



Islamabad POST

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Detailed News On Page-01

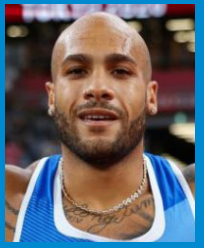
Pakistan-USA to continue cooperation

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Italy's Jacobs wins 100m Gold at Olympics

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Briefs

BCCI attitude regrettable

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain says pressurizing South African batsman Herschelle Gibbs for not playing in Kashmir Premier League by Board of Control for Cricket in India is regrettable. In a statement on Sunday, he said we condemn dragging sports to politics. He said freedom movement in Kashmir will not be affected by pressurizing Herschelle Gibbs. He said India will damage itself by stopping international players from playing for their irrational political purposes. He urged to keep cricket and politics separate.

Shahbaz worried over Covid surge

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N president Mian Shahbaz Sharif has raised his concerns over the rapid rise in coronavirus cases across the country. According to details, Shahbaz Sharif said in his tweet on Sunday, "The rapid rise in the Corona cases due to new variants is deeply worrisome". The PML-N President said, "We, as a nation, need to exercise extra precautions", adding, "Casual attitude in this regard can be dangerous". Shahbaz Sharif asked the people of Pakistan in the tweet, "Please wear mask & get vaccinated".

Suki-Kinari project 66% completed

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Chairman China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Asim Saleem Bajwa says 66 per cent work on Suki-Kinari hydro project has been completed. In a statement, he said 884 Megawatt power generation capacity project is being constructed in Kaghan on river Kunhar. The Chairman CPEC Authority said the project is being constructed on the run of river system and it has attracted foreign investment worth one point nine billion dollars.

Inside...

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Pakistan, US to continue with Afghan peace process - Page 08

Pak banks in Scandinavia, Uzbekistan

Prime Minister Imran Khan assures to resolve law and order situation in the twin cities; says Noor Mukadam case to be taken to logical conclusion



ANSAR M. BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said on Sunday that overseas Pakistanis are the backbone of the country adding government is trying to establish branch of Pakistan banks in the Scandinavian countries and Uzbekistan. While responding to masses phone calls, the prime minister said PIA flights issue shall soon be resolved and it is hoped that the national carrier shall soon start its operations to European and other countries. He said he recently visited Uzbekistan where he interacted with the Pakistani businessmen, who wanted to have a Pakistani bank opened in Uzbekistan. The

Prime Minister assured the government was earnestly looking into the issue and assured to open a bank in Uzbekistan. The Prime Minister further said government was alive to increasing law and order situation in the twin cities. To a question he said justice shall be done in the Noor Mukadam case and nobody will be spared. He said, the personally looked after the Afghan ambassador's daughter case and was satisfied the way the law enforcing agencies handled and resolved the issue. He said he considered Afghan ambassador's daughter has his own daughter and thus followed the case in this spirit. Prior to taking the calls, the premier reminded the

masses to observe the coronavirus standard operating procedures (SOPs) because of the widespread Delta variant of the virus. He also spoke about how imposing a complete lockdown in the country is not the solution and cited the example of India, where the situation worsened for poor people. "Therefore, smart lockdown is the most viable solution," he said. "We cannot destroy our economy by imposing a full lockdown." He also stressed people to vaccinate them in order to curb the virus. Answering a question regarding job quotas, the premier said that the centre is very small, therefore, he would instruct all the provinces to allot job quotas to deserving people. He said that leaders who are scared of free media are the ones who are either corrupt or have something to hide. "If I had apartments in London [or had been involved in corrupt activities], I would have been scared of a free media too," he said. In response to a question, the premier said that he could earlier not invest time in developing sports in the country but now - during the last two years of his government's tenure -

Continued on Page 06

Asad urges masses to follow SOPs

- warns that the Indian variant spreads very fast

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Asad Umar has urged people to strictly follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and get vaccinated at the earliest to contain spread of the Indian variant of COVID-19. Addressing a news conference along with Special Assistant on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Dr. Faisal Sultan in Islamabad on Sunday, he said the Indian variant spreads very fast. He said the government is arranging vaccines to protect the people from the coronavirus. Asad Umar said the government has been successful to combat the previous waves of coronavirus and now

Continued on Page 06



Pakistan completes 30m vaccinations

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has crossed 30 million vaccinations against COVID-19. This was stated by Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umar in a tweet on Sunday. He said the first ten million vaccinations took 113 days, the second ten millions 28 days and the third ten millions only 16 days. The Minister said the pace of vaccination has rapidly increased in the country. He said all six days this week were a record, as 934 hundred thousand people received vaccinations yesterday. He said five million vaccinations were done in last six days.

FM Qureshi says India biggest hurdle in regional peace

Qureshi hinted that the govt was striving hard to overcome inflation

BUREAU REPORT

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Hussain Qureshi Sunday said India wanted to sabotage peace in the region and was creating obstacles in this regard. Qureshi expressed these remarks during his address in a ceremony, organized in honour of workers of Multan Waste Management Company, by PTI local leader Shiekh Wajid, here. Qureshi maintained that promotion of peace in the region was top priority of Pakistan. However, India is big hurdle in way of peace

Indian troops martyr 37 Kashmiris in July

SRINAGAR: In Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJ&K), Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred thirty-seven Kashmiris, including two women, during last month. According to a report released by Kashmir Media Service on Sunday, eight people were killed by the troops in fake encounters or in custody. During the month, twenty eight people, including media men, were critically injured after Indian troops and police personnel used brute force on peaceful protesters in the territory. The report maintained that at least fifty seven civilians, mostly youth, political activists, a religious scholar and a woman, were arrested. The troops also damaged ten houses during at least 219 cordon and search operations in the month. - DNA



BAKU: Speaker National Assembly Asad Umar is being briefed about the Pakistani Cultural Center at the Azerbaijan University of Languages. (More Pictures on Page 07) - DNA

Afghan forces battle to thwart Taliban assaults

Both the Taliban and government forces exaggerate their claims of casualties inflicted on each other's forces

NEWS DESK

KANDAHAR: Afghan government forces struggled against Taliban assaults on several major cities Sunday as the insurgents stepped up a nationwide offensive that saw a key airport in the south come under rocket fire overnight. After seizing large tracts of rural territory and capturing key border crossings, the Taliban has now started to besiege provincial capitals. "Fighting is going on inside the city and we have asked for special forces to be deployed in the city," Ataulah Afghan, head of Helmand provincial council, told agencies. Afghan security forces have increasingly relied on air strikes to push the militants back from cities even as they run the risk of hitting civilians in heavily populated areas. "The city is in the worst condition. I do not know what will happen," said Halim Karimi, a resident of Lashkar Gah. "Neither the Taliban will have mercy on us, nor will the government will stop bombing." Further west in the city of Herat, fighting continued on the city's outskirts overnight with air strikes on Taliban positions. Herat provincial governor's spokesman Jailani Farhad said that around 100 Taliban fighters had been killed in the attacks. Both the Taliban and government forces exaggerate their claims of casualties inflicted on each other's forces and true counts are difficult to independently verify.

Rockets hit Kandahar airport

AGENCIES

KANDAHAR: At least three rockets struck Kandahar airport in southern Afghanistan overnight, an official told AFP on Sunday, as the Taliban pressed on with their sweeping offensive across the country. "Last night three rockets were fired at the airport and two of them hit the runway... Due to this all flights from the airport have been cancelled," airport chief Massoud Pashtun told AFP. Pashtun said work to repair the runway was underway and expected the airport to be operational later on Sunday. An official at the civil aviation authority in Kabul confirmed the rocket attack. The Taliban have for weeks launched withering assaults on the outskirts of Kandahar, stirring fears that the insurgents were on the verge of capturing the provincial capital. Kandahar's air base is vital to providing the logistics and air support needed to keep the militants from overrunning Afghanistan's second-biggest city. The attack on the airport came as the Taliban inched closer to overrunning two other provincial capitals - Herat in the west and Lashkar Gah in the south. The Taliban's significant territorial gains during the final stages of the US military withdrawal have largely been in sparsely populated rural areas. But in recent weeks they have brought increasing pressure on several provincial capitals and seized key border crossings. The capture of any major urban centre would take their current offensive to another level and fuel concerns that the army is incapable of resisting the Taliban's battlefield gains.

Lockdown to be imposed in Islamabad localities

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The authorities on Sunday decided to impose lockdown in more areas of Islamabad due to surge of Covid-19 cases. According to the sources, people in the affected areas will be quarantined in their homes. In the first phase, 2,294 people affected by COVID have been quarantined in their homes. Meanwhile, the police have been deployed to stop the movement of Corona patient outside their homes.



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Briefs

12 killed
in rain
related
incidents

PESHAWAR: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has said that around 12 people were killed and 14 injured in rain related incidents during last six days.

In a statement issued by the Authority here Sunday, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority said that 93 houses were partially damaged and seven houses were completely damaged across the province.

The Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority told that on the directives of Chief Minister Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all district administrations and concerned organizations were directed to expedite the relief operations in rain affected areas.

He said that relief items had been distributed among the affected families in Charsadda. Roads leading to Owerk, Munawar, Bashkir, Narcourt and Bighost areas of Chitral have also been restored partially, he told.

The Director General also said that all the district administrations and concerned agencies were put on high alert and Emergency Operation Center of Provincial Disaster Management Authority was made fully operational around the clock. The PDMA's helpline 1700 is working round the clock for complaints about any untoward incident. — APP

Corona
claims 18
more lives in
Punjab

LAHORE: Coronavirus claimed 18 more lives in Punjab, while 709 new cases were reported during the last 24 hours.

According to the data released by a spokesperson for the Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) here on Sunday, the death toll reached 11,057 while total cases 356,920 and recoveries 332,830 in the province.

Currently 13,033 patients are under treatment in different hospitals, and 401 recovered in last 24 hours. Health department conducted 18,815 tests for COVID-19 during the same period and total number of tests reached 6.17 million. Meanwhile, during the last 24 hours, 549,675 citizens were vaccinated at 662 centres and the total number of vaccinated persons reached 16,501,984 in the province. — APP

Tourism
added Rs67bn
to KP govt's
exchequer

DNA

PESHAWAR: In a positive outcome of boosting tourism in the country, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has generated a revenue of Rs67 billion after 2.7 million tourists visited the province during Eid holidays.

According to details, during the three days of the Eid ul Adha holidays, as many as 2.7 million tourists visited the Naran, Kaghan, Swat, and Galiyat areas in the province, boosting the revenue generation of the province by Rs67 billion.

The information department of the KP government also endorsed the figures in a message from its Twitter handle.

It is pertinent to mention here that in order to facilitate the tourists in the summer season, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government installed camping pods at different spots. The camping pods have been established at 10 tourist spots to provide facilities to the people visiting the northern areas of the country.

The camping pods have been established at Thandiani, Sharan, Beshagram, Gabean Jabba, Sheikh Badin, Mahabin, Yakh Tangi and other spots. Each spot contains 26 camping pods.

DG WCA inspects historical
buildings of Faisalabad

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Director General (DG) Walled City Authority (WCA) Lahore Kamran Lashari visited Faisalabad on Saturday for inspection of historical buildings and other heritage. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, DLG Mian Aftab, Assistant Commissioners Umar Maqbool and Syed Ayub Bukhari were also with him. DG and DC along with Officers inspected District Council, old buildings of Pakistan Model school Katcheri Bazaar, Allama Iqbal library, Clock tower, Heritage shops and other historical and memorable buildings and sites.

Different proposals regarding preservation, rehabilitation and restoration of original shape of historical old buildings came under discussion. DG Walled City Authority said that under WCA four cities of the province, including Faisalabad, will be made "Dilkash Cit-



ies" and funds have also been fixed for this purpose. He said that the next generation should be familiar with the history, culture and lifestyle of the area. DG Walled City Authority said that the purpose of care is to preserve the civilization and culture of the region in this regard, Faisalabad (formerly Lyallpur) is also

of historical and cultural importance in which the monuments of historical and spiritual personalities and other cultural heritage are protected on a sustainable basis. In this regard, the current condition of historical and monumental buildings is being reviewed by visiting Faisalabad. He said that cultural heritage

reflects the historical identity and lifestyle of any area, acquainting future generations with its cultural roots. In order to do so, rapid steps have been taken for the restoration and preservation of historical buildings, places and other cultural monuments of Faisalabad in real form and the keen interest of

those who love Lyallpur is commendable. The Deputy Commissioner said that activities to highlight the history and culture of Lyallpur were being continued and social sectors were also showing interest in this regard. He said that the work on construction, restoration, protection and decoration of various

buildings and monuments of cultural and historical heritage is being carried out through integrated planning.

He said that the participation of industrialists and cultural heritage-loving citizens is commendable, with whose help district administration would preserve the cultural heritage.



SWAT: Ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei meeting with National Commissioner Boys Scouts Association Waqat Shahzad during his recent visit to Swat. — DNA

DC for immediate
disposal of rain water

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali directed that immediate steps should be taken for discharge of rain water from the roads and low lying areas of the city so that there would be no disruption in the normal life of the citizens.

He directed this while checking the discharged of rain water from different areas. Deputy Commissioner went to Iqbal Stadium, Sam-

undari Road, Allama Iqbal Colony, Narwala Road, Jail Road, Bashir Nizami Chowk, Abdul Rashid Ghazi Chowk, General Bus Stand, Abdullahpur, Satiana Road, Sir Syed Town, Dikot Road, Samanabad, Jhang Road, Jinnah Colony, Guru Nanak Pura, Gulbarg, Canal Road, Jaranwala Road, Ghulam Muhammad Abad and other areas in instructed the WASA officers to stay in the field during the rains and there should be no obstruction in the discharge of rain water.

DC starts monsoon
plantation

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali sapled the plant at Govt Municipal Graduate College Jaranwala road in connection with moonson tree plantation campaign. AC city Syed Ayub Bukhari, DD Colleges Professor Imdad ullah Ch., Principal Dr.Zahoor Bhatti and Director Student Affairs Professor Khalid Hassan and others also sapled the plants. Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of plantation and said that trees are the beauty of nature those minimise the pollution and smog. He said that trees are being planted in the vacant places of offices and educational institutes.

He asked the students to participated in the plantation

campaign and sapled as many as tress which also gave us the shadow.

Deputy Commissioner said that all possible steps are being taken to make the Prime Minister's Ten Billion Tree project a success and during this year 0.6 million plants would sapled. He said that plantation regarding moonson was also underway in the district during which government offices, parks and the target will be achieved by planting trees in public places. He asked the officers of the forest department to make effective arrangements for their maintenance and development by planting different types of tall plants on the available lands so that they can grow and meet the challenges facing the environment.

PHP arrests 438 criminals
on Punjab Highways

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: The establishment of Punjab Highway Patrol has played major role in the reduction of accidents and prevention of Road users. The prevention, detection and apprehension of criminals have risen with the effective patrolling of PHP. SSP Punjab Highway Patrol, Region Faisalabad Mirza Anjum Kamal said while releasing monthly performance re-

port of July, 2021. As per detail, as many as 435 cases were registered under different sections and 438 criminals and 9 POs were sent behind the bar. SSP told that 6 pistols 30 Bore, 3 Guns with 66 bullets were recovered. Furthermore, total 37 liter liquor, 225 Gram Cannabis, 240 Gram Heroin and stolen electric wire worth Rs 1, 00, 000/- were recovered. As many as 223 cases were registered against reckless drivers U/S 279 PPC. More-

over, 11 lost children were found and reunited with their relatives. Help rendering were extended to 1956 commuters and first aid was provided in 9 accidents. As many as 78 temporary encroachments were removed for free flow of traffic. Motorcycle is widely used during robbery/Dacoity, in order to prevent road robbery, total 154 Motorcycles were impounded U/S 134 PO, 115 MVO and 550 Cr.P.C. However, talking about the patrolling mechanism to

curb the crime, SSP said that the time of occurrence of crime is most crucial one to devise proactive patrolling strategy. Moreover, the lists of stolen/snatched vehicles, proclaimed offenders and bad elements of the area are kept in the official vehicles. Furthermore, the patrolling officers are continuously in contact with control room. In case of any emergency and accidents, official vehicle rushes towards the spot and responds as per SOP.



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali sapled the plant in Govt Munnicipal Graduate College inconnection with moonson tree plantation. — DNA

A low-hanging fruit to reverse deforestation

The National Forest Policy 2015 had revealed that forests in all provinces of Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan were under tremendous pressure especially in private and community-owned natural forests

PESHAWAR: Confronted by deforestation and climate change challenges, Pakistan is losing about 27,000 hectares forests per year mainly in private and community-owned natural forests owing to rapid population growth, high demands of wood and desertification. The National Forest Policy 2015 had revealed that forests in all provinces of Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit Baltistan were under tremendous pressure especially in private and community-owned natural forests. In these areas rate of deforestation

is estimated at 27,000 hectares annually due to population explosion, drought, increasing wood demands for domestic consumption in alpine pasture areas and susceptibility of climate change. The shrinking of forests in watershed areas are making an adverse impact on agriculture productivity, quality of water at outlets and biodiversity besides causing catastrophic floods in downstream areas mostly in KP and Punjab due to an erratic rainfalls. In addition to it, intrusion of sea and rivers water in ripari-

an, low-lying and coastal areas in Sindh and Balochistan, which inflicted substantial human, material and economic losses in the past in Pakistan are also major cause of these adverse impacts. These effects of deforestation and climate change could be seen from 2010 devastated flood, which had brought havoc to humans, properties, agriculture and economy in most parts of the country especially in KP. Besides that, worst drought during 1999-2003, cyclones in Karachi and Gwadar coasts in 2008

and Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GOLFs) including Atabad Lake in Gilgit Baltistan, Chitral and July 28, 2021 flash flood in Islamabad, which necessitated large-scale plantations to ward off these climate change's threats in future are also due to deforestation. The previous tenure of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, while taking cognizance of an increased deforestation and climate change's damages, had devised and implemented Green Growth Initiative (GGI) in KP focusing on six key sectors includ-

ing forestry, protected areas and national parks, clean energy, climate resilience, water and sanitation and waste management, which produced far-reaching positive results. Capitalizing on GGI, the then PTI government had successfully implemented 'Billion Trees Afforestation Project (BTAP)' by planting a record 1.208 billion saplings with the help of 4,509 forests enclosures established on 306,983 hectares, man-made plantation on 263,213 hectares and sowing on 23,096 hectares. — APP

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Women MPAs
condemned
atrocities in
IIOJK

PESHAWAR: Women parliamentarians of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have condemned ongoing genocide in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and demanded of the world community to pressurize India to stop ongoing human rights violations in the occupied valley.

Brutalities of India in IIOJK and its annexation are blatant violations of United Nations resolutions and an attempt of Indian government to disrupt peace in the region, said Ayesha Bano of PTI while talking to APP.

She said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has also raised this issue at all international forums while people of IIOJK had also expressed their anger and disgust at this decision and added that hapless people of Kashmir were facing a complete lockdown including communications blackout from the August 5, 2019. Our government fully supports the struggle of Kashmiri people and will extend all kinds of moral, political and diplomatic support to them till they get freedom from the Indian yoke, she said.

Woman legislator of JUI-F, Rehana Ismail said Kashmir had become the land of war after India violated international human rights laws and UN Security Council resolutions on August 5, 2019 and scrapped special status granted under Article 370 of Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir.

She said independent media was not being given access to report brutalities from IIOJK which was against norms of humanity and clear violation of freedom of speech and expression, adding, the policy of India in occupied valley was condemnable and unacceptable.

Talking about August 5, PPP woman legislator Nigat Orakzai said the atrocities of Indian forces against innocents of IIOJK has made lives of Kashmiris more miserable and exposed true face of Indian government.

She said the brutalities being committed in IIOJK have exposed real face of Indian government. She lamented that instead of implementing resolutions passed by United Nation (UN) to conduct a plebiscite in occupied valley, the Indian government has abolished the status of IIOJK. — APP

Anti-polio
campaign
from Aug 2

FAISALABAD: The five-day next round of polio vaccination will begin from August 2 in the district during which 1,326,937 children under five years of age will be administered anti-polio drops.

The health department has formed 3549 polio teams which will administer polio vaccine to children.

According to a handout, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali directed all the departments concerned to perform duty vigilantly to achieve the 100 percent target. He clarified that every round of polio was important, therefore, awareness of parents should be continued before and during the campaign.

The DC appealed to the parents to come forward and play their role in ensuring vaccination of their children to eradicate the crippling disease. He said staff deployed for the campaign had been warned that no negligence would be tolerated in this regard. — APP

Teenager boy
killed in road
accident

FAISALABAD: A teenage boy was killed in a road accident, in the limits of City Jaranwala police station.

Police said on Sunday the accident occurred near Ali Pur Bangla where a rashly driven car hit a motorcyclist. As a result of which, the motorcyclist, who has yet to be identified sustained critical wounds and he was shifted to THQ hospital where doctors referred him to the Allied Hospital Faisalabad. He died on way to the hospital.

Police have shifted the body to mortuary for post-mortem.

A case has been registered against the fleeing car driver. Further investigation was underway. — APP

Briefs

**1,260,975
Covid doses
administered
in RWP**

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: As many as 1,260,975 people including 36,909 health workers and 1,224,066 senior citizens have jabbed themselves so far against COVID-19 from 23 centres operating across the district since the vaccination administering drive launched on March 10.

According to data shared by the district administration here Sunday, 160 more COVID-19 positive cases were reported during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 29,350 in the district.

As per the latest data, 47 cases were reported from Rawal Town, 46 from Potohar town, 45 from Rawalpindi Cantt, 7 from Gujar Khan, 6 from Kahutta, 7 from Taxila, and one each from Murree and Kalarsyeda.

"Presently 155 confirmed patients were admitted to various city facilities, counting 33 in Holy Family Hospital, 25 in Benazir Bhutto Hospital, 53 in Institute of Urology, 33 in Fauji Foundation Hospital, three each in Bilal, Attock and Hearts International hospital while two were admitted in Begum Akhtar Memorial trust," the health authority report said. District Health Authority updated that so far 27,151 patients were discharged after recovery while 2543 were quarantined including 1531 at home and 1012 in isolation.

The report said that six patients were on ventilators in critical condition, 73 stable and 76 on oxygen. Meanwhile, Divisional Surveillance Officer Dr. Waqar Ahmed told APP that the positivity ratio during the past 24 hours was recorded at 10.61 per cent in the district.

Bike snatcher, dacoit gang busted

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The police have busted a bike snatcher, dacoit gang and arrested its seven members besides recovering Rs 190,000 cash, 11 motorcycles, weapons and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, police team under the supervision of SHO Bani Police Station was constituted which after hectic efforts managed to net seven accused, who were bike snatcher and dacoit gang members and allegedly involved in several cases registered in different police stations.

The police recovered 11 motorcycles snatched at gun point, weapons and other items from their possession. They confessed to have committed bike snatching and other crimes in different areas. A case has been registered against them while further investigation is underway, he added. The SHO informed that the gang members had been sent to jail for identification parade.

RPO pays surprise visit to Murree

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Region Imran Ahmer paid a surprise visit to Murree police station, informed a police spokesman on Sunday. "RPO Imran Ahmer visited police station following the instructions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Inam Ghani," he added.

The RPO checked the daily entry register of the police station and directed the SHO to accelerate efforts to arrest criminals including proclaimed offenders and court absconders. He said effective strategy was vital to controlling crime and also ordered to adopt a professional as well as responsible attitude to mitigate the sufferings of the people.

On this occasion, RPO Imran Ahmer asked the police officers to focus on solving public complaints promptly by taking citizen-friendly steps. Later, the RPO also inspected the front desk, building, lockup and cleanliness of the police station. - APP

FPCCI, Iranian envoy discuss prospects of Gwadar project

Iran and Pakistan are old friends in the region not only friends but have lots of mutual interests in religion and culture as well. But the need of time is to enhance the trade relation between both countries

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: FPCCI office Bearers delegation led by Haji Qurban Ali, Head FPCIC capital office Islamabad meet with Ambassador of Iran Muhammad Ali Hussaini in his office. Discussion was held in very friendly environment and it was fruitful for both Pakistan and Iran sides. Bilateral Trade, Transit Trade, mutual flight operations, exchange of trade delegations and Gwadar and Makran Electric supply and other businesses and trade matters were discussed between FPCCI delegation and Iran Ambassador.

Haji Qurban Ali and Mir Naveed Jan Baloch noticed Iran Ambassador to focus on that due to disconnection of electrification from Iran has brought our Businesses and investors in big loss and also discussed mutual problems faced by both sides' businessmen, and Ambassador committed to resolve the problem of electrification as soon as possible.



Iran and Pakistan are old friends in the region not only friends but have lots of mutual interests in religion and culture as well. But the need of time is to enhance

the trade relation between both countries so the trade and business activities can be activate and generate all type of regional Businesses in the CPEC region.

The meeting ended in a very business friendly environment as well and Ambassador of Iran and FPCCI understanding valued that much the meeting was

taken up in even High ups of both countries, and in a day after meeting ended the electric supply has been functional and rehabilitate Iran Promise at government level to provide more electric in Gwadar region soon. An important factor of trade relation enhancement with mutual understanding was also on board, to take up Chabahar port functional. As Gwadre and Chabahar both need to be functional and operational equally.

And to take up private sector of both sides on board and in loop for exchange of businesses so the hurdles can be removed with mutual understanding automatically. Haji Qurban Ali Head FPCCI Capital office Islamabad presented shield to the Ambassador of Iran, Mirn Naveed Jan Baloch President Gwadar CCI was accompanied him, and both the business leaders from Pakistan side thanked him for such quick action and initiative that the rehabilitation of electric supply was done in a day after the said meeting.

6 gamblers arrested, stake money recovered

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Saddar Baroni police have arrested six gamblers and recovered Rs 42,400 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Saddar Baroni police acting on a tip-off conducted a raid and rounded up six gamblers namely Nisar Ahmed, Muhammad Qadeer, Owais Ali, Abdul Salam, Ejaz Khan and Saeed Ilyas allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Police recovered Rs 42,500 cash stake money, six mobile phones and other items from their possession.

A case has been registered against all the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent Police (SP) Saddar division appreciated the police team and directed them to continue crackdown against lawbreakers.

Dr. Huma Mir returns to TV dramas

ISLAMABAD: A leading actress of television Dr. Huma Mir has returned to TV dramas after many years. She has also released her national song "Jiwayjiway Pakistan" for her fans as a gift on the eve of Independence Day to be celebrated on August 14. In a statement, Dr. Huma said, she has started her professional singing career with the national song. She said, Independence Day celebration was an opportunity to release a National song.

Yesterday, she also took part in the recording of drama with famous actor Noorul Hassan and dozens of new artists. She said taking part in the shooting of the play after a long-time. She expressed the hope that audience will like her as before. She said it was great to work under the direction of Yasir Hussain. Huma said audience will see her in a different and interesting role in "Koili" drama. - APP

Single curriculum to implement in Punjab school

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Political Communication Dr. Shahbaz Gill on Sunday said that the enforcement of a single curriculum at primary schools and seminaries in Punjab would begin from August 02.

In a message from his personal Twitter handle, Shahbaz Gill said that they have begun implementation on the dream of Prime Minister Imran Khan and an important part of the PTI's manifesto from Punjab province.

CDA takes action against violation of building by-laws in sector E-11

ISLAMABAD: The CDA administration has taken stern notice of illegal constructions and violation of building by-laws in Sector E-11 of the Federal Capital.

The management of Capital Development Authority has issued show cause notices to the owners of private housing societies located in Sector E-11 of Islamabad for violating illegal constructions and building by-laws. In addition, seal and show cause notices were issued to 18 residential and commercial buildings in Sector E-11 for illegal constructions and violation of building by-laws. CDA has been conducting operations against illegal encroachments in the Federal Capital for several months, billions of rupees of government land have been relinquished. In addition, the CDA administration is mulling an FIR against the owners of private housing societies including Fortune Empire, FECHS, PECHS at Golra police station. However, till filing of the news, no FIR was lodged in this regard. During the construction of the basements, no safety measures were taken by the owners and developers to deal with any emergency. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Senior Manager Turkish Airlines North, Muhammad Umer Khan presenting souvenir to CEO and Founder of Monal Group Luqman Ali Afzal during latter's visit to Turkish Airlines office, in Islamabad. - DNA

CDA launches plantation campaign in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: In order to make the Federal Capital greener, beautiful and attractive, the tree planting campaign to be continued of the CDA Environment Department has been intensified in the monsoon on the directions of the CDA management. The Department of Environment is planting flowers and plants in all the highways, green belts, roadside slopes, intersections, drains and all parks of Islamabad. Duties are also distributed in relevant staff with solid plan. Tree planting in Fatima Jinnah Park, Park Enclave, Diplomatic Enclave, Srinagar Highway, 9th Avenue, 10th Avenue, 11th Avenue, Margalla Road, Margalla Hills, National Park, Islamabad Highway, Express Highway



and other areas of Islamabad. In addition, under the special direction of the CDA administration, educational institutions in the federal capital are also being made a direct part of the tree planting campaign and free plants are being provided to students in addition to involving citizens in the tree planting campaign. In this regard, flower and plant stalls are being set up at various

places in the city so that the citizens can be directly involved in the tree planting campaign. In this regard, on Sunday, students of a private educational institution in the federal capital took part in a direct tree planting campaign to make Islamabad more beautiful and attractive, tree planting in Sector D-12, Golra Interchange, G-11 Green Belt. - DNA

One Window Center to be opened in every district

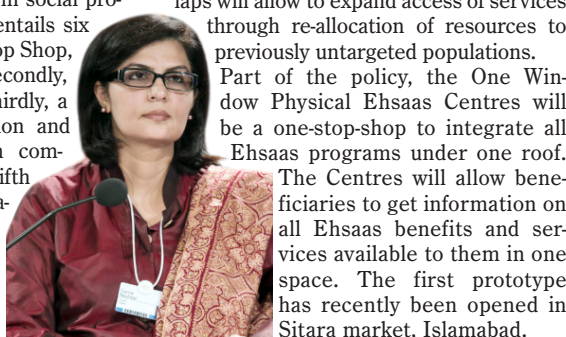
KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Prime minister has approved the One Window Ehsaas Policy. "With One Window Ehsaas policy in place, the aim is to deliver services through a single window, a one-stop shop", stated Dr. Sania Nishtar. The overarching Ehsaas Strategy stipulated the creation of "One-Window Ehsaas" (Policy # 4) to enable delivery of the multiple Ehsaas programs through a single window, and to address issues in social protection programs. The policy entails six sets of actions: firstly, a One Stop Shop, the Ehsaas Physical Center; secondly, a public facing digital interface; thirdly, a public facing digital information and services platform; the fourth component is a mobile app; the fifth component is the integrated database; and finally, the Ehsaas One-Window Beneficiary Selection and Targeting Policy. According to an official statement, collectively, the six

pillars of One Window policy will increase cohesiveness and coordination across the different programmes offered by different implementing organizations and will improve beneficiary experience.

While physical one window centres, e-portal and app will enable beneficiaries to better access welfare services, cross-organizational data sharing, and a standard beneficiary identification methodology will allow for better visibility, and efficient and transparent targeting. Lastly, removing program overlaps will allow to expand access of services through re-allocation of resources to previously untargeted populations.

Part of the policy, the One Window Physical Ehsaas Centres will be a one-stop-shop to integrate all Ehsaas programs under one roof. The Centres will allow beneficiaries to get information on all Ehsaas benefits and services available to them in one space. The first prototype has recently been opened in Sitara market, Islamabad.





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Brochures can be obtained from the one window directorate CDA and selected branches of HBL, UBL, MCB, ASKARI Bank and Bank of Punjab and also form can be downloaded online from www.cda.gov.pk

Capital Development Authority
Director Estate Management-II
051-9252481

ISLAMABAD the green city

Briefs

Up to 700,000 tourists visit GB since Eid

DNA

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

Activities in residential areas irk citizens

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: The residents of several Cantt areas have been left to suffer due to illegal commercial activities in residential areas and it looks that the authorities concerned are least interested to take action in accordance with the law against the rules violators. Illegal commercial activities in several residential areas of Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) including Gawalmandi, Chor, Tench Bhatta and Chungi No 22 irk the residents as the encroachers have occupied streets and roads, creating problems for the motorists as well as pedestrians particularly for women and children.

The illegal commercial activities are rampant in several residential areas, creating a lot of nuisance. The questions are also being raised as to why a number of roads were declared commercial by ignoring the parking arrangements and traffic-related issues. Most of such unauthorised commercial units, factories and godowns in residential areas lack parking arrangements. Thus, vehicles are generally parked on the roads causing traffic snarls. Moreover, the majority of such units lack fire safety arrangements, posing threat to the residents. Also, there is no check on noise pollution being created by the industrial units.

Teachers demand revision in service

ISLAMABAD: The college teachers serving in the educational institutions run by Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) in Islamabad have demanded of authorities concerned to bring improvement in their service structure in line with the provinces of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The provinces like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab have improved the service structure of their college teachers in 2012 but the federal education department is yet to take steps in this regards.

According to an official source, a new service structure famously known as four tier promotion formula was introduced for college teachers in the country in the year 1991.

As per the four tier service structure, the college teachers of various grades are employed with a prescribed ratio 1:15:34:50 i.e. one percent of the total strength are Professors in BPS-20, fifteen percent are Associate Professors in BPS-19, thirty four percent are Assistant Professors in BPS-18 and fifty percent of the total strength Lecturers are in BPS-17. — APP

President Arif Alvi addresses to complaint of medical student

Complainant Sarbuland Khan had filed a representation with the President of Pakistan assailing the order of Wafaqi Mohtasib, which had upheld the decision of Mohammad Medical College, Mirpurkhas, on grounds that the case was time

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD, President Dr Arif Alvi on Sunday, on complaint of a medical student facing denial by his institution to appear in examinations, said the aggrieved could invoke a relevant clause of Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) that gave universities a prerogative to allow students as many retakes. Complainant Sarbuland Khan had filed a representation with the President of Pakistan assailing the order of Wafaqi Mohtasib, which had upheld the decision of Mohammad Medical College, Mirpurkhas, on grounds that the case was time.

The complainant had mentioned that he had failed twice in the

second year's paper of Biochemistry, and under the rules had four chances to pass the examination. However, he could not avail the third and fourth chances as the medical college did not intimate him timely and also had banned his entry into the institution. He prayed that if he was not given a chance to appear in the examination, then the medical college be directed to refund his paid fee Rs.1, 500,000 with seven years interest. He also requested for rechecking of Biochemistry paper, wherein he had failed lack of one mark. The Wafaqi Mohtasib in its order said no maladministration on part of the Agency (medical college) was evident and the assertion of the complainant for the four-time limit under Pakistan Medical and



Dental Council (PMDC) stood repealed after the PMC Act came into force on 24.09.2020. The president, in his decision, referred to a notification of PMC's (Admissions, Curriculum and Conduct) Regulations, 2021, that explained on how the university

could allow the students to retake the examinations. The President referred to Rule 16 (1) from notification's Chapter-IV which empowers universities to frame their own regulations for allowing failed students to retake professional examinations, to publicly notify such regulations and make available to the students."

He also mentioned Rule 16 (2) which states "A university may allow a student as many retakes as may be determined by the university subject to no student being required to pay to the college tuition fee in addition to the fee paid for the given year. A retake exam fee may be charged as may be determined by the university subject to being a reasonable fee

commensurate with the taking of an examination." He quoted Rule 16 (3) which states that "no student shall be allowed to repeat a year after having failed in a profession exam. Either a student qualifies their professional exam through retakes offered by the university or shall be expelled from the program on failure to qualify."

The President said "there was no fault with the orders passed by the Wafaqi Mohtasib", however the complainant, if desired, could invoke the said clause. "If so desired, the complainant may take a chance of invoking the above mentioned R.16 before the competent authority for redressal of his grievance," he wrote, disposing of the representation.

Dollar keeping rupee under pressure

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt on Sunday said the dollar is keeping the rupee under continued pressure.

The US dollar, which was trading at Rs 152.28 in the month of May, is now being traded at Rs 192.43 while rupee lost 93 paise against the dollar in one week, he said.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the country will sink in unprecedented inflation if fall of the rupee continued therefore the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should review its decision of not interfering in the exchange rate to stabilize the local currency.

He said that dollar inflows have reduced while demand is increasing which can boost its value to Rs170 if corrective measures were avoided.

He said an increase of Rs10 in the value of the dollar has not only increased the loans but also effected almost everything as almost 20 billion dollars will be required for debt servicing in the current fiscal.

The business leader noted that the current account deficit is increasing, neighbouring Afghanistan is facing turmoil prompting the purchase of dollars, exports to Afghanistan have been reduced to zero, while the fourth wave of coronavirus has raised concerns about economy while foreign investment in Pakistan Investment Bonds has dropped to zero.

He said that the price of oil and Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) continue to climb and the costliest LNG deal has been finalized which will stoke inflation.

Political frictions have a more negative impact on the situation than the rest of the issues while nothing is being done to diffuse the situation, he observed.

Arab Parliament's Speaker arrives in Pakistan

He regarded Pakistan as an 'important Muslim country' and said "Our alliance and cooperation with Pakistan will be beneficial for the Muslim Ummah

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Arab Parliament, Speaker Adel Abdulrahman Al-Asoumi, heading a high-profile delegation of legislators from the Arab League, arrived in Islamabad on Sunday on invitation of Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani. Senator Sana Jamali welcomed the delegation on arrival at Islamabad International Airport, said a news release of the Senate Secretariat.

On arrival, Adel Abdulrahman Al-Asoumi informed the journalists that this was his first visit to any non-Arab country after becoming President of the Arab Parliament and described it as a 'true reflection' of their fraternal ties.

He regarded Pakistan as an 'important Muslim country' and said "Our alliance and cooperation with Pakistan will be beneficial for the Muslim Ummah. Mutual cooperation will open new



avenues for our relations." During the visit, Al Asoumi said he, along with the delegation, would hold meetings with the political leadership of Pakistan in which the issues faced by Muslim Ummah and matters pertaining to their unity and harmony would be discussed at length. He expressed confidence

that the visit would produce positive and far-reaching results, adding the exchange of delegations at the parliamentary and public levels would significantly boost their ties, trade and investment.

The president said the vast opportunities, offered by Pakistan in the area of trade and investment, would be

fully brought to use. He said Pakistan and Arab countries had been enjoying brotherly and decades old bond which was based on common religion, culture and traditions.

Al Asoumi extended his gratitude to Chairman Senate Sadiq Sanjrani for inviting him to Pakistan.

National Highway Authority plants trees along main roads

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: As per vision of Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Imran Khan and on directive of Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saeed, National Highway Authority launched forestation campaign under Clean and Green Pakistan program. To this effect, NHA General Manager Maintenance (Punjab-North) Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed Sajid and Maintenance Unit Lahore team planted trees in collaboration with M/s. Izhar Steel Private Ltd. Moving forward, an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was also



signed between the National Highway Authority and Grana.Com to effectively carry out the tree plantation campaign. According to details, tree plantation is underway along Lahore Eastern Bypass at the NHA Regional Office, Punjab North. Another Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was also signed between

National Highway Authority and Grana.Com to effectively carry out the tree plantation campaign. According to details, tree plantation is underway along Lahore Eastern Bypass Project. Furthering this activity Member National Assembly Pakistan

Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Rahat Amanullah Bhatti from Muridke also planted trees under the Clean and Green Pakistan Campaign at Lahore Eastern Bypass Project with cooperation of National Highway Authority and National Highways and Motorways Police officers.

CDA employees soon will be allotted plots

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Secretary-General Capital Development Authority's Labour Union Amanullah Khan has said that he will share the news of plots allotment with the employees of CDA soon.

After holding a meeting with newly-appointed Director Land Afnan Aalam, he said he along with his team served the employees of Capital Development Authority (CDA) without any discrimination, adding that they worked day and night since day one they took charge of the office. He said that his union is focusing

on its main target of allotment of plots which will be concluded in the office.

In his short term, he got approved capital allowance and Corona allowance, Khan said, adding he paid a lot of attention towards restoration of already broken authority which proved to be a successful drive.

He deplored that ex-union representatives were responsible for handing over a number of CDA's directorates to the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI); however, this process was reversed through his hectic efforts. He was visibly hopeful about the future of the CDA employees.

Pakistan to accept Afghan peoples' choice

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Khawaja Rameez Hassan, Deputy Secretary Information, PML-Q Punjab, said in a press release that Afghan soil has always been used against Pakistan. He said that the seeds of hatred are being sown among the Afghan people under planning against Pakistan. In Afghanistan, the impression is being given that Pakistan and the ISI support the Afghan Taliban, while Pakistan has repeatedly stated that it has nothing to do with the internal situation in Afghanistan. Whoever comes to power in Afghanistan, Pakistan will accept it. He more added Pakistan has always hosted Afghan refugees in Afghan peace and difficult times

227 criminals held, looted items recovered

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Senior Superintendent of Police (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer said that, Islamabad Police, during last week accelerated its efforts against criminals and arrested 227 outlaws with huge recovery of looted items worth Rs 24.10 million.

Following directions of Inspector General of Police Islamabad Qazi Jamil Ur Rehman and Deputy Inspector General of Police (Operations) Afzaal Ahmad Kausar, he said that renewed efforts were made and police achieved remarkable success. SSP (Operations) told that, 32 culprits were arrested involved in dacoity, robbery, car/motorcycle theft while 26 absconders were held during the same period. Complete challans of 194 cases were sent to concerned apex courts, he added.

Syed Mustafa Tanweer further stated that ICT Police had launched a special campaign against drug sellers/ bootleggers for elimination of this menace from Capital. During this campaign Islamabad Police have nabbed 67 accused and recovered 27913 gram hashish, 10057 gram heroine, 1059 gram Ice and 156 wine bottles from them. 19 accused were also held for having illegal weapons and recovered 18 pistols, 2 rifles, 1 Kalashnikov and 1087 rounds from them, the SSP maintained. He emphasized that police accelerated its efforts against criminals and 83 accused involved in crimes of different nature were also arrested. Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanweer reiterated that criminal elements would not be spared and those involved in such acts would have to face action as per law. He has also appealed to the citizens to cooperate with Islamabad in curbing activities of such elements.

Police arrest 18 lawbreakers

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police, in its crackdown against lawbreakers, rounded up 18 including four for immoral activities from different areas. Police also recovered six 30 bore pistols, 440 grams charras, 14 bottles of liquor and 11 liters liquor from their possession, said a police spokesman on Sunday. He informed that Pirwadhai police held four including a woman for immoral activities. Police arrested Rehmat Khan, Munir Shah, Arshad Khan and Sadia for immoral activities, he added. Airport, Bani, Saddar Baroni, and Chontra police conducted raids in different areas and rounded up Fawad Ahmed, Shahzaib, Saddam Hussain, Shahid, Tabassam Iftikhar, and Sami ur Rehman Akbar for possessing six 30 bore pistols and ammunition. Meanwhile, Westridge, Wah Cantt, Gunjmandi, Race Course and Murree police netted eight accused namely Ahsanullah, Muhammad Tariq, Rasheed, Wajabat Afzal, Muhammad Javed, Fayyaz Ahmed, Naveed, and Ahmed Sher on recovery of 440 grams charras, 14 bottles of liquor and 11 liters liquor. Cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway, he said and added that police would continue their raids against lawbreakers and they would be sent behind bars. — APP

The Karakoram Highway, 8th Wonder of the World

MUNAZA KAZMI

THE Karakoram Highway is the highest and the lengthiest paved international highway of the world, it is also viewed as the 15th most beautiful roads of the world for its scenic beauty. The Karakoram Highway was built by the governments of Pakistan and China in a long span of almost twenty years (1959-78) due to the region's unique topography, high-altitude mountains, snow-covered peaks and tough terrain. The mighty road, manifesting the strategic relationship and geographical interdependence between the two nations - China and Pakistan - is also termed as Friendship Highway and it is referred to as the eighth wonder of the world.

The Karakoram Highway represented the undeclared beginning of CEP-EC - a dream that is being realized after 50 years.

The magnificent 1300km road snakes through the Pamirs, Hindu Kush, Kunlun Mountains, and Karakoram Range, to connect Kashgar in China to the northern provinces of Pakistan. At a maximum height of 4714 meters, it has the world's highest border crossing at the Khunjerab Pass. Whilst ensuring the most epic road trip ever, the highway is notorious for frequent land sliding, avalanches,

and movement of glaciers under extreme weather conditions; the well-known Attabad Lake that is now an attractive tourist destination is a living result of such land sliding. However, the highway was constructed on respective sides of China and Pakistan by their relevant organizations.

Construction at such a high elevation and harsh terrain defies conventional engineering wisdom. Hence, then government of Pakistan gave this task to the Army's

Corps of Engineers to undertake the work; thus, was born the Frontier Works Organization. However, in the meanwhile 200 Chinese and over 800 Pakistani laborer and engineers lost their lives; some due to inclement weather, others to the harsh elevation of 4,693 meters (15,397 ft) above sea level.

To say inevitably the Karakoram Highway had a huge impact on the lives of locals, their economic conditions improved manifold, likewise it turn out to be an open gateway for

them to the rest of the world.

One of the major benefits it came with is the uplift in adventure tourism, as it is the corridor to the stunning mountain range of Pakistan, namely the gorgeous Himalayas, magnificent Hindukush and the mysterious Karakoram. Furthermore, one can have a luxury of an uninterrupted and clear view of notorious Nanga Parbat and Rakaposhi. Also, it is a gateway to the world's largest glaciers, mainly Khujerab, Passu, Minapin and Ghulkin. Thankfully

now it is no longer difficult to access the many high mountains, glaciers, and lakes in the area.

The Karakoram Highway offers to its traveler a delightful experience of scenic beauty that would surely remain for life. One would be travelling while witnessing the sights of world's beautiful landscapes, the lands of fairies and djinns. Moreover, it was deemed the third-best tourism site in the country and one of the most challenging engineering feats anywhere in the world. Karakoram Highway is also known as The Silk Route that relates to a lot of beautiful stories that I will be sharing in my next article.

Historically Karakoram Highway was a trade route, famously known as the ancient Silk Road Route, used by Chinese traders on their journey toward the Middle East, Central Asia and Europe. However, under the CEPEC, the Karakoram Highway has been upgraded as a motorway. It is the sustenance for the people of Gilgit-Baltistan besides the source of economic activities. Moreover, Karakoram Highway can be viewed as the main channel of the CEPEC and its impact are evident in the whole region as a beneficiary of trade between China and Central Asia, the Middle-East and Eurasia through the Arabian Sea at Gwadar.



Minimum wage

THE benchmark of a minimum wage for workers is an established practice in a majority of countries in the world. It ensures that workers eke out a living at a bare minimum to sustain their and their families' lives. The Sindh High Court has issued notices to the secretary labour and human resource department and secretary of the Minimum Wage Board on a petition of traders' associations that challenges the minimum monthly wage of Rs25,000 by the government of Sindh. Businesspersons and traders claim that this level of minimum wage would lead to the closure of their businesses. Unfortunately, in this claim not only is the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) the prime petitioner, but the Sindh Industrial Trading Estate (SITE) associations and other bodies too are demanding the withdrawal of the minimum wage limit. Workers had been relieved when the government of Sindh announced increasing the minimum salary from Rs17,500 to Rs25,000 per month. The petitioners are invoking the Sindh Minimum Wage Act 2015, and saying that the Sindh government has set the minimum wage without initiating statutory requirements as contained in the Act. The Sindh government, according to the petition, has acted in excess of its jurisdiction. The petitioners have also cited the fact that the increase in minimum wages announced by the federal government and other provinces was less than that announced by the Sindh government. Without going into the details of the petition, it is safe to say that the interest of the workers must be supreme in any such discussion. The well-being of millions of people depends on this meagre amount. Depriving the poorest of the poor of even this minimum wage is tantamount to snatching bread from their children's hands. There are other factors contributing to increasing costs of products in Pakistan and a minimum wage for workers is the least of them. A large spectrum of various taxes, high prices of power, bureaucratic hurdles, corruption, poor infrastructure, and low level of technical competence are some of the factors that hamper our manufacturing sector and export potential. Punishing the workers by reducing their wages is not a good idea. The workers in this country are already under tremendous duress; depriving them of their essential living wages would be cruel.

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Kashmir Premier League

MUCH like the Pakistan Super League, the Kashmir Premier League (KPL) is a T20 series that aims to feature Pakistan's domestic and international cricket players, except there will also be investment into cricket in Kashmir as well. This is a good opportunity for Kashmiri talent to come into the limelight, for the region to develop and for the attention to be focused on the cause of liberation that the people have been fighting for tirelessly. It is vital that the government provides KPL the platform it needs to attract international attention. After immense strife, the first ever edition of the KPL is set to begin on August 6 and will continue until August 16. Players from different cities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will take part in the matches, along with those who are overseas. The KPL is also bound to bring in some investment and attract some development in the region. There are various facilities needed to host a long sporting event that will benefit the region in the long-term as well. One can expect the occasion to be joyful as, for once, the region is witnessing some semblance of normalcy. This may just be the kind of momentary break that the people of Kashmir need and deserve. However, it seems as though India has not taken well to this as the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has threatened overseas players by saying that the doors of Indian cricket will close for them if they participate in the KPL. This politicisation of the sport has been criticised and condemned by the Pakistani government and the players alike, and rightfully so. There is no room for such antics in the world of sports especially and after the degree to which India goes to state their support for the Kashmiri cause. Logic would dictate that they, like Pakistan, would empower the people and support this event. Going out of your way to bully players coming in from abroad is not the appropriate step forward and that is something that the players themselves are also highlighting. Regardless, Pakistan must continue to support the people, talent and development of Kashmir.

Afghanistan: In the graveyard of the empires

Sajjad Ashraf

The US chose to ignore the local culture and value system called "Pashtun Wali" – the traditional lifestyle of the Pashtuns, especially the element of Nyāaw aw Badāl (justice and revenge) and continued to believe that military force alone will compel the Afghan resistance (Taliban) to give in. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. The 'forever war' has cost the \$2 trillion and has proved to be its most expensive failure. During the last 20 years, the United States has poured more than \$70 billion in weapons, equipment and training into the Afghan forces (ANSF) alone in the mistaken hope that this force will withstand the rag tag collection of irregulars

THE United States attacked Afghanistan on October 7, 2001; ejected the Taliban from power and installed a government that sustains only with the American assistance. Twenty years on, the US departed from Afghanistan this month from Afghanistan. The commanding General Scott Miller relinquished command and surfaced only when he landed in Washington.

The country has a chequered history. The last withdrawing Soviet column, led by the commanding General Boris Gromov crossed the Amu Darya bridge, in public view, into what was then Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic on Feb. 15, 1989. The Soviets had similarly intervened in Afghanistan on December 24, 1979.

Four decades of war

In the military honour system, the commander is the last to leave the post or as they say in the navy, "the captain goes with the ship." The contrast defines the two interventions into a country that has only seen war for over four decades.

In 1839, the British also had a walkover into Kabul with 21,000 troops. Falling into Afghan tactics and chivalry only one British soldier returned to Jalalabad in 1842. No wonder the British historians tagged Afghanistan as the 'graveyard of the empires.'

Early 16th century after taking over Kabul almost without a shot and settling in, when Emperor Babur wrote to his mother in Fergana Valley describing the Afghan culture of conflict and norms, the far-sighted women advised him not to stay among such people. Babur moved to India in 1526 and set up the dynasty of the Great Mughals that ruled over India for nearly 300 years.

One of history's greatest generals, Alexander the Great, negotiated his peaceful passage through Afghanistan in 327 BC and only had his first real military engagement in the plains of modern-day Pakistan. Yet the military genius must have had good reason to warn "... beware of the revenge of an Afghan." In invading Afghanistan, the Americans forgot some fundamental lessons of history and the rule that unless you are supported by the population, no military can hold its ground.

The US chose to ignore the local culture and value system called "Pashtun Wali" – the traditional lifestyle of the Pashtuns, especially the element of Nyāaw aw Badāl (justice and revenge) and continued to believe that military force alone will compel the Afghan resistance (Taliban) to give in. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. The 'forever war' has cost the \$2 trillion and has proved to be its most expensive failure.

During the last 20 years, the United States has poured more than \$70 billion in weapons, equipment and training into the Afghan forces (ANSF) alone in the mistaken hope that this force will withstand the rag tag collection of irregulars. They underestimated the yearning of the Afghans to rid their country of what they believed were foreign forces.

Paying their way into occupation again proved insufficient to cow down the Afghans. One of the highest desertion rates in the world from the ANSF also did not alert them to the faulty perceptions under which they continued to pour billions into Afghanistan.

If anyone is now expressing shock at the way the ANSF is surrendering space to

the Taliban, either they have been fed with their own lies or they still do not have any understanding of the 'graveyard of the empires.'

With the ANSF on the run, Kabul's president Ashraf Ghani is attempting to mobilise warlords whose militias are expected to push back the Taliban ascendancy in Afghanistan. But Afghanistan's previous experience is dreadful. These ethnic militias eventually turn on each other resulting in a state of anarchy.

Every dispassionate student of international politics knew from the beginning of the invasion of Afghanistan that defeating Taliban was of little interest to America and not the least was the freedom and democracy for the Afghan people. The key motive remains a forward base in the underbelly of "existential threats" to America – China and Russia. Occupation of one country – Afghanistan provides America a cover. Now, having decided to quit the US can take some consolation that the wreckage they are leaving behind will haunt their geopolitical rivals, Moscow and Beijing and other states in the region.

The American military engagement in Afghanistan goes back some 40 years when it began clandestine military support for the then resistance – Mujahideen, against the Soviet intervention. In process what they created is a new era of extremism.

The off shoots of all these groups like Mujahideen and Taliban can all be traced to the root of Cold War machinations in Afghanistan. The consequences of these interventions might continue to haunt the world for a while. Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

– Courtesy: Gulf News

Britain should not turn its back on refugees

Waheed Arian



This anti-refugee bill proposes to create a two-tier asylum system. A person fleeing war or persecution will be criminalised or jailed if their journey was not pre-authorised – thus destroying the very rationale of the convention, which deliberately emphasises not the question of how they arrived in the country

THIS week, we mark the 70th anniversary of the United Nations Refugee Convention, put in place in response to the appalling failures during the Holocaust. It is a source of great sadness for me that Britain, the country that gave me sanctuary and which has honoured me in different ways, now wants to turn its back on everything that the convention stands for.

When you are fleeing war or violence, you do not stop running until you feel safe. Two decades ago, I fled to Britain from war-torn Afghanistan. Having spent most of my childhood hiding from rockets and weathering the inhumane conditions of refugee camps where I survived tuberculosis, I arrived in the United Kingdom as a traumatised 15-year-old. Separated from family, I had little formal education and a total of \$100 to my name.

In a place of safety, I was able to rebuild my life. I was proud to be honoured for my achievements in healthcare and innovation both by Priti Patel, now Britain's home secretary, and by the then prime minister, Theresa May. And yet: the British government today is closing the doors to others like me, with their own hopes and dreams, with its proposed Nationality and Borders Bill.

This anti-refugee bill proposes to create a two-tier asylum system. A person fleeing war or persecution will be criminalised or jailed if their journey was not pre-authorised – thus destroying the very rationale of the convention, which deliberately emphasises not the question of how they arrived in the country but why they were forced to flee their home

in the first place. Under this proposed legislation, I would not have been given the chance to learn English, study medicine at Cambridge University, and become a doctor fighting coronavirus in the UK. If I were fleeing for my life today, I would be denied an asylum hearing and summarily deported.

Most people fleeing war or persecution do not have the "luxury" of accessing pre-authorisation, desirable though that may be. Back in Afghanistan, there was no "legal" escape route available to me or other civilians caught in midst of gunfire and shelling. And this is also the case now for the 1 percent of the world's population that has been forcibly displaced because of conflicts – a minuscule proportion of whom end up on the UK's shores. The Refugee Convention, which Britain contributed to after the horrors of World War II, could not be clearer: the right to seek asylum is universal, regardless of how refugees reach your shores. Governments may not impose penalties based on the method of arrival if they can "show good cause". By focusing on "how" vulnerable people are entering the UK, over a principled duty to protect them, Britain threatens to breach its own international commitments and turn its back on people who need it the most.

The other threat this bill poses is an existential one. Anti-foreigner and anti-refugee sentiments have been creeping into UK politics; a departure from the kindness and compassion that was shown to me by the British government and people in past decades. The heart-breaking images of desperate people coming

across the English Channel in small boats have been presented to our nation as a "refugee crisis". Yet, the UN refugee agency recorded that in 2020, the UK received just below a third as many asylum applications as Germany and about two-fifths the number as France.

As American troops withdraw from Afghanistan and my friends and family back home endure escalating violence, I cannot help but feel history is repeating itself. Except, I fear that the people looking to Britain for safety will be denied it in the most ruthless way.

Refugees have long been part of the fabric of Britain. They have enriched our health and education system, as well as our culture and community. Not long after I qualified, I set up Arian Telehealth, a charity that uses technology to connect doctors in war zones with low resources to clinicians in the UK National Health Service to exchange medical expertise. In many ways, it personified the "global Britain" that we were promised after Brexit. It made one thing clear – diversity of experience and knowledge benefits everyone – and in many cases, saves lives.

The 70th anniversary of the Refugee Convention should serve to remind Britain of its proud history of offering protection to people like me. It must now step up and play its part in an increasingly dangerous world. The way we treat people is emblematic of the country we wish to be. On this anniversary, the message to the British government must be clear: give us a compassionate and fair approach to asylum – one that global Britain deserves.

– Courtesy: Al Jazeera

Briefs



Medal Count

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
USA	20	23	16	59
China	24	14	13	51
ROC	12	19	13	44
GB	10	10	12	32
Japan	17	5	9	31

China out of Olympic women's volleyball

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: Defending champion China was knocked out of the women's volleyball quarterfinals of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games here on Saturday while ROC, Turkey and South Korea secured their berths in the top eight round. China swept Italy 25-21, 25-20 and 26-24 for its first win in four tries Saturday evening, but it came a little bit too late. "Before the start of the match, we already know that we have no chance to advance to the quarterfinals, but we are eager to play a good game and earn a victory," said China head coach Lang Ping.

The Russian Olympic Committee team hammered the previously unbeaten American women 25-20, 25-12 and 25-19 to improve to a 3-1 win-loss record.

Nataliya Goncharova led the Russian spikers with 26 points while Jordan Thompson was forced out of the match after sustaining an ankle injury in the beginning of the second set.

"It's not a major ankle sprain. It's somewhere between mild and medium. We'll learn more about the extent," said USA head coach Karch Kiraly. "I've heard she'll be back in action within a few days, which means maybe she's unlikely for Italy [on Monday] but we're hopeful beyond that."

Lyu Xiaojun, staying young forever

DNA

TOKYO: Age could really be just a number for a heart of champion. At least that's the case of Lyu Xiaojun, the 37-year-old Chinese weightlifter, who made history by winning gold in the men's 81kg category, along with three new Olympic records at Tokyo 2020. When he was competing with the other nine weightlifters - all in their 20s - on Saturday, Lyu showed no fear, but exuded confidence all the way.

"I never see him as a 37-year old. In my eyes, he is always 23 or 24 years old around, in terms of the physical state or the ability to compete, he is pretty much the same as he was young," said Yu Jie, head coach of China's men's weightlifting team.

Although he was the favorite in the men's 81kg category, Lyu did not let the illusion conquer his mind. His younger rivals have made burgeoning progress, posing challenges in a series of continental competitions, and are eager to create a new era in Tokyo. In the final competition on Saturday evening, despite failing on his first snatch attempt at 165kg, Lyu eventually regrouped to lift a new Olympic record of 170kg in the snatch.

Chen wins gold in badminton

DNA

TOKYO: China's top seed Chen Yufei defeated Chinese Taipei's world No.1 Tai Tzu-ying in badminton women's singles final to win the gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics here on Sunday.

Scores seasawed from the onset before Chen led from a 17-17 tie to 21-18. Chen raced to a 11-8 lead in the second game, but Tai recovered from 12-14 down to win 21-19. In the decider, Chen dominated to clinch a 21-18 victory, thus winning the final 2-1. Chen, 23, who is a two-time bronze medalist at world championships, harvested her first Olympic gold in her Olympic debut. Earlier in the day, India's No.7 Pusarla Venkata Sindhu beat Chen's teammate He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 to bag the bronze.

India afraid of Kashmir Premier League popularity

Murad Saeed criticized Indian government behaviour meant to discourage foreign players from taking part in the KPL. The Indian government and their cricketing board behaviour clearly mean that they are afraid of KPL popularity

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communication and Postal Services Murad Saeed criticized the Indian government behaviour meant to discourage foreign players from taking part in the Kashmir Premier League (KPL) as they are afraid of KPL popularity.

He was speaking during the unveiling ceremony of first RISJA Inter-Media Independence Cup cricket tournament with the collaboration of Park View at the National Ground on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion the Minister expressed excitement on the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) decision to hold an Inter-Media event. "Journalists stay busy all the time, keeping the country updated on news. They also need entertainment. I hope that the event will help them to have some fun."



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for communications Murad Saeed giving cricket shirt to participating team during unveiling ceremony of RISJA Inter Media Independence Cup at Islamabad. - DNA

Murad Saeed said he always supported healthy activities. "By such a way you stay active and healthy which is important." He thanked sponsors Park View and

RISJA for making efforts to organise the event. Murad Saeed criticized Indian government behaviour meant to discourage foreign players from taking part

in the Kashmir Premier League (KPL). "The Indian government and their cricketing board behaviour clearly mean that they are afraid of KPL popularity. They are

using negative tactics to pressurize foreign players which is totally unjust." Former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Governing Board member Shakil

Sheikh also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the importance of sports events for journalists. "It is encouraging to see all leading media houses taking part in the event."

Chairman RISJA Mohi Shah thanked guests for taking time out. President RISJA Ayaz Akbar highlighted salient features of the event. Rs half a million will be awarded to the winner of the event while Rs quarter million will be given to the runners up. The are also cash prizes for the Bowler of the Tournament, Batsmen of the Tournament and Man of the Match for each match.

Ten teams have been divided into two Groups while Zain Qureshi (MNA) will lead the Parliamentarian team. The star-studded Parliamentarian team will be included by all leading MNAs who were part of the team that won the international tournament held in England in 2018.

Italy's Jacobs wins first post Bolt Olympic 100m gold



AGENCIES

TOKYO: Italy's Lamont Marcell Jacobs outshone a field of unusual suspects to claim a shock Olympic gold in the men's 100 metres on Sunday, breaking retired Jamaican star Usain Bolt's 13-year hold on the blue riband event. Jacobs, 26, timed a European

record of 9.80 seconds, with American Fred Kerley taking silver in 9.84sec in one of the most understated major championship 100m races of recent times.

Canada's Andre de Grasse, a bronze medalist at the 2016 Rio Games, repeated the feat in 9.89sec. The athletes were introduced in a dramatic light show - the stadium flood-

lights were shut off and 12 projectors cast 3D images of the world, zooming in to the Tokyo skyline, and then the name of each sprinter. The lights came back on, swiftly followed by a horrendous false start for Zharnel Hughes in lane four, the Anguilla-born Briton not even bothering to question his disqualification. Dressed in

light blue singlet and lycra shorts, the US-born Jacobs, in lane three, made a good start, held his nerve through the drive phase and powered through to the line. Jacobs joyously ran into the arms of Italian teammate Gianmarco Tamperi, who had just shared gold in the men's high jump and was waiting at the finish line. The race, run in stifling temperatures of 30 degrees Celsius (84 Fahrenheit), had a distinctly underwhelming build-up and feel to it as hot favourite Trayvon Bromell bombed out of the semi-finals in which China's Su Bingtian and Jacobs unexpectedly set Asian and European records respectively. The Tokyo Olympics are the first since Athens in 2004 to take place without Bolt, who went on to win three consecutive Olympic 100m titles in Beijing, London and Rio de Janeiro, as well as three straight 200m crowns. And for the first time since the 2000 Sydney Games, there was no Jamaican in the final. Bolt's long-time former teammate Yohan Blake failing to qualify from his semi-final.

French boxer stages ringside sit-in protest

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: A French super-heavyweight boxer lashed out at an "injustice" and sat in protest on the side of the ring after he was disqualified for headbutting in the Tokyo Olympics quarter-finals Sunday. In what was the first major controversy in the boxing in the Japanese capital, Mourad Aliev was disqualified in the second round against Britain's Frazer Clarke. The 26-year-old Aliev sat beside the ring ropes afterwards, seething, and claimed that officials had admitted they had made a mistake.

"I sat down to protest against the unfairness for me," he said. "I prepared for these Games for four years... I really wanted to fight against the injustice, so that was my way to show that I don't agree with that decision." He added: "So the judges went to discuss together to know what happened. They said that I would have won, however it was already written that I was disqualified so the decision cannot be unmade. "It was already too late." Aliev said that the referee had failed to give him any warning before the bout was called off. "I was just stopped without any warning and they just told me that 'you lost' - just like that," he said. "So I think it was an act of sabotage." Clarke, who had cuts to both eyes, called the situation "confusing". "The referee made his decision, that's what he's there to do. There's a bunch of great referees and officials here so you know we have to believe in what they do. "I think they've done whatever they deemed to be correct." Clarke said that he told Aliev "to calm down".



Bashir eyes medal round qualification



DNA

TOKYO: Pakistan's national champion, shooter Ghulam Mustafa Bashir has shown impressive performance in stage one of 25m rapid fire pistol shooting competition at Tokyo Olympics 2020.

27 shooters were part of stage one on Sunday where they played 30 shots. As many shots will

be played in stage two tomorrow and the top six will qualify for the medal round. Country's top shooter GM Bashir ended day one with 293 points after playing six series of five shots each in three different time brackets in stage one. He's placed at 6th position.

On the other hand, Khalil Akhtar is placed at the 16th position with a total of 286 points after the end of stage 1. According to the rules, each shooter has to play six series of five shots each. Two series in eight seconds, two in six seconds, and two in four seconds. A shooter has to fire one shot at each of the five targets within a specified time limit for the series.

A 'sense of achievement' for young Pakistani who summited K2

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A young mountaineer who last week scaled the second-highest mountain on earth, said on Sunday he felt a "sense of achievement" as he stood atop the K2 summit and hoisted the Pakistani flag. Located in the Karakoram Range in northern Pakistan near the country's border with China, K2 is considered by many to be the most dangerous mountain in the world for climbers. It's nicknamed the "savage mountain."

Kashif, wearing a thick brown jacket, noted that K2 has several dangerous points along the route

carried all gadgets and luggage by myself," Kashif told The Associated Press in an interview. He said he received a lot of help from Nepali Sherpas, however. Sherpas are known for their endurance at high elevations and often serve as guides for foreign mountain climbers. Located in the Karakoram Range in northern Pakistan near the country's border with China, K2 is considered by many to be the most dangerous mountain in the world for climbers. It's nicknamed the "savage mountain."

Kashif said the mountaineering management in Pakistan cooperated with him to make his climb a success and he said his parents were grateful, too. He said he experienced a sense of achievement becoming the youngest mountaineer to scale K2. Showing a reporter a video clip on his mobile device during the interview, Kashif was seen praying after reaching the summit. Haidri, secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan, said Kashif brought honor to Pakistan. He "became the pride of the nation and we will recommend to the gov-

ernment a high reward for him," he said. Kashif said he started mountaineering when he climbed a small peak at age 11 and then gradually moved on to greater heights. "I received mountaineering training and technical assistance and moved on to big mountains in which the dangerous and difficult mountains K2, Broad Peak and Mount Everest are included," he said. In May, Kashif became the youngest Pakistani to scale Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world. Haidri said Kashif now holds the additional distinction of being the youngest person to reach the summit of both K2 and Everest.

India, Belgium join Australia, Germany in semis

Dutch goalie Pirmin Blaak recognised Charter's role in the shootouts. "Charter saved a few and it was hard to get pressure on the Aussies," he said

SPORTS DESK

TOKYO: India reached the semi-finals of the men's hockey tournament at the Olympics for the first time since 1980 thanks to a 3-1 win over Britain on Sunday to set up a showdown with Belgium at the Tokyo Games. Australia and Germany will contest the other semi-final.

India, who had won the last of their eight Olympic hockey gold medals at the 1980 Moscow Games, led 2-0 at halftime thanks to goals by Dilpreet Singh and Gurjant Singh. After conceding a goal in the 45th minute, India sealed the win when Hardik Singh made it 3-1

with just minutes left to play. Belgium ended Spain's run with a 3-1 victory, including two goals from top-scorer Alexander Hendrickx. Earlier on Sunday, Australia reached the semi-finals by beating the Netherlands in a penalty shootout in sizzling Tokyo heat, while Germany overcame Argentina. A powerful performance by goalkeeper Andrew Charter, who kept a clean sheet in the shootouts - won 3-0 by Australia after the score was 2-2 at the end of regular playing time - helped the Kookaburras win the match. "It's bloody amazing," said Charter. "To come out here and carry the burden for a bit, it's good for my confi-

dence and it's good for the team defensively moving forward." The Australians had pulled ahead twice in the game, thanks to two goals by Tom Wickham, only to see the hard-fighting Dutch side equalise through goals by

Mink van der Weerden and Jeroen Hertzberger. Dutch goalie Pirmin Blaak recognised Charter's role in the shootouts. "Charter saved a few and it was hard to get pressure on the Aussies," he said.



"I think if you miss three (penalty shots) and they score three, they deserve to win." The result meant the Dutch men's squad will not feature in the semi-finals of the Olympic hockey tournament for the first time since 1984.

Australia will face Germany on Tuesday after the Germans secured an easy victory over Olympic champions Argentina. Germany opened the score in the 19th minute when defender Lukas Windfeder shot a penalty corner low and hard at the left side of the goal, leaving Argentina goalkeeper Juan Vivaldi no chance to stop the ball. Ten minutes into the sec-

ond half, the German side added to their advantage after scoring through another penalty corner, which gave them little left to fear from the Argentinians. "It's hot weather and hot-minded Argentina and we just want to keep it cool and play our German style and I think we did exactly that," said forward Christopher Ruhr. The fourth quarter saw one goal from each side, including Windfeder's second, leaving the final score at 3-1. Reporting by Daniel Leussink; Editing by Lincoln Feast, Shri Navaratnam, Ana Nicolai da Costa, Hugh Lawson and Pritha Sarkar.

Pak banks in Scandinavia, Uzbekistan

FROM PAGE 01

he will oversee the development of sports in the country. He also addressed questions related to price hike and assured government will do its best to provide relief to masses.

The prime minister, stressing the importance of electronic voting machines (EVMs), said former US president Donald Trump could not prove rigging in the presidential elections as America uses EVMs.

The prime minister said he had been inviting the Opposition for electoral reforms for a year, but they paid no heed and showed no interest in this regard. Speaking about the July 25 Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections, he said the "umpires" and the sitting government belonged to the PML-N; the police and the election staff were also chosen by them. "Given all this, how [can it be said] the elections were rigged?" The premier said Sialkot was the party's stronghold, but they lost the by-election there as well, adding that the only way to eliminate rigging was EVMs.

Asad urges masses to follow SOPs

FROM PAGE 01

we will be able to protect our people from the current wave and without affecting their employment.

Speaking on the occasion, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Dr. Faisal Sultan asked the citizens to strictly follow COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to prevent the disease in the wake of sudden increase in the number of infections in the country.

Dr. Faisal said that this disease expansion had caused a burden on the country's health system as Covid cases were jumping up for the past few weeks. He said that the number of confirmed Corona cases was increasing while the rising trend was also observed in a number of critical patients admitted in hospitals across the country. He added daily reported cases figure was also high in Karachi.

He said that keeping in view the disease risk the government will take effective steps to protect its citizens. He said that this time is not of any complacency rather strict compliance of SOPs.

FM Qureshi says India biggest hurdle in...

FROM PAGE 01

The citizens in IIOJK have been deprived of basic rights, said Qureshi. Following efforts from PM Imran Khan, the Kashmir issue was discussed after 63 years in United Nations, said FM Qureshi. Now, the international community is raising voices in support of innocent Kashmiris, who are facing brutalities by occupied forces.

The Kashmir issue has become a globally recognized issue following efforts of incumbent government of PTI, remarked Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

Shah Mahmood Qureshi observed that Pakistan Tehreek Insaf had become the most popular political party in the country. Similarly, he said, the country is heading towards matchless progress under the vibrant leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

Qureshi hinted that the government was striving hard to overcome inflation. He hoped that country would witness more positive economic changes very soon.

The fourth wave of pandemic coronavirus is a big challenge for the government. He however urged people to follow precautions in this regard.

He suggested Sindh government to make strategy after complete consultation with National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) in order to combat the pandemic effectively.

Qureshi also lauded performance of Multan Waste Management Company especially on occasion of Eid ul Azha. On this occasion, Special Assistant to CM Punjab, MPA Javed Akhtar Ansari, and many other local PTI workers were also present.

Briefs

Iran's Raisi set to focus on economy

TEHRAN: Iran's ultra-conservative Ebrahim Raisi will be inaugurated on Tuesday as the new president of the Islamic republic, a country mired in deep economic crisis and hit by crippling US sanctions.

He replaces moderate president Hassan Rouhani, whose landmark achievement was the 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and six world powers. Raisi, 60, will have to tackle the nuclear talks aimed at reviving the deal from which the US unilaterally withdrew. Two days after Tuesday's inauguration by the Islamic republic's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Raisi will take the oath before parliament. He won June's election when more than half the voters stayed away after many political heavyweights were barred from standing.

A former judiciary chief, Raisi has been criticised by the West for his human rights record.

Iran's economic problems, exacerbated by the American sanctions, will be the new president's greatest challenge, according to Clement Therme, a researcher at the European University Institute in Italy. "His main objective will be to improve the economic situation by reinforcing the Islamic republic's economic relations with neighbouring countries," Therme told AFP. "The goal would be to build a business model that would protect Iran's economic growth from American policies and decisions." Therme believes Raisi's main priority will be to "remove US sanctions" so Iran can bolster trade with its neighbours and non-Western countries such as China and Russia.

India reports 41,831 new Covid cases

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally rose to 31,655,824 on Sunday as 41,831 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours across the country, showed the federal health ministry's latest data.

As many as 541 deaths were recorded since Saturday morning, taking the death toll to 424,351. There are still 410,952 active cases in the country with an increase of 2,032 during the period. A total of 30,820,521 people have recovered and been discharged from hospitals so far, with 39,258 new recoveries. — APP

Greek firefighters battle to extinguish forest blaze

ATHENS: Nearly 300 firefighters, two water bomber planes and five helicopters were battling Sunday to put out a forest fire in Greece that has so far destroyed around 20 homes and injured eight people, authorities said.

Five villages have been evacuated and eight people hospitalised with burns and respiratory problems since the fire broke out early Saturday near Patras, in the Peloponnese, about 210 kilometres (130 miles) west of Athens, the firefighting service said.

A motorway in the region was shut down as was the Rio-Antirio bridge across the Gulf of Corinth connecting the Peloponnese and mainland Greece, the ANA news agency reported.

Hospitals in Patras and the neighbouring city of Aigio were put on notice to admit any injured people, while the coastguard has been on standby to rescue any swimmers overcome by smoke. According to the civil protection agency, 58 forest fires have broken out over the past 24 hours, although most were quickly brought under control.

Greece is hit by forest fires every summer, but experts have warned that global warming increases both their frequency and intensity. The country has been in the grip of another heat wave since Friday, with temperatures hovering between 42 and 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit), weather forecasters say. — APP

PM Imran Khan's vision making way to Central Asia

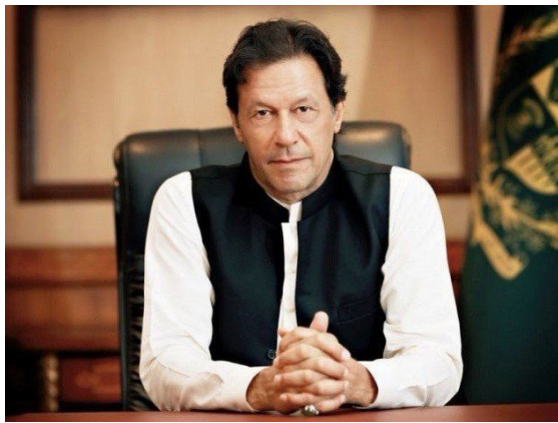
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is setting new targets of development by creating economic linkages with Central Asia and taking the pathway of regional prosperity that traverses through a peaceful Afghanistan.

The country, after its significant shift from the geo-strategic to geo-economic policies in line with the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan, has embarked upon a journey where all roads of regional integration lead to progress. The government is focusing on regional connectivity with five-landlocked Central Asian states - Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, to witness a major economic upturn in near future. However, it has termed peace in Afghanistan as the "foremost factor" to materialize

such a vision of prosperity. Imran Khan at several occasions has emphasized that of all nations, Pakistan is the one "most interested" in the resumption of peace in Afghanistan for its own interests.

"Pakistan is concerned for peace in Afghanistan because the country's economic strategies greatly depend on it," he said, in a recent interaction with the visiting Afghan journalists in Islamabad.

A peaceful Afghanistan, he said, could act as a corridor for Pakistan's trade route to Central Asian states besides benefitting itself from Pakistan's Gwadar seaport. Pakistan, Uzbekistan, and Afghanistan on February 2, 2021 had agreed to a roadmap for construction of a 573-kilometer route from



Mazar-e-Sharif to Peshawar, via Kabul.

The project, with an estimated cost of US \$ 5 billion, will open Pakistani seaports on the Arabian Gulf to Uzbekistan and continue Afghanistan's gradual integration into the Central Asian economic system.

The new corridor will improve connectivity with an annual transit potential of up to 20 million tons of cargo transportation. Prime Minister Imran Khan and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in a virtual meeting on April 14, had supported construction of

'Termez-Mazar-e-Sharif-Kabul-Peshawar' railway line, calling it an important initiative to establish connectivity from Central Asia to Arabian Sea through Afghanistan and Pakistani sea ports of Karachi, Gwadar and Qasim.

Prime Minister Khan, during a recent visit to Uzbekistan in July, had stressed that Pakistan's trade relationship was going to depend on how quickly the countries were able to connect with each other. He termed the trans-Afghan railways project as the most important project for Uzbekistan and Pakistan. "For Pakistan, it connects us to Central Asia, to Uzbekistan which is the biggest of the Central Asian republics and beyond," he said.

The regional connectivity also promises an immense

potential for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor to benefit the entire Central Asian region in areas of transport, fiber optic cable, energy pipelines, and investment opportunities in Special Economic Zones. In his address to the leaders participating in the Tashkent's 'Central and South Asia Summit on Opportunities and Challenges' in July, the prime minister spoke about the situation in Afghanistan, where he said Pakistan wanted a political settlement in the neighbouring country for "mutually beneficial" connectivity between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, and also other Central Asian countries. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry has also linked regional connectivity with durable peace in Afghanistan.

Pakistan to be partner at 18th CAEXPO

BEIJING: Pakistan, like previous year, will be the special partner country at the upcoming 18th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) to be held in Nanning, Capital of Guangxi Zhuang autonomous of China from Sept 10 to 13.

The Pakistan Pavilion will be established to display major export and cultural items as well as print and audio-visual material on tourist attractions of Pakistan. In addition to Pakistan Pavilion, around 25 stalls to exhibit various Pakistani products will be set up at the exhibition center of the Expo, Muhammad Irfan, Trade and Investment Counselor, Pakistan Consulate, Guangzhou told APP.

Pakistani entrepreneurs will showcase jewelry, precious stones, marble, carpets, furniture, handicrafts, and sports goods during the exhibition. Trade and Investment Conference would also be organized on sidelines of the expo as part of the celebrations of 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan, he added. Pakistan Ambassador to China, Moin ul Haque is likely address the Chinese investors and businessmen at the conference and brief them about the investment-friendly environment offered by the incumbent government in Pakistan.

According to senior Chinese government officials, the event would facilitate China and the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to further broaden trade relations under the regional free trade agreements and supported the recovery of global economy. — APP

Wildfires continue as Turkey puts out dozens

AGENCIES

ANKARA: More than 100 wildfires have been brought under control in Turkey, according to officials, as firefighters worked to battle blazes that continued in popular seaside destinations. Minister of Forestry and Agriculture Bekir Pakdemirli said on Twitter on Sunday that five fires were continuing in the tourist destinations of Antalya and Mugla, while 107 fires were "under control".

Pakdemirli's list showed fires began in 32 provinces from Wednesday onward. Six people have died, with hundreds injured and thousands evacuated from their homes. The fires in Antalya were in two districts while in Mugla, the tourist destination of Marmaris and others were hit by fire.

Police water cannon assisted helicopters and fire trucks in a village in Bodrum, a popular district in Mugla that saw panic-struck tourists being evacuated from hotels on Saturday as fire rolled down the hill towards the sea. — APP

One Nepali disappears in Mahakali River

ISLAMABAD: One Nepali has disappeared after the Indian Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) personnel cut down the Tuin rope through which the person was crossing the Mahakali River in Far West Nepal.

Kashmir Media Service reported that according to District Police Office, Darchula, Inspector, Narendra Chand, Jaisingh Dhama, 35, of Byas Gaonpalika-2 went missing after falling from Tuin while crossing the Mahakali River on Friday, reports Kantipur daily. According to the locals, after three locals crossed the Mahakali River from Tuin in the morning, two SSB personnel started to cut down Tuin when ill-fated Dhama was crossing the River and when he was about to reach the endpoint of the Tuin, the rope fell to the River along with Dhama.

Dhama was heading towards Kathmandu seeking foreign employment job. Villagers are compelled to go to the Indian village across the Mahakali River to travel to Kathmandu and other parts of the country. According to local Nabin Dhama, Dhama was the fourth person attempting to cross the Mahakali River after three persons already crossed the river.

Pakistani Cultural Center opens in Azerbaijan University of Languages



DNA

BAKU: Pakistani Cultural Center has solemnly opened at the Azerbaijan University of Languages. The ceremony was attended by Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly (lower house of the parliament) Asad Qaiser. Rector of the

university Kamal Abdulla addressed the event. In his remarks, he pointed out that the opening of the Pakistani Cultural Center will further contribute to cultural ties between the two countries.

He stressed that through this center, citizens will be able to get acquainted with Pakistani culture.

"We have already established relations with the Pakistani University of Foreign Languages and we hope that the Azerbaijan Cultural Center will open in Pakistan as well," Abdullah added. Pakistani Ambassador to Azerbaijan Bilal Hayee stressed that the opening of this center is very remarkable event.

"We want the Azerbaijani people to get acquainted with Pakistani culture through the center. We'll provide the necessary support in this. Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan - both during the 2020 Nagorno-Karabakh War and afterwards," he added. As Qaiser noted, the opening of this center will allow

the two peoples to get even closer to the Azerbaijani and Pakistani culture. "We intend to develop relations between the two countries in the field of education. We would like to develop cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan in the field of student exchange and mutual recognition of diplomas," he added.

Complications causing delay in new investment

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Association Front (PIAF) has asked the government to make the regulations and procedures of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) easy and simple, removing all irrelevant and unnecessary clauses, as they cause hurdles and delay the new investment in the country. PIAF chairman Mian Numan Kabir and vice chairman

Javed Siddiqi, in a joint statement issued here on Sunday, observed that policies and procedures in SEZs are very complicated and approach is so bureaucratic that an ordinary businessman is reluctant to shift his unit there. "To establish industrial units at SEZs the irrelevant documents are demanded by the authorities, which, actually, have no relevance, he said and added that such kind of approach should be changed, making it business-friendly rather."

Debt servicing major issue amid rising loans: APBF

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum has said that debt servicing has become the serious issue on expenditures front in the wake of rising domestic and foreign loans, as total public debt has reached Rs.38 trillion, registering an increase of Rs2.499 trillion reported during the same period of last year, yet it accounts for 80% of the GDP. Total debt of the government is standing at 70.7% of the GDP while domestic and external

debt is standing at 54% and 26% of GDP, respectively. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi said that the government's reliance on debt is a violation of the country's Fiscal Responsibility and Debt Limitation Act 2005, which states that the government must limit debt to 60% of gross domestic product while currently the ratio is standing at 78% of Pakistan's \$303 billion GDP. He says the government borrows heavily not only to finance current expenditures but also to ser-

vice existing debt. Syed Maaz Mahmood said that reforms will require growth-friendly budget, re-composition to upgrade tax, social spending, and active industrial policies in close consultation with the real stakeholders to achieve the sustainable development goals. APBF President said that amid high discount rate and instability in exchange rate, Pakistan's total debt and liabilities are skyrocketing, rising at high speed in the wake of soaring budget deficit.

Pak-Italy see new dimensions to enhance ties

Ambassador Jauhar informed me that Italian firms are investing in energy, food processing, leather, textile, construction and furnishing. He said that the Mission is promoting Joint Venture mode for Italian investment in Pakistan that will help in technology and skill transfer to our businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Italy, Jauhar Saleem on Sunday said that Pakistani-Italian bilateral relations are looking at new dimensions to enhance mutual cooperation and economic activities in different sectors.

Negotiation between both of the sides on enhancing cooperation in the fields of trade, labour market, tourism, agriculture, energy, investment, innovation and skills and media sectors are in the final stages, he said this while talking to the media through 2nd series digital 'Zoom Link' webinar organized by the embassy of Pakistan in Rome. Jauhar Saleem said that Italy and Pakistan have agreed in principle to negotiate a labour agreement that will give Pakistan comprehensive market access to

Italian labour market.

He informed that Pakistan has been included in Italian Seasonal Work Visa for 2022 which would offer an immense opportunity for our labour force working in the agriculture and services sector to come and work in Italy with legal entry mode. He informed me that Italian firms are investing in energy, food processing, leather, textile, construction and furnishing. He said that the Mission is promoting Joint Venture mode for Italian investment in Pakistan that will help in technology and skill transfer to our businesses. Jauhar Saleem said that once the travel restrictions are eased there will be an increased number of Italian investor delegations to Pakistan. He also highlighted the initiatives that have been taken to promote tourism, especially capacity building of Pakistan's tourism sector stake-



holders through Italian experts. On the multilateral front, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem informed that Pakistan has been elected President of IDLO for two years which would help in promoting Pakistan's leading role with different forums along with taking advantage of IDLO's technical assistance for Pakistan. Meanwhile, he informed that Pakistan has posted a trade sur-

plus of \$ 300 million with Italy in Fiscal year 2020-21, which is 49 percent higher than the previous year of 2019-20.

The Ambassador informed that Pakistan's exports to Italy have reached all-time high i.e. \$ 786 million in FY 2020-21. The trade surplus has been created by export enhancement and import contraction, the Ambassador said.

The value added sectors were the main drivers of this growth, he added. Moreover, Italian imports from non EU countries declined 14 percent. Pakistan posts record trade surplus and export growth in the COVID-19 hit Italian market, he said. The Ambassador said that Italy has been among the first countries in Europe that were severely hit by the pandemic. Italian GDP fell as low as 9.6 percent in 2020, which is the highest fall since World War-II, he informed.

However, despite these difficult conditions, Pakistan has not only recovered from the pandemic led export challenges but it has registered impressive growth of 9.1 percent in FY 2020-21.

While responding to a question, the Ambassador stated that despite the Indian false claim over Basmati's exclusive Geographical Indication (GI) rights in the EU and Italian market, Pakistan maintained its position as market leader in rice with 37.4 percent share whereas India supplied only 12 percent of the total imported rice in Italy. He informed that Italy hosts the largest Pakistani diaspora in the EU countries. In FY 2020-21, workers remittances from Italy reached \$601 million which is an all-time high figure, he said. He said it is 66 percent higher if compared with the annual figure of FY 2019-20 that was \$ 369 million.

Briefs

PDM postpones Karachi rally

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUIF) chief and Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) head Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday announced to postpone Karachi rally due to surging coronavirus cases in the port city. The PDM chief earlier announced to hold a rally in Karachi on August 13. PML-N leader and Secretary-General of Pakistan Democratic Movement, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, said the multi-party alliance will announce a new date of the Karachi rally once the Covid situation gets better in the provincial capital of Sindh. According to the sources, the PDM has decided to give a tough time not only to Imran Khan's PTI government but also to the PPP's Sindh government. Muttahida Qami Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) on Saturday also postponed its scheduled protest rally in Hyderabad against the Sindh government after a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases. It is pertinent to mention here that the Sindh government on July 31 imposed lockdown in the province till August to stem the spread of coronavirus cases.

'Pak declared cheapest country to live in'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib on Sunday said that Pakistan has been ranked cheapest country to live in by the World Population Review in its annual report about the "cost of living for countries in 2021".

In a series of tweets, he said the report showed that the country's cost of living was 18.58 with 225.19 million population, followed by Afghanistan and India where the cost of living was 24.51 and 25.14 with population of 39.835 million and 1.39 billion, respectively. The minister said the cost of living in Uzbekistan was 30.25, 30.69 in Nepal, 31.75 in Nigeria, 38.72 in Vietnam, 39.46 in Malaysia and 42.64 in Brazil. He said the most expensive countries to live in were Cayman Islands and Bermuda where the cost of living was 141.64 and 138.22, respectively. The cost of living in Switzerland was 122.67, while Norway had 104.49, he added. Farrukh said the metrics used by the international organization to determine cost of living in each country included rent index, purchasing power, consumer price and grocery indices.

Third spell of monsoon will continue till August 3

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Monsoon third spell continues across country as National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) Chairman Lt Gen Akhtar Nawaz on Sunday predicted that the third spell of monsoon will continue till August 3. Talking to a private news channel, the NDMA chairman said that the entire institutions plan together to cope casualties and financial losses with rains. "Modern radar system has also been installed in Karachi," he said. Lt Gen Akhtar Nawaz said that overall arrangements have been made to deal with the situation caused by the monsoon rains. "The arrangements are made at the beginning of the year to deal with any emergency. For this purpose, all the institutions play their role," he mentioned. Meanwhile, intermittent rain is lashing Lahore and turned the weather of city pleasant. On the other hand, the intermittent rain is continued in Lahore and turned the weather into pleasant.

Pakistan, US to continue with Afghan peace process

NSA Moeed Yusuf says any instability in Afghanistan will lead to rebirth of various terrorist groups there, which can create problems for the world and Pakistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: National Security Adviser Dr. Moeed Yusuf said Pakistan and the United States have agreed to continue with the Afghan peace process to ensure lasting stability in Afghanistan. Interacting with Pakistani media in Washington, he said there is a need to work jointly to avert any security vacuum in Afghanistan. He said any instability in Afghanistan will lead to rebirth of various terrorist groups there, which can create problems for the world and Pakistan. He said we have repeatedly said that Afghan soil is being used against Pakistan, which needs to be stopped. He said Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan has established sanctuaries in Afghanistan, which is a threat to Pakistan. Besides, there may be some groups which can target other

countries as well, which is a matter of concern for the United States too. Regarding his engagements with US officials, Dr Moeed Yusuf said both Pakistan and the United States are unanimous that there should be peace in Afghanistan and we are discussing technicalities to achieve this objective. He said Pakistan has played its due role and will continue to do so for peace in Afghanistan. He said that the United States is an important player and will remain relevant for stability in Afghanistan. Answering a question, Moeed Yusuf said we will react if any country attempts to use Afghan soil to destabilize Pakistan like any sovereign country. He said use of Afghan soil to undermine Pakistan is not acceptable. He said it is a well-known fact that who is involved in carrying out subversive acts against Pakistan



from Afghanistan. He urged all the stakeholders to make their sincere efforts to avert any protracted conflict or civil war in Afghanistan. He said any decision should be taken in view of the ground realities. He said the

region is agreed that there should be a joint decision and there is also a general consensus that any military takeover in Afghanistan is unacceptable. He said military takeover is against the democratic norms and human rights and

no country, especially Pakistan, can afford a civil war at its doorsteps. Answering a question, Dr Moeed Yusuf said under the current arrangements, Afghanistan's exports through Pakistan are continuing without any bar. He said Indian goods bound for Afghanistan are also being allowed through Karachi Port. He, however, transit of goods from India to Afghanistan via land route through Pakistan is not allowed due to security concerns. He said Pakistan has the right under the International Law to stop movement of goods through its territory if it feels any threat to its national security as it is a known fact that India does not let any chance go to create instability in Pakistan. Dr Moeed Yusuf said, despite all this, Pakistan, especially Prime Minister Imran Khan, has tried its best to improve

bilateral relations with India and both the countries can live like a civilized neighbours. But, unfortunately, India, at present, is being ruled by an ideologically motivated government that actively pursues Hindutva ideology. To another question, Dr Moeed Yusuf said Islamabad desires peace in Afghanistan as it is not only in the best interest of Pakistan, but it also serves the interests of other countries. He said Pakistan wants sustainability in Afghanistan's economy and will welcome any country to invest in the economic development of Afghanistan. Regarding repatriation of Afghan refugees living in Pakistan, the SAPM said we want dignified return of these refugees to their homeland. He said no country has extended generous hospitality toward Afghan refugees more than Pakistan.

Iran rejects Israeli 'baseless' accusations

WEB DESK

TEL AVIV: Israel's PM has said he knows "with certainty" Iran was involved in a deadly tanker attack off Oman, accusations Tehran called "baseless".

Two crew members died when the MV Mercer Street, operated by an Israeli-owned firm, was attacked on Thursday.

Israeli PM Naftali Bennett warned "we know how to send a message to Iran", while Tehran said it would "not hesitate to defend its interests". Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Saeed Khatibzadeh, told reporters Israel "must stop such baseless accusations".

He said of the allegations: "Whoever sows the wind reaps the whirlwind."

There have been several recent attacks on Israeli- and Iranian-operated ships. The attacks since March have been seen as tit-for-tat incidents.

A British security guard and a Romanian crew member died on the Zodiac Maritime-operated vessel, with the US pointing to a drone attack.

Mr Bennett told a cabinet meeting on Sunday intelligence evidence existed that Iran had carried out the attack. He called on the international community to make it clear that Iran had "made a serious mistake". He added: "In any case, we know how to send a message to Iran in our own way."

Punjab govt mulls smart lockdown

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar says all possible measures are being taken to protect people from the fourth wave of coronavirus. In a statement on Sunday, he said the government has issued Covid-19 related guidelines for people to contain spread of the pandemic.

The Chief Minister urged people to continue to take precautionary measures and get themselves vaccinated as it is the most effective way to remain safe from Coronavirus infection. He said the number of Coronavirus patients are increasing and smart lockdown can be imposed if the situation remains the same.



RAWALPINDI: President RCCI Nasir Mirza welcomes Korean Ambassador, Suh Sangpyo at RCCI ICEE 2021 EXPO. - DNA

Turkey: Foreign tourists evacuated from resorts

AGENCIES

ANKARA: Tourists have been evacuated from beaches in south-western Turkey, where raging wildfires are now threatening hotels and homes. Turkish Coastguard vessels - assisted by private boats and yachts - were deployed to bring holidaymakers to safety, according to local media. Two more fatalities were confirmed on Saturday. They were among the thousands of people who have been battling almost 100 separate blazes in resorts and villages on Turkey's Mediterranean and Aegean coasts - a major tourist region. Officials say all but 10 of the fires have now been brought under control. Images shared by Bodrum's mayor on Twitter show fires still burning into the early hours of Sunday morning. Local media have also shared dramatic footage showing people fleeing the area as a

fire was fast approaching the city from a forested mountain. It is unclear exactly when it was filmed. Investigators are trying to establish whether some of the fires were started deliberately, amid reports that one suspected arsonist has been detained. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday visited the town of Manavgat, where five fire-related deaths have been confirmed. Mr Erdogan vowed that the government would do everything to help hundreds of people affected by the disaster to rebuild their lives. The president has been heavily criticised for the shortage of firefighting aircraft in the country. But he said that "the main reason for these issues with planes is that the Turkish Aeronautical Association has not been able to update its fleet and technology". He added that more aircraft from Azerbaijan, Iran, Russia and Ukraine were now involved in the massive firefighting operation.

Seven casualties reported so far

The number of people who lost their lives due to massive forest fires in southern Turkey has increased to seven, the health minister announced on Sunday. Fahrettin Koca said on Twitter that the total number of deaths in Antalya's Manavgat district reached seven with the addition of two more fatalities. He said 497 of the 507 people affected by the fire in Manavgat have been discharged from hospitals. Similarly, he added, 186 of the 203 people struck by wildfires in Mugla's Marmaris and Bodrum districts have also completed their treatment. Turkish authorities maintain their tireless efforts to put out the forest fires through both aerial and ground operations. Firefighters - including a group of 100 Azerbaijani firefighters - along with locals, are at work.

Kashmir: PTI bags 3 reserved seats

DNA

MUZAFFARABAD: The PTI has extended its lead in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly after winning three women's reserved seats, while PPP and PML-N were able to bag one each, the region's election commission announced Sunday. All five candidates won unopposed. From PTI Imtiaz Naseem, Sabeha Sadique, Kausar Taqdees Gilani emerged victorious, while from PPP Nabila Ayub and from PML-N Nasaran Abbasi were the winning candidates. A total of 10 candidates had submitted their nomination papers for the reserved seats, however, five of them withdrew their names later. Polling on three other reserved seats - one each for technocrats, ulema-o-mas-haikh, and overseas Kashmiris - will be conducted on Monday as more than one candidate is contesting each category. Following the latest results, PTI has 29 seats in the AJKLA, PPP has 12, and PML-N seven.

Unvaccinated passengers stopped at airport

The passengers of Peshawar-Karachi flights have been offloaded by the airport officials for not having vaccination certificates

DNA

PESHAWAR: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has taken action against unvaccinated passengers who have been stopped from boarding the domestic flights at Peshawar airport. The passengers of Peshawar-Karachi flights have been offloaded by the Bacha Khan airport officials for not having COVID-19 vaccination certificates. Sources said that 25 unvaccinated passengers were offloaded from domestic flights. They added that the vaccination certificates for travellers are mandatory to travel through domestic flights. Those having no vaccination certificates will not be issued boarding passes. Earlier in the day, CAA issued a new travel advisory

for all passengers boarding domestic flights. According to a notification, the CAA has declared the COVID-19 vaccination certificate mandatory for passengers travelling through domestic flights from August 01. "In continuation to the steps being undertaken to curb the spread of Covid-19 in Pakistan, it has been decided by the Competent Authority that with effect from August 1, 2021, no Pakistani passenger of 18 years of age and above, will be allowed to undertake domestic air travel within Pakistan without proof of Covid-19 vaccination," read the notification. The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) on July 17 directed all employees to get themselves vaccinated against the virus by July 31.

Chinese cities test millions as coronavirus cases surge

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: Chinese cities rolled out mass testing of millions of people and imposed fresh travel restrictions as health authorities battled Sunday to contain the country's most widespread coronavirus outbreak in months. China on Sunday reported 75 new coronavirus cases with 53 local transmissions, with a cluster linked to an eastern airport now reported to have spread to over 20 cities and more than a dozen provinces. The outbreak is geographically the largest to hit China in several months after the country's successes in largely snuffing out the pandemic within its borders last year. That record has been thrown into jeopardy after the fast-spreading Delta

variant broke out at Nanjing airport in eastern Jiangsu province in July. Authorities have now conducted three rounds of testing on the city's 9.2 million residents and placed hundreds of thousands under lockdown, in an effort to curb an outbreak Beijing has blamed on the highly contagious Delta variant and the peak tourist season. They are also scrambling to track more than 5,000 people nationwide who attended a theatre festival in Zhangjiajie, a tourist city in Hunan province which has locked down all 1.5 million residents and shut all tourist attractions after four visitors tested positive. Health officials say the mini-outbreak in Zhangjiajie was sparked by travellers from Nanjing and has helped spread the disease to more than 20 cities. "Zhangjiajie has now become the new ground zero for China's epidemic

spread," virologist Zhong Nanshan told reporters Saturday. "We must cast the net wider when tracing close contacts of the Delta variant." Beijing Sunday reported three locally transmitted infections - a family living on the outskirts of the Chinese capital that had returned from Zhangjiajie, the local health bureau said. Beijing has cut all rail, bus and air links with areas where coronavirus cases have been found. The Chinese capital has also closed its doors to tourists during the peak summer holiday travel season and is only allowing "essential travellers" with a negative nucleic acid test to enter. Fresh cases were also reported Sunday on Hainan island - another popular tourist destination - as well as Ningxia and Shandong provinces, authorities said.

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