



Islamabad POST

Thursday, August 12, 2021

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PM Imran assures to extend all possible assistance to farmers

Detailed News On Page-08

Pakistan role for Afghan peace laudable

Detailed News On Page-01



Inzamam slams New Zealand's team selection

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Briefs

Maryam will not attend son's wedding

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The nikkah ceremony of PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz's son will take place in London later this month, but Maryam on Wednesday said she "will not make any request" to the government to seek permission to travel abroad on the occasion. According to the wedding invite shared on Twitter by the PML-N leader, the nikkah of Junaid Safdar with Ayesha Saif Khan, daughter of Mr and Mrs Saifur Rahman Khan, will be held on August 22.

Dr. Faisal shares details with UK

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: SAPM on Health Dr Faisal Sultan has written a letter to British Health Secretary Sajid Javid, comparing Pakistan's pandemic statistics with those of other countries in the region and pointing out "obvious discrepancies" that highlight the better situation here. In the letter, the PM's aide suggested that in order to reduce the health risk associated with travel during the pandemic, the UK may shift attention towards "interventions focused directly on traveller, rather than on other metrics".

EVM vital for free and fair elections

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology Senator Shibli Faraz says use of Electronic Voting Machines will help make electoral system rigging-free, fair and transparent for an acceptable and reliable result. He was briefing the media on Electronic Voting Machine at the Parliament House Islamabad on Wednesday. National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser and other parliamentarians were also present on the occasion.

Pakistan, Iraq pledge to solidify ties

Iraqi Prime Minister to visit Pakistan soon, solution of Afghan issue essential for regional peace: Dr. Fuad Hussein



ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Iraq Dr. Fuad Hussein has said he was worried about what was happening in Afghanistan adding he was satisfied with the role Pakistan was playing towards an amicable resolution of this conflict. He further said peace in Afghanistan is necessary for regional peace and stability

Minister of Iraq has accepted the invitation to visit Pakistan and modalities of the visit are being finalized. To a question about facilitation of Zaireen he said he will take up this issue with the Interior Minister of Iraq for better facilitation of Pakistani pilgrims. "We are going to work on that and we will solve this problem as Pakistani people are very welcome in Iraq", he added. On Palestine issue, the minister said we believe in right of self determination for the people of Palestine issue. On Yemen crisis, the minister said Yemen and other crises have regional dimensions as well therefore we think the world should join hands to seek solutions of these crises including the Yemen crises. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan wanted to have durable relations with Iraq in all fields. He welcomed Iraqi foreign minister on his first ever visit to Pakistan.

Continued on Page 06

PDM rejects electoral reforms, AJK poll results

"Nawaz Sharif will not return without getting treated", says Shahbaz

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Fazlur Rehman on Wednesday declared the electronic voting machine as the "simplest way to rig elections" as the alliance rejected the government's "unilateral" electoral reforms and Azad Jammu and Kashmir's election results. The press conference came after the Opposition alliance met in Islamabad after a two-month hiatus, during which it decided to direct all its efforts in holding "free and fair elections in the country." The meeting's participants unanimously agreed the country faces severe internal and external threats, while the incumbent government has "completely failed" in combating the prevailing threats, the PDM chief said.

Continued on Page 06

Farrukh terms PDM extinct, ineffective

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib Wednesday termed Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) extinct and ineffective. Talking to a private news channel, he said the masses had rejected the narrative of the PDM leadership and its reprehensible politics for personal gains. Farrukh said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government was working efficiently for the development and welfare of the country and people and it would complete its constitutional term. He said the PDM leadership had announced protest and public gatherings which were unnecessary and inappropriate as the country was confronting multiple challenges including COVID-19 and Afghanistan's prevailing situation. He said there was no need to hold public meetings and asked the PDM leadership to come in the parliament to play their pivotal role in legislation and electoral reforms. He said asked the opposition parties to participate in launching of Electronic Voting Machine instead of wasting time in long march. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Minister of Iraq, Dr Fuad Hussein, calls on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Dr. Alvi for boosting cooperation with Iraq

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan highly values its ties with Iraq as both countries have shared religion, culture and common aspirations. He underlined the need for further intensifying bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade and culture to bring the two countries further closer. He stated this during a meeting with the visiting Foreign Minister of Iraq, Dr Fuad Hussein, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Talking to the visiting dignitary, the President said that Pakistan strongly supported the sovereignty, political unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. He informed that Pakistan could help in the reconstruction and rebuilding of Iraq by providing skilled and trained human resources as well as doctors and engineers.

Continued on Page 06

'Kabul can fall to Taliban in 90 days'

DUBAI: The Taliban could isolate Afghanistan's capital Kabul in 30 days and potentially take it over in 90 days, a US defence official told a news agency on Wednesday, citing a US intelligence assessment. Taliban fighters have taken control of eight provincial capitals in six days, a pace that has surprised US officials. Taliban forces now control 65 per cent of Afghanistan and have taken or threaten to take 11 provincial capitals, a senior EU official said on Tuesday. The US official, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said the new assessment followed the rapid gains the Taliban had been making around Afghanistan.

Biden urges unity as Taliban make gains

The US president said he does not regret his decision to withdraw from Afghanistan

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden has urged Afghanistan's leaders to fight for their homeland as the Taliban armed group tightens its grip on the country's territory. "Afghan leaders have to come together," Biden told reporters at the White House on Tuesday, adding the Afghan troops outnumber the Taliban and must want to fight. "They have got to fight for themselves, fight for their nation." The US president said he does not regret his decision to withdraw from Afghanistan, noting that Washington has spent more than \$1 trillion over 20 years and lost thousands of soldiers. He said the US continues to provide significant air support, food, equipment and salaries to Afghan forces. Meanwhile, the Taliban

Afghan Army Chief replaced

MONITORING DESK

KABUL: Afghanistan has replaced its army chief, as Taliban militants continue to make rapid advances. President Ashraf Ghani earlier flew to the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif - traditionally an anti-Taliban bastion - to try to rally pro-government forces. The removal of the country's army chief, General Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai, was confirmed on Wednesday. He had only been in the post since June. His successor will have to deal with escalating violence across the country, as the Taliban continue their offensive now that foreign troops have all but withdrawn. US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday that he did not regret withdrawing troops after 20 years, and urged Afghan leaders to unite and "fight for their nation". More than 1,000 civilians have been killed amid fierce fighting in the past month, according to the UN.

seized three more provincial capitals in Afghanistan, officials said on Wednesday, putting nine of the nation's 34 in the armed group's hands. The fall of the capitals of Badakhshan and Baghlan provinces to the north-east and Farah province to the west put increasing

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Scapegoating must be avoided to counter spoilers: COAS

General Bajwa made these remarks during 242nd Corps Commanders' Conference held at General Headquarters

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa has presided over Two days 242nd Corps Commanders' Conference at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Wednesday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the participants took comprehensive review of global, regional and domestic security environment. The forum was given a detailed briefing on evolving situation along Pak-Afghan International Border, its implications on Pakistan's internal security, particularly in the western zone and measures being taken to tackle emerging challenges. On the occasion, the COAS expressed satisfaction over stringent measures being



taken for ensuring effective border control as part of the comprehensive Border Management Regime & asked for high level of vigil along the western Border. Reinforcing Pakistan's vision for peace, connectivity and shared prosperity, Gen Bajwa said we have made every possible effort to facilitate Afghan peace process leading towards a negotiated settlement with utmost

sincerity and will continue to do so. He said being a collective responsibility, all stakeholders have to play their part positively for enduring peace in Afghanistan which is pivotal for stability in the region. The Army Chief emphasized that misperceptions and scapegoating must be avoided to counter designs of spoilers. Taking holistic view of the multifarious security challenges faced by Pakistan in various domains in the evolving milieu, the forum underscored the need for adopting whole of nation approach. Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa also commended formations for maintaining high standards of operational readiness and providing sustained support to civil administration during ongoing national efforts against Covid-19, monsoons and national polio drive.

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Briefs

Minorities playing important role in country

FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs and Human Rights Ejaz Aslam Augustine said on Wednesday that minorities were playing a significant role in national and economic development of the country.

He said that minorities were enjoying equal rights in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan and Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar. He was addressing a seminar held under the aegis of Association of Women Awareness and Motivation (AWAM) at Quaid-e-Azam hall, District Bar Association. He said the constitution of Pakistan provided equal rights to minorities, adding that protection of minorities' rights was part of the PTI manifesto. He said that founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had provided equal right to minorities. He said the objective of observing minorities' day was to highlight the sense of protection among minorities. — APP

First ever blind scholar completes PhD

DNA

PESHAWAR: For the first time in the history of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a blind researcher completed his PhD degree from Institute of Research and Education, University of Peshawar in education for the special children in KP.

Dr Habib Nawaz, the scholar here on Wednesday successfully defended his PhD thesis wherein experts from the fields participated. In his research on education for the blind children, he found lack of facilities for blind and special children at educational institutes specified for them in the province.

He said that all such institutes were under administrative control of Social Welfare department where the officers were not having the required expertise and capacity to help the special children grow mentally and physically.

He concluded that there was so much to do for the health, hygiene, education and other matters of the special children in KP. He suggested that constitution of a special care commission for blind children in KP so that they could get proper and timely facilities at government institutions. In his message, Dr Habib Nawaz said that a blind person could also get higher education and become useful citizen of the society, adding that disable person could also fulfill their dreams provided they didn't make the physical disability an excuse and do their utmost efforts with devotion and commitment.

Crackdown on profiteers directed

PESHAWAR: Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mehsud on Wednesday directed Industrial Development Officer (IDO) for conducting market survey on supply and demand, available stock and price of sugar in market and furnishing of a comprehensive report within regarding artificial sugar shortage in the market.

He issued these directives while presiding over a meeting regarding supply and official rate of sugar in the market. Besides, Rationing Controller Shahabuddin, Deputy Director Food, Mohammad Shakeel, IDO Banaras Khan and Malik Mehr Elahi of Tanzeem-e-Tajir, president Sugar Association, district Peshawar Haji Waheed Khan also attended the meeting.

The Commissioner Peshawar directed stern action against hoarders and violators of the official rate of sugar and directed traders to ensure the sale of commodity on officially fixed rate and avoid hoarding. He also directed IDO for strict monitoring of the demand and supply of sugar and ensuring of the commodity in proportion to demand in the market. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister of Turkey, General (r) Hulusi Akar calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. — DNA

Comprehensive arrangements devised for Ashura: Minister

Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution Ch. Zaheeruddin said that peaceful Ashura Muharram demands the best departmental services so the concerned departments should perform their duties in a vigilant manner and solved even a minor complaint

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution Ch. Zaheeruddin has said that the Punjab government has made extensive security arrangements for the law and order situation during the sensitive days of Muharram. He said this while taking briefing at Deputy Commissioner's Office on the arrangements for Muharram. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, CPO Sohail Chaudhry, Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters Muhammad Khalid, Assistant Commissioner Sadar Umar Maqbool, CEO Faisalabad Waste Management Company Kashif Raza Awan, CEO Health Dr Mushtaq Sipra, Civil Defense Officer Rana Abbas and other officers were also present on the occasion. Expressing satisfaction over the arrangements made so far for Muharram, Punjab Minister said that peaceful Ashura Muharram demands the best departmental services



so the concerned departments should perform their duties in a vigilant manner and solved even a minor complaint. He said that in the coming days CCTV cameras should be used from the control rooms to monitor the movements of the people in Muharram processions and gatherings. He cleared that there should be no interruption in the departmental communication. The

Deputy Commissioner appraised about the arrangements being made regarding Muharram and said that the district administration is in close touch with the police and members of the peace committee to monitor security and administrative matters. At the same time, the atmosphere of religious harmony and tolerance was maintained. He said that 57 clerics have been banned

in the district and 80 have been gagged. During the briefing, the CPO apprised the details of the security plan for Ashura Muharram and said that additional force has been deployed at sensitive places while four-level screening of participants in processions and gatherings will be conducted. He said that a total of 443 processions and 1281 majalis will be held

which are being categorized as A, B and C and security arrangements are being implemented as per the checklist.

He also informed about flash points, combing operation, training of police and volunteers and other necessary security matters. Later, while talking to media persons, Provincial Minister for Prosecution Chaudhry Zaheeruddin said that the Punjab government under the leadership of Chief Minister Usman Buzdar was using all its resources for the peaceful conduct of Muharram and provincial cabinets in all districts to monitor the arrangements.

Appreciating the joint efforts of the district administration, police and the peace committee, he said that promotion of religious tolerance and communal harmony was essential for the establishment of peace for which the cooperation of scholars of all schools was commendable. Welcoming the media representatives, he said that the issues identified by them would be resolved on priority basis.

FCCI hails increase of exports during current FY

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Engineer Hafiz Ihtasham Javed, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) has expressed satisfaction over the exports of 284.237 million dollars during the first month of the current fiscal. In a statement issued here today, he hoped that Faisalabad would play a major role in achieving the projected target of 40 billion dollar export due to the positive and pro-export policies of the government. He said that FCCI has collected data of export

from FCCI, Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and other trade bodies on the basis of Certificates of Origin (CO) issued during the month of July. However, data from WBOC is not included in this export. He said that during this period maximum export was made by Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) which exported different products of value added sector worth 165.42 million dollars. The members of FCCI exported different items valuing 48.027 million dollars while Pakistan Textile Exporters Association (PTEA) made exports of 42.8 million dollars.



ISLAMABAD: German ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck and Rubina Shaheen, Chairperson Ameer Begum Welfare Trust pose for a photo after signing a micro project for installation of several water filtration plants across Punjab. — DNA

40 pc citizens to be vaccinated up to 14th Provincial Health Minister Dr Yasmeen Rashid appealed the media representatives to spread the message of administered against corona

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Provincial Health Minister Dr Yasmeen Rashid has said that a working plan for setting up a new dental college at Faisalabad Medical University is being finalized which is a continuation of the Punjab government's initiatives in the health sector. The Punjab government has allocated a historic budget of Rs 370 billion for the health sector this financial year, while the federal government has provided aside Rs 22 billion in addition to this. She was talking to the mediamen at Faisalabad Medical University after the meeting of syndicate. Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan, Vice Chancellor Dr Zafar Ali Chaudhry, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Afifa Shajia, Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari and members of the syndicate were also present. Punjab Minister for Health Dr.Yasmeen Rashid said that the 4th wave of corona was too dangerous and in this regard people are urged to take precautionary measures.



She appealed the media representatives to spread the message of administered against corona. She said that 1240 new cases of corona have come to light in Punjab today that is a matter of concern. She said that by August 14, five major cities Faisalabad, Lahore, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and Multan, the target is to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of 18-year-old people would vaccinated, and the administration's ongoing efforts to achieve this are commendable. She said that the syndicate has decided to set up a new dental college at Faisalabad Medical University. She said that the every family will have a health card.

and so far 8.5 million health cards have been distributed. She said that every family in DG Khan and Sahiwal has received a health card. Modern standard medical facilities are being provided for treatment. Responding to questions from media persons, the provincial minister said that those who have been vaccinated with Chinese vaccine cannot be vaccinated with other vaccines. Every hospital is directed to provide free emergency and indoor medicines to the patient. Earlier, a meeting of the syndicate was held in which it was decided to start various new programs. Some other issues were also discussed in the meeting.

149 citizens fined, dozens units sealed

DNA

PESHAWAR: The district administration imposed a fine on 149 citizens and sealed several shops over violation of the COVID-19 related standard operating procedures (SOPs) in the provincial capital on Wednesday.

A crackdown which has been launched on the directives of Commissioner Peshawar Division Riaz Khan Mehsud across the Peshawar city imposed a fine on 149 citizens at BRT stations and buses for not wearing masks.

Commissioner Riaz Khan Mehsud said the team also sealed a prominent shop and arrested its manager at University Road for violating the SOPs in addition to several other shops in the posh area of Hayatabad. He said 18 restaurants and 37 shops were sealed at various places in the city.

He said the administration also took action against violators at GT road and sealed 13 'Rent A car' and transport terminals. The commissioner urged shopkeepers to follow COVID-19 related SOPs in order to stop the spread of pandemic, adding, no leniency could be tolerated against violators.

CM urged to allow business on Friday

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA), has appealed to Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murtaza Ali Shah in the best economic interest of the country to allow business to open on Friday, August 13 & August 20, 2021 due to Independence Day & Muharram-ul-Haram holidays, which will help overcome the serious economic crisis caused by the Corona epidemic. In an Appeal, Hanif Lakhany, Vice President, Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) & Senior Vice Chairman Pakistan Yarn Merchants Association (PYMA), Farhan Ashrafi, Vice Chairman PYMA & convener FCCCI's Central Standing Committee on Yarn Trading, said that the Sindh government had already issued orders to close businesses for two days on Friday and Sunday to curb the spread of the corona epidemic, but there was also a holiday on Sunday after the August 14 holiday.

Due to which business activities will be closed for 3 consecutive days including Friday which is not in any way in favour of the economy in the current situation. PYMA office-bearer added that similarly, on 9th Muharram-ul-Haram on Wednesday 18th August and 10th Muharram-ul-Haram on Thursday 19th August 2021, after public holidays, business will be closed again on Friday due to COVID-19 SOPs.

Punjab reports 1217 Covid cases

DNA

FAISALABAD: In Punjab 1217 coronavirus positive cases diagnosed and 17 persons succumbed to the virus disease in 24 hours, provincial health minister told media in Faisalabad on Wednesday.

According to a media, Health Minister Yasmin Rashid said that 70 percent Covid-19 cases in the province belong to delta variant of the virus, which spreads and infects rapidly. "We can protect ourselves from the virus with compliance of the SOPs and rapid vaccination," Rashid said.

"Hopefully 40 percent people of five big cities are expected to be vaccinated by August 14," health minister told media. "Here in Faisalabad 1.324 people have been vaccinated till now," Yasmin Rashid said. In last 24 hours 31,000 people have been inoculated in Faisalabad, health minister said. "Regrettably, some countries have blacklisted us but not India, which has more infection rate in relation to us," the minister said. The government is trying to provide maximum facilities in health sector.

Article 20 envisages religious freedom: CJP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Constitution of Pakistan is indeed a comprehensive document for basic human and minority rights, said on Wednesday Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Gulzar Ahmed as the country observes the National Minority Day. The top judge said while addressing a ceremony to commemorate the day, there are some works to be undertaken by the federal government in order to ensure minority rights, as enshrined in the law, are duly observed. The attorney general is a legal representative of the federal and he may look into the demands made by the minority communi-

ties, while I can assist on the legal aspect of the matter, CJP said. Article 20 of the Constitution envisages religious and basic freedom to every citizen of the country, he said, and added that every religion in this country is

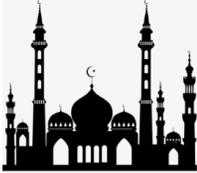
free to establish their places of worship. If any feudal lord imperils anyone from the minority community, the doors of the court are always open, he reassured the minorities in Pakistan. Separately, it may be

reminded that the National Minority Day was being observed to commemorate the contribution of minorities in the progress of Pakistan. The day was observed to recall the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad

Ali Jinnah and to reaffirm the commitment that despite belonging to different faiths, we are one nation. Events, seminars, and social gatherings are arranged across the country on the day by members of various religious minorities.



SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	03:55 am
Zohr.....	12:13 pm
Asr.....	05:01 pm
Maghrib.....	06:59 pm
Isha.....	08:30 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

Serena Hotel.....	111 133 133
Marriott.....	051-2826121
Monal.....	0334-5421812



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
Bomb Disposal.....	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....	1122 & 16
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Motorway Police.....	9266044
Motorway Police.....	9270601-20
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Rawalpindi.....	9270601-20



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CAA.....	9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....	5611111
MH.....	5611116
Cantt Hospital.....	9270907-11
DHQ.....	5556311-4
RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



Departments

CDA.....	9221334-43
CDA.....	9208301-04
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TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board.....	9270151-3



Complaints

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11.....	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8.....	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi.....	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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Pak-Bangladesh experts call for direct air, sea links

China's Belt Road Initiative has established a regional connectivity network that can be beneficial for regional cooperation

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pak - Bangladesh experts have called for direct air and sea links to enhancing trade and political relations. Former Special Secretary Finance Pakistan, Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan has suggested an alternative of SAARC i.e., establishing South Asian Economic Bloc, where the decisions must be based on consensus rather than being dictated by the powerful member such as India. He suggested this in a webinar organized by Islamabad based think tank "Pakistan House" on the subject of "Sharing Future Economic Progress: Potential Avenues for Collaborations between Pakistan and Bangladesh". Director General Pakistan House Muhammad Athar Javed shared that the webinar is the continuation of previous webinar, which was on the Economic Co-

operation between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The sole objective of the latest webinar is to explore opportunities for Pakistan-Bangladesh relations and put forward recommendations. Dr. Ashfaq Hassan, while participating as keynote speaker said that SAARC is no more a vibrant and significant regional organization that does not mean that one-fifth population of the world should be deprived of regional connectivity. It is also imperative to note down the role of China in regional connectivity. China's Belt Road Initiative has established a regional connectivity network that can be beneficial for regional cooperation. Pakistan, Bangladesh along with China's expertise and resources can utilize this network for developing a new regional bloc. "Volume of Pak-Bangla trade is fluctuating. The trade volume has been in the favor of Pakistan. Overall trade with Bangladesh



amounts to 1% only remaining the same for years. There are many prospects to collaborate in trade areas but there are certain problems that bar the countries from establishing strong trade ties. Most importantly, both produce more or less the same products e.g., cotton oriented. The prospects for economic development will remain stagnant if both countries do not move towards diversifying their

trade." He concluded. Mr. Shibly Abdullah, Accounting and Business Studies Charles Sturt University Australia said that Pak-Bangla FTA could not be processed. Bangladesh is facing trouble with rising prices of yarn import for six months. Pakistan is one of the largest producers of yarn which can be helpful. Pak-Bangla economies can be complementary to each other, rather competitive in

the industry of jute, leather, and textile etc. Another untapped area is the scenic natural beauty of both sides. Governments can prepare attractive tourism packages to engage people along with economic activities. PM Bangladesh invites Pakistani businessmen from IT and several other fields to help in bridging the gaps. Digital platforms are opening new doors and digital transformation can be very beneficial for both countries in generating global GDP. Another good news is BRI which is going to connect Pakistan and Bangladesh with several other States. We see discussions underway regarding collaboration and potential areas including sports and surgical goods, pharmaceuticals etc. Bangladesh' strategic vision is to attract new capital to enhance the activities in engineering, renewable energy sector etc. Another untapped industry is entertainment.

Dr. Reza Kibria, Economist from Dhaka shared that there is a lack of communication that needs to be improved and easy travