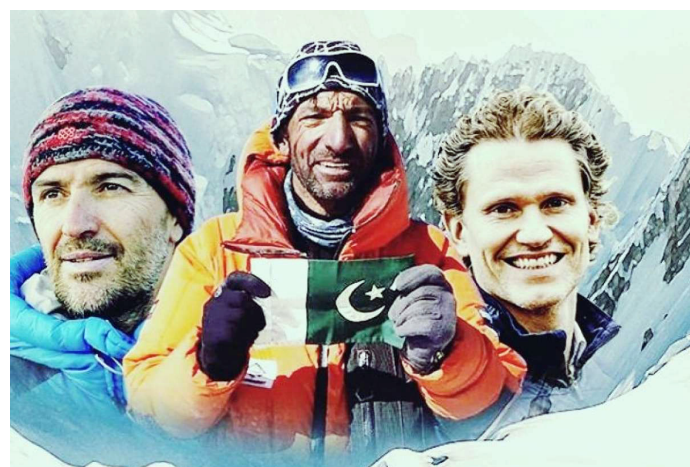
ISLAMABAD: Sajid Ali Sadpara, the son of legendary Mohammad Ali Sadpara, has retrieved the bodies of three missing climbers including his father, who went missing while attempting to summit K2 in February this year. The bodies were spotted at the Base Camp of K2 on Monday, a development confirmed by Gilgit-Baltistan Information Minister Fatehullah Khan on Tuesday.

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 had never been scaled in winter until a Nepalese team accomplished the feat less than a month before the Sadpara expedition.

Sajid, who was accompanying the three, had to abandon his summit bid after his oxygen regulator malfunctioned and he returned to camp three. Bad weather thwarted multiple attempts to search for the missing climbers, though the efforts continued. "Sajid Sadpara has fulfilled his duty as son of AliSadpara. He has secured the body of our hero at C-4. He single handedly not only retrieved the body from a dangerous slope but also managed to bring it from bottleneck to C-4.

An Argentinian climber has only helped him K2Search," an official Twitter account of Team Ali Sadpara said on Wednesday. In another tweet, it said that Sajid offered Fateha and recited verses of the Holy Quran as per the wishes of his mother. Team Ali Sadpara further said that the climbers had summited K2 in winters and were frozen to death due to a storm on their way back. Sajid said that retrieving the bodies was challenging as they were at a very "technical and dangerous"

slope. "I am securing bodies of fallen climbers to a safe place and instant retrieval from above bottleneck is not possible without endangering many lives," he had said. He thanked the entire nation for love and prayers, saying that the entire ordeal was very painful for his family and friends. "I am thankful to whole nation for their love and prayers. I request everyone at K2 not to share any photo/video of the bodies, as it's very painful for all families and friends," he further wrote.



Shi breaks world record to win gold in 73kg

DNA

TOKYO: China's Shi Zhiyong broke his own world record to win the men's 73kg weightlifting event at the Olympics on Wednesday and claim a gold medal for the second Games in a row. The 27-year-old lifted a combined 364 kg to better his own world record of 363 kg he set at the 2019 world championships. Shi remained strong throughout the competition, breaking the Olympic record in the snatch with his second lift and again with his third. Shi, gold medalist at the 2016 Olympics in the 69 kg category, also broke the Olympic record for the clean and jerk on his first attempt. Venezuela's Julio Ruben Mayora Pernia won the silver medal and Indonesia's Rahmat Erwin Abdullah the bronze.

United agree deal to sign Varane

DNA

LONDON: Manchester United have agreed a deal with Real Madrid to sign France centre-back Raphael Varane, the Premier League giants announced Tuesday. "Manchester United is delighted to announce the club has reached agreement with Real Madrid for the transfer of French international defender and World Cup winner, Raphael Varane, subject to a medical and to player terms being finalised," said a club statement. It is not expected, however, that Varane will be able to undergo a medical until next week because of current UK coronavirus restrictions. No fee has been disclosed but British media reported value the deal at £34 million (\$47 million) rising to £48 million with add-ons. The 28-year-old Varane, a 2018 World Cup winner, has one season left on his contract at the Santiago Bernabeu. He moved from French club Lens to Madrid in 2011 and has since made 360 appearances across all competitions for Madrid, winning 18 major honours – including four Champions League titles. In a statement, Madrid – confirming they had agreed a fee with United – acknowledged Varane's time in the Spanish capital by saying: "Our club thanks the player for his professionalism and exemplary conduct throughout his ten seasons representing our colours, during which time he has won 18 titles: 4 Champions Leagues, 4 Club World Cups, 3 European Super Cups, 3 La Liga titles, 1 Copa del Rey and 3 Spanish Super Cups.

Cuba wins first medal at Tokyo Olympics

DNA

TOKYO: Cuba won its first medal at the Tokyo Olympic Games on Tuesday, with 80kg taekwondo athlete Rafael Alba defeating Sun Hongyi from China to take the bronze medal. In a low-scoring 5-4 bout, the complex fight was decided in the last second of regulation time, when Alba achieved the point that led him to the podium. "I am very happy and grateful to win this medal," he said. "The Cuban people were expecting this victory." Alba added that he appreciated the support given by the rest of the members of the Cuban Olympic delegation and his relatives and friends on the island. "We will continue gaining Olympic medals. I have no doubt about it," he added. In the coming days, Mijain Lopez (Greco-Roman wrestling), Idalys Ortiz (judo) and Julio Cesar La Cruz (boxing) are expected to compete for gold medals in their respective sports. Ariel Sainz, vice president of Cuba's Institute of Sports, Physical Education and Recreation, said that the island's Olympic delegation would continue working hard to meet its goals. "With a small delegation, we hope for a dignified and efficient performance," he said. Cuba has amassed 226 medals since its debut at the 1900 Paris Games, ranking first among Latin American and Caribbean countries in Olympic history. With some five gold medals predicted to be won, the island expects to place among the top 20 in the overall medal count at the Tokyo Olympics.

Briefs

S. Korea sees highest daily Covid cases

ANKARA: South Korea on Wednesday reported 1,896 new cases, the highest daily spike since the coronavirus outbreak in the Asian country in January 2020.

The latest update by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency showed that the record one-day count on Tuesday raised the nationwide caseload to 193,427 as the country battles the fourth wave of the outbreak.

The new cases have been growing in South Korea since July 7, when authorities reported the highly transmissible Delta variant of the coronavirus, first identified in India, was spreading.

With four more fatalities over the past day, the death toll also rose to 2,083.

According to Yonhap News Agency, the Korean health authorities fear that the virus curve may not have reached its peak yet, as the Delta variant is becoming the dominant strain in the country.

To control the spread of the virus, the government has extended the highest distancing measures of Level 4 in the capital Seoul and surrounding areas for another two weeks till Aug. 8.

Under the level 4 restrictions, gatherings of more than two people after 6 p.m. are banned, while restaurants and cafes are allowed to serve until 10 p.m. and nightclubs and other entertainment venues are banned. — APP

Bangladesh to launch vaccination for Rohingya

DHAKA: Bangladesh will launch a COVID-19 vaccination campaign for Rohingya in the refugee camps of Cox's Bazar district amid calls for vaccinating the persecuted people.

Rohingya refugees aged 55 and above will get vaccinated initially, and the age limit will gradually be lowered with the arrival of more vaccines from various sources.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen told reporters in Dhaka late Wednesday.

"The refugees will get vaccinated in a similar arrangement and with the same type of vaccines for Bangladeshi citizens of Cox's Bazar, and there will be no discrimination between local people and Rohingya," said Momen. The decision was made in a meeting with the Health Ministry to ensure the health safety of the refugees, he added.

There is regular communication between the refugees and the host community, so it is important to vaccinate the Rohingya to ensure the safety of the locals, he continued. Momen said the government will cover the vaccination of the refugees from "what we have [vaccines for its citizens], and no discrimination will be made in this case."

He noted, however, that there are some difficulties in preserving vaccines they get through the COVAX facility, with Chinese Sinopharm vaccines easier to maintain under cold chain management. — APP

2 Armenians sentenced for 15 years

DNA

BAKU: Baku Grave Crimes Court today sentenced two Armenians to 15-year imprisonment each for espionage against Azerbaijan. Davit Davtyan and Gevorg Sujyan were tried on charges of illegal weapon possession, espionage, formation of illegal armed group and illegal border crossing. The two will be deported from Azerbaijan after serving their prison term.

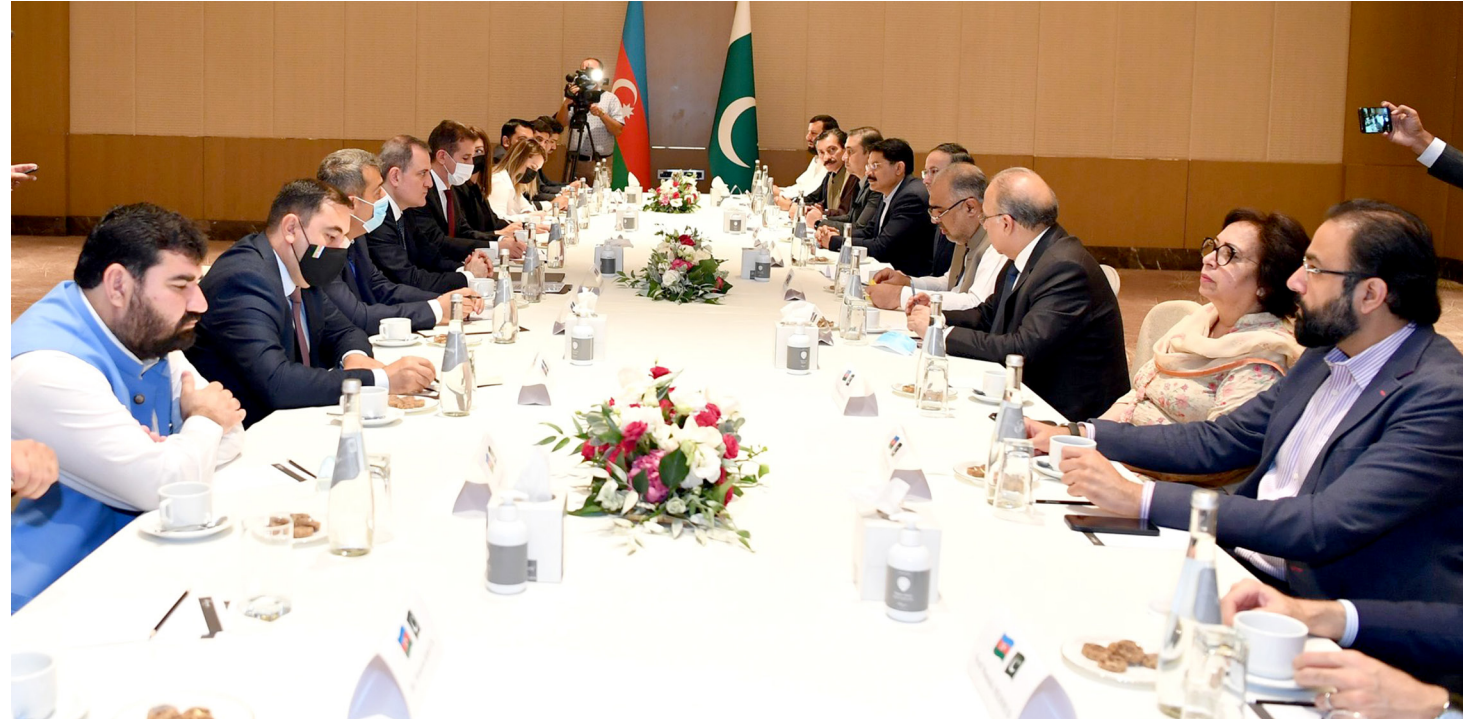
Earlier today, the prosecutor demanded a prison term of 16 years for the two defendants. Defendants Gevorg Sujyan and Davit Davtyan spoke during the trial and apologized for their crimes.

As stated in the indictment, Davtyan and Sujyan, having entered into a conspiracy, illegally crossed the state border of Azerbaijan, collected information of a military nature and handed it over to the special services of Armenia, having committed espionage.

Speaker NA thanks Azerbaijan for supporting on Kashmir issue

DNA

BAKU: Speaker of National Assembly congratulates the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan on the victory in the 44 Day patriotic war, in the meeting held at the Fairmount Hotel, on Wednesday. The Speaker extended his good wishes to both the President and Prime Minister of Azerbaijan, along with sharing the highlights of the successful First Trilateral Speakers' Conference with the Foreign Minister. In the meeting the Speaker briefed the Foreign Minister Bayramov on the situation of the Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and thanked for the unflinching support of Azerbaijan to Pakistan on this international dispute. He also praised Azerbaijan on its public stance for standing with Pakistan at multilateral fora in raising its voice against the systematic human rights violations in the Indian Occupied Jammu & Kashmir. The expansion of bilateral ties were discussed where it was highlighted that the



engagement in the areas of economy and trade, health, education, climate change and interaction between people needs to be intensified. The Speaker noted that travel for business and students should be facilitated and prioritized, the Foreign Minister was encouraged to facilitate the entry of Pakistani students that are already enrolled in the various universities of Azerbaijan. The Foreign Minister was

also briefed on the Pakistan's initiative to deal with Climate Change by the MNA Ms. Munazza Hassan. Foreign Minister Bayramov congratulated the Speaker upon his partici-

pation in the conference and also extended his gratitude to Pakistan for supporting Azerbaijan in regards to territorial integrity. Foreign Minister Bayramov briefed the Pakistani delegation regard-

ing his visit to Pakistan in January this year where the Two Foreign Minister agreed upon expanding the bilateral ties concerning trade, economy, culture and interaction between people.

ANKARA: Turkey has administered over 68.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines since it launched a mass vaccination campaign in January, according to figures released on Wednesday.

Morocco extends state of health emergency

RABAT: Morocco on Wednesday extended for a month its state of health emergency imposed among measures to fight the novel coronavirus.

In a statement, the government of the North African nation said the emergency status, which was supposed to end on Aug. 10 would continue until Sept. 10.

Morocco has confirmed 9,638 coronavirus-related deaths and 588,448 cases of the disease, while 549,116 people have so far recovered, according to Moroccan Health Ministry. More than 22 million people have gotten a COVID-19 vaccine in the country of approximately 36 million, including nearly 10 million who received the full two doses. — APP

Turkey administers over 68.7M Covid vaccine

ANKARA: Turkey has administered over 68.7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines since it launched a mass vaccination campaign in January, according to figures released on Wednesday.

The country continues its intensive vaccination campaign to curb the virus' spread, as everyone 18 and over is eligible for vaccine shots.

According to Health Ministry data, nearly 40 million people have gotten their first dose, while over 24.5 million have received their second jabs as well.

Meanwhile, over 1.2 million vaccine doses have been administered in the last 24 hours, the figures showed. The ministry also confirmed 19,761 new infections and 51 coronavirus-related deaths in the last 24 hours, while as many as 7,108 more patients recovered.

Amid a nationwide drop in cases and an expedited vaccination drive, Turkey entered a new normalization phase on July 1, lifting almost all virus-related restrictions.

However, seeking to limit the spread of the virus's Delta variant, the country suspended flights from India, and required arrivals from the UK, Iran, Egypt, and Singapore to have negative COVID-19 test results taken within 72 hours prior.

Since December 2019, the pandemic has claimed over 4.17 million lives in 192 countries and regions, with nearly 195 million cases reported, according to the US' Johns Hopkins University. — APP

Azerbaijan, Russia agree on seasonal gas supplies

BAKU: Azerbaijan and Russia have agreed to cooperate in the seasonal supply of natural gas, a local media source has reported.

The corresponding contract was signed between the Azercontract and Gazprom group, with the term of the agreement till 2023.

The contract provides for the supply of gas from Azerbaijan to Russia in the summer season and the supply of similar volumes of gas from Russia to Azerbaijan in the winter season. It was noted that the supply volumes will depend on the level of gas production and consumption in Azerbaijan during the summer months.

Moreover, technical implementation of the agreement - receiving and sending the corresponding volumes of gas from Azerbaijan, will be carried out by the State Oil Company (SOCAR).

It was noted that the contract will allow the parties to optimally use their oil and gas infrastructure. "Against the background of the rapid growth of gas production in the country, Azerbaijan gets an opportunity to create additional volumes of its own gas for the winter, when the level of domestic consumption increases significantly," the information reads.

It should be noted that the trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Russia amounted to \$2.6 billion in 2020, making Russia Azerbaijan's third-largest partner. In addition, the trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$1.3 billion in the first half of 2021. — APP

Pakistan, Belarus agree to boost bilateral relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Belarus on Wednesday expressed satisfaction over their growing bilateral cooperation and agreed to maintain the momentum in all fields of mutual interest. The views were agreed upon during meeting of Pakistan's Additional Secretary (Europe), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Tariq with Foreign Minister of Belarus Vladimir Makei, in Minsk. The Additional Secretary was in Minsk for the 5th round of Bilateral Political Consultations with the Be-

larussian side, the Foreign Office said.

The Additional Secretary briefed the Belarusian Foreign Minister on deliberations held during the Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) held on 27 July 2021. He underscored the commitment of Pakistan's leadership to further broaden relations with Belarus in diverse areas including trade and investment, industry, defence, agriculture, education, healthcare, and pharmaceuticals. The Additional Secretary conveyed an invitation by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi to the Belarusian foreign minister to visit Pakistan.



MINSK: Additional Secretary (Europe), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Tariq, called on the Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei. — DNA

UN-AMID in final shutdown phase

NEW YORK: Practically all peacekeepers and staff, including the Pakistani contingent, have now left the hybrid UN-African Union Mission in Darfur (UN-AMID), in line with its drawdown plan, a senior UN official has told the Security Council.

Atul Khare, UN Under-Secretary-General for Operational Support, updated the 15-member Council on Tuesday about progress towards the mission's closure and final liquidation, following the end of its mandate last December after 13 years protecting civilians uprooted by conflict.

Nearly 6,000 troops and police were repatriated from the Sudanese province ahead of the drawdown deadline of 30 June, and nearly 1,200 civilian staff were separated from the mission. Pakistan had 1,075 personnel, the second largest after Rwanda.

The UN General Assembly recently approved nearly \$80 million to support final closure no later than 30 June 2022.

Khare was in Sudan earlier this month, where he met with senior officials as part of efforts to ensure progress remains on track. "All leaders shared their sat-

isfaction at the successful achievement of the expedited timelines and discussed ways to resolve outstanding issues related to the liquidation and wider transition implications," he said. Only a 360-strong Guard Unit remains at UNAMID to protect staff working on the exit, and the remaining UN assets, though primary responsibility for security rests with the Sudanese Government.

Remaining UN assets in Darfur are being disposed of in two phases, the first of which is already underway. The mission has so far handed over some \$41 million in facilities and equipment to local authorities, but 10 of the 14 sites reportedly have suffered "varying degrees of destruction and theft", which Khare called a major loss for local communities.

"I note that although authorities have made commitments to investigate these incidents, various Sudanese interlocutors have nevertheless suggested that these events resulted from underlying tensions among groups locally, along with concerns, whether real or perceived, surrounding equitable access to the facilities and equipment that was handed over," he said. — APP

Armenia demonstrates disrespect for peace in region

DNA

BAKU: The Armenian side demonstrates disrespect for the conditions of peace and coexistence in the region, Commissioner for Human Rights (Ombudsman) of Azerbaijan Sabina Aliyeva



said in her appeal made in connection with the tension on the Armenian-Azerbaijani state border, Trend reports on July 28 citing the Office of the Ombudsman. "Azerbaijani servicemen were killed and injured as a result of shelling by the Armenian Armed Forces," the appeal said. "We are greatly concerned about injuries of

Azerbaijani servicemen and the attempts of the Armenian Armed Forces continuing since last night to aggravate the situation on the state border in the direction of Kalbajar district." "The disregard by the Armenian side of the ceasefire regime on the Armeni-

an-Azerbaijani state border and the use of large-caliber weapons once again prove that this country not only neglects the peacekeeping process but also greatly impedes it," the appeal said. "The threats to Azerbaijan's territorial integrity within the internationally recognized borders are unacceptable," the appeal

Armenia urged to stop provocative steps

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan called on Armenia to refrain from provocations and deliberate aggravation at the border, Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry said on Wednesday.

"We call on the military-political leadership of Armenia to refrain from provocations and deliberate aggravation of the situation on the state border of the two countries and to start negotiations on the delimitation of the state border in a civil manner," said a ministry statement. Two Azerbaijani soldiers were wounded by Armenian shelling in the Kalbajar section of the Caucasus countries' border, Azerbaijan's military said early Wednesday. Azerbaijan reaffirmed that Armenia's military-political leadership bears full responsibility for the aggravation of the situation on the Armenian-Azerbaijani border. It stressed that all provocations committed by Armenia will continue to be resolutely blocked to ensure the inviolability of Azerbaijan's borders. The ministry said in a separate statement that Azerbaijan accepted Russia's initiative to declare a cease-fire on the border starting at 10 a.m. local time (0600GMT). "In spite of this, the Armenian side continues to aggravate the situation and shell our positions additionally using tanks and 120-millimeter mortars," it added. Relations between the former Soviet republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan have been tense since 1991, when the Armenian military occupied Nagorno-Karabakh, also known as Upper Karabakh, a territory internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, and seven adjacent regions. New clashes erupted last September and ended on Nov. 10 with a Russia-brokered cease-fire.

said. "The Armenian side demonstrates disrespect for the conditions of peace and coexistence in the region." "Once again we call on the

Armenian side to make efforts to ensure peaceful coexistence, protect the life and health of people," the appeal said.

US slaps sanctions on Syria group

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday slapped sanctions on a Syrian armed group that killed a Kurdish politician amid Turkey's 2019 incursion, vowing to keep pursuing accountability in the war-ravaged country. The United States also took action against two men accused of funding extremists in Syria, including one based in Turkey, as well as five prison officials from President Bashar al-Assad's regime over torture. The Treasury Department said it was blocking any assets and banning any US transactions with Ahrar al-Sharqiya, a once obscure armed group that came under the spotlight as Turkey sent forces into northern Syria in October 2019 following talks with then president Trump. — APP



BUCHAREST President of Romanian Institute for Europe-Asia Studies met with Pakistan ambassador to Romania Dr. Zafar Iqbal. Both sides discussed enhancing bilateral collaboration between higher education institutions of both sides. — DNA

Briefs

PM submits reply in Shahbaz' defamation suit

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan through his counsel Barrister Ali Zafar submitted a reply in the Sessions Court and prayed the court to dismiss the defamation suit filed by PMLN President Shehbaz Sharif against him it was baseless and contrary to the facts. The Prime Minister said that a person named Omar Farooq told him that there was an offer if he (Imran Khan) stop following the Panama Leaks case then he was ready to pay a huge amount of money. "The offer did not come directly from Shehbaz Sharif or Nawaz Sharif," reads the submitted reply submitted by the Prime Minister in the court. Imran Khan in his reply submitted said, "Shahbaz Sharif did not send any notice in 60 days as per the law and then sent only legal notice on May 8, 2017 without fulfilling the legal requirements." "Shahbaz Sharif has been a political opponent for two decades and he himself made multiple statements to defame me. The answer was given in the same way as the bribe was offered. Shahbaz Sharif's reputation may have been affected by some other reason than my statement." The premier said, "Shahbaz Sharif's claim is false, baseless and was filed by distorting the facts. The court may dismiss the baseless defamation suit filed by Shehbaz Sharif." As per reports, Prime Minister did not deviate from his stance and has now filed a rejoinder after a long delay of four years, however, the reason of this long delay is not clear yet.

Pakistan condemns killing of a Kashmiri

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned the extra-judicial killing of an innocent Kashmiri by the Indian occupation forces in a so-called "cordon-and-search" operation in Munnad area of Kulgam district of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). "The further intensification of fake encounters in IIOJK is a matter of grave concern. Extra-judicial killings of young men, including teenage boys, and refusal to return human remains of those martyred is completely unlawful and reflects the moral bankruptcy of the Indian occupation forces," the Foreign Office said in a statement. The FO pointed out that draconian military siege, extra-judicial killings, torture in custody, enforced disappearances and incarcerations continued in IIOJK to suppress the Kashmiris.

Board exams to continue, says ministry

ISLAMABAD: Board examinations will continue as per schedule across the country despite a surge in coronavirus cases, Federal Education Ministry announced Wednesday. The decision was taken during a meeting headed by the Acting Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education Asif Haider, while provincial education secretaries attended the meeting virtually. The meeting jointly decided not to extend the vacations for educational institutions. Meanwhile, the meeting agreed upon conducting academic activities at schools under the strict implementation of COVID-19 standard operating procedures (SOPs). The representatives from the provincial education departments were directed to make decisions regarding the resumption of schools according to the coronavirus positivity ratio in their respective provinces. - APP

Linking region with CA, EU thru peaceful Afghanistan PM's vision

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain said on Wednesday that Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision was to link the region with Central Asia and European Union through a peaceful and stable Afghanistan. For improving economic conditions of the poor segments of the region, political stability of Afghanistan was of paramount importance for achievement of this goal, he said while addressing the inaugural session of the Pak Afghan Media Conclave organised by Pak Afghan Youth Forum here. He said that Pakistan was desirous of setting up rail link between Gwadar and Tashkent and for this peace in Afghanistan was vital. This he said would link Central Asia with China Pakistan Economic Corridor and it would also link Central Asia with European Union. He said it was a big vision and Prime Minister Imran Khan was working for its realization. He said Pakistan also wanted good relations with India as well as this would help fight poverty in the region. He said that Pakistan and Afghanistan enjoyed centuries old historical religious, geographical and cultural relations. Despite having seen many ups and downs, the bilateral ties with Afghanistan were stable. However Fawad Hussain opined that some external factors were also behind misunderstandings between the two brotherly countries. He said when the erstwhile Soviet Union attacked Afghanistan in 1979, it did not consult Pakistan. Similarly when Al Qaeda targeted New York twin towers in 2001, it did not consult Pakistan but in



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain in a group photo during inaugural session of Pak-Afghan Youth Forum Media Conclave at PNCA. - DNA

both cases Pakistan and Afghanistan and their people had to bear the consequences. He said that US policies have failed in Afghanistan and both Pakistan and Afghanistan were paying its price. He said that super powers play their games and then leave the region and in 1988 both US and USSR left Afghanistan at the mercy of the circumstances and people of Afghanistan and Pakistan bore the consequences. He said that over 5 million Afghan people had to migrate to Pakistan after the Soviet invasion and still over 3 million were living here. The minister said over 6,000 children of Afghan refugees were completing their education from Pakistani universities and colleges and they admit that Pakistan has provided them opportunities. Fawad said it was Pakistan's re-

sponsibility to provide shelter to Afghan brothers when their country was invaded as these were the teachings of Islam and the Holy Prophet (PMUH). He said that Pakistan was playing the role of a facilitator in intra-Afghan talks but only Afghan factions and people had to decide about their future. He said that in Afghanistan there was bloodshed and in Pakistan over 70,000 innocent people lost lives in bomb blasts. He said Pakistan was desirous of peace and stability in Afghanistan on two counts - one was that Afghans were brothers of Pakistanis and had close family relations, shared same languages and have similar culture and second reason was that Afghanistan's stability was prerequisite for economic progress of the whole region.

He said Prime Minister Imran Khan believed that no single faction could form a stable government in Kabul, so all factions should sit together and form an inclusive dispensation to ensure peace and progress of the country as well as the entire region. He said all Afghan factions will have to show flexibility as pre-conditions would not prove helpful in moving forward. He urged the participants of the conclave to give their suggestions for improving bilateral relations. He said that differences of opinion exist in all countries and Pakistan was no exception but consensus on the Constitution helps to run the affairs of the state. He suggested that Afghanistan should adopt a similar model and build a consensus on a Constitution for moving forward. The minister said that

media of both the countries could play an important role in building bridges and improving perceptions about each others. He said that presently most of the talks being held with Afghanistan had focus on security issues but there was need to have dialogue on art, film and culture as well. He said that Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was ready for joint ventures in the fields of film and drama production with Afghanistan. He said that Khushhal Khan Khattak was Pakistan's poet but Afghan National poet. Similarly Allama Iqbal was liked by Afghanistan people. He called for translation of Afghan poets and writers in Pakistani languages and Pakistani writers works in Afghan languages. Later the minister distributed souvenirs among the Afghan del-

egates. President Institute of Regional Studies Ambassador Nadeem Riaz said that both countries enjoyed old ties and building close relationship with Kabul was one of the top most priorities of the government of Pakistan. He said that Pakistani people want warm and friendly relations with Afghan people. Director General Pak Afghan Youth Forum Salmaan Javed said that the forum was an effort to bridge the gap between Pakistan and Afghanistan, in particular their youth. He said that it was important to initiate a process of Information and academic exchanges. He said that the PAYF was also working for fostering people to people relationship including public diplomacy domain.

Settlement plan in the heart of Jerusalem is a crime

PNC explained that this new settlement plan on Salah Eddeen Street aims to further confiscate lands

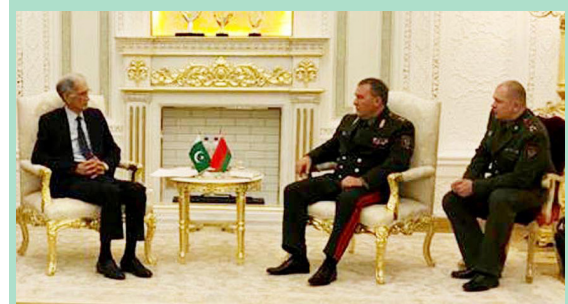
NEWS DESK

RAMALLAH: What the Israeli occupation authorities are committing in the occupied city of Jerusalem; in its neighborhoods, holy sites, streets, heritage and historical monuments, are crimes that necessitate accountability and punishment for the perpetrators for violating international legitimacy resolutions related to occupied Jerusalem, including UNESCO resolutions, PNC said. In a statement issued PNC added that the occupation authorities' announcement of the implementation of the so-called "East Jerusalem city center plan" - especially on Salah Eddeen Street, which forms the heart of Jerusalem - aims to obliterate the identity, history and features of the Old City, and bring about further changes to the legal and demographic reality of the city to serve the Judaization project in the occupied city including its neighborhoods, markets and streets, and changing its Arab, Islamic and Christian character. PNC explained that this new settlement plan on Salah Eddeen Street, which is one of the most important cultural, civilizational and commercial centers for residents and visitors of

the city, also aims to further confiscate lands, restrict mobilization and strike the city's economy in terms of trade, tourism, companies, educational and various public institutions. All of this comes amid the escalation of settlers' incursions into the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, PNC added, the settlers storming accompanied by repression, arrest and assault on worshippers in Al-Aqsa Mosque, as about 5,000 settlers carried out those incursions during the last three months of this year, in an attempt to establish the spatial and temporal division of Al-Aqsa Mosque, and to establish a gradual change in the "status quo" on the honorable Mosque sanctities. The Israeli violations and occupation crimes are accompanied by the continuation of the plans of displacement and ethnic cleansing, PNC added, and the demolition of homes and the displacement of their owners in the neighborhoods of Jerusalem, especially Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood, and the neighborhoods of the town of Silwan (Batn Al-Hawa, Al-Bustan and others), without international accountability for these crimes. PNC affirmed that the continuing violations by the occupying power (Israel) to the Hague Convention and the relevant Geneva Conventions, and the resolu-

tions of the "UNESCO" and United Nations resolutions that rejected the claims of Israeli sovereignty over the city of Jerusalem as an occupied Palestinian city constitutes a flagrant challenge to the will of international institutions and its decision-makers, especially the UN Security Council, which must take its role, abandon the policy of inaction and turn a blind eye to these crimes, and work to prevent the implementation of this Judaization plan in the city of Jerusalem. PNC called on the Arab and Islamic nations, their governments and parliaments to assume their responsibilities, implement the decisions of their political and financial institutions to save the occupied city of Jerusalem, and thwart the Israeli occupation's attempts to impose its sovereignty over it and its Christian and Islamic sanctities before it's too late, and not to leave Jerusalem and its people alone before the Israeli machine of terrorism and Judaization. History and future generations will not be merciful to anyone who is negligent or neglectful of the Arabism of the holy city and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque; the first of the two Qiblas and the third of the Two Holy Mosques, and the ascension of our noble Messenger to heaven.

Khattak for Pak-Belarus collaboration in combat training



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Pervez Khattak Wednesday emphasized that Belarus and Pakistan should enhance bilateral collaboration in training of Armed Personnel, transfer of technology and sharing of defence related expertise. Minister for Defence, Pervez Khattak who is currently in Dushanbe, Tajikistan to attend meeting of Defence Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organization, met Defence Minister of Belarus, Lieutenant General Viktor Khrenin on the sideline of the conference, said a news release here received. Khattak said, "Pakistan attaches great importance to its relations with Belarus bilaterally and in context of EU." He also underscored the importance of enhancing interaction between defence forces of Pakistan and Belarus. The Defence Minister highlighted Pakistan's commitment for facilitating peace efforts in Afghanistan. "China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) does not have any military designs, and the project will contribute towards peace, stability and economic development in the region," Khattak told his Belarusian counterpart. The Defence Ministers of both countries expressed satisfaction over the ongoing defence collaboration between Pakistan and Belarus and agreed to work together to achieve the common goal of regional peace and security. - DNA

Khamenei warns to not trust West

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said Wednesday that experience has shown "trusting the West does not work", as the Islamic republic prepares for a new administration to take power. Khamenei also blasted the US, which is indirectly involved in Iran's talks with world powers to revive a nuclear deal, of tying its return to the accord to "future" negotiations on Iran's missile programme and regional issues. The 2015 deal, the signature achievement of outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani, gave Iran some relief from international sanctions in exchange for limits. - APP

Spain's 5th Covid wave takes toll on hospitals

OVIEDO: Spain's fifth wave of coronavirus infections took a devastating turn on Wednesday as more major countries warned against travel to the Mediterranean nation and COVID-19 deaths surged. On Wednesday reported 55 COVID-19 deaths, 26 more than the same day last week. What many had originally shrugged off as a mild wave of infections among the younger population is beginning to have more serious consequences. In Catalonia, home to Spain's highest infection rate, COVID-19 patients are now taking up 44% of the intensive care units. Hospitalizations in the capital Madrid have also doubled in a week, with nearly 10% of all beds now being used to treat the infectious disease. The country's soaring infection rate has also begun to take an even heavier toll on the country's tourism industry. On Tuesday, the US issued a fresh travel warning to its citizens, advising them not to travel to Spain, Portugal, or Greek Cyprus due to rising rates and the surging Delta variant. Spanish hotels have also seen a wave of cancellations by German visitors after Berlin decided to tighten restrictions on arrivals from Spain starting Tuesday. As of Friday, Israel is also moving Spain to its red list. Tourism represents 12.4% of Spain's GDP and could suffer "severe consequences" from the new wave, said Juan Molas, head of the Mesa de Turismo Association. - APP

Pakistan, Brazil agree to enhance bilateral ties

DNA

BRASILIA: The 5th round of Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) between Pakistan and Brazil was held via video conference today. Mr. Faisal Niaz Tirmizi, Additional Secretary (Americas), Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan and Ms. Marcia Donner Abreu, Secretary Asia-Pacific and Russia, Ministry of External Relations of Brazil, led their respective delegations. Pakistan's Ambassador Ahmed Hussain Dayo also joined the meeting via video-link from Brasilia. During the consultations, views were exchanged on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. The Additional Secretary underscored that Pakistan and Brazil enjoyed a friendly and cordial relationship based on mutual respect and understanding. The Additional Secretary briefed the Brazilian side on the measures taken by the Government of Pakistan to mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on the lives of the peo-

ple and the steps taken to curb the pandemic without jeopardizing the livelihoods. Highlighting Pakistan's focus on achieving economic security through leveraging its geographic location, the Additional Secretary invited Brazilian investment in various sectors in Pakistan. In view of scope and potential in livestock sector between the two countries, the Brazilian investment in Halal Meat sector was also invited. Stressing Government's priority towards sustainability, the Additional Secretary briefed the Brazilian side about Prime Minister Imran Khan's Ten Billion Tree initiative and alternatives/Renewable Energy Policy in order to harness the potential of clean and green energy. The two sides discussed progress on implementation of various Agreements/MoUs and underscored the need for early finalization of those in process. Additional Secretary stressed the importance of exchange of expert delegations to explore cooperation in aviation/aeronautical sector.

USAID announces scholarships for female Pakistani students

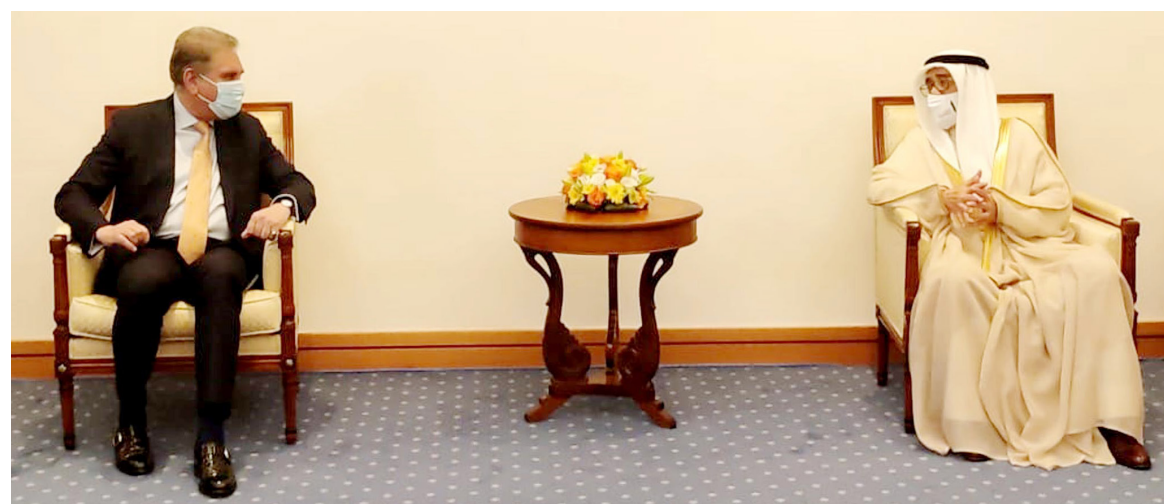
KHAYAM ABASSI

ISLAMABAD: USAID in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC), has announced Merit and Need-based Scholarships for Pakistani female students only in top 30 public and private higher educational institutions of the country. According to the official sources from HEC, more

than 5,300 USAID-funded scholarships with ratio of 53 percent have been awarded to Pakistani female students. More than 3,000 scholarship beneficiaries have been trained so far under career path workshops, the sources said. HEC sources said that the scholarship covers tuition fee, books allowance, boarding & lodging, transportation institutions and other academic costs. Sharing the details of eli-

gibility criteria, they said that females only, who have secured admission in 2021 academic session in 30 public and private participating institutions. Master's/ MBA/MS/MPhil/Education Teaching degree programs in selected disciplines are allowed under the scholarship programme. The female students who fulfill criteria of need and will provide all the information required under the rules.

The student availing any other scholarship or continuous grant are ineligible. The students are encouraged to apply through www.hec.gov.pk/scholarships/usaid-mnbsp. It is worth mentioning here that since 2004, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) is working with USAID in offering scholarships on the basis of merit, as well as financial need to the deserving students.



BAHRAIN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi called on Dy. Prime Minister of Bahrain H.E. Shaikh Muhammad Bin Mubarak Al Khalifa in Manama. - DNA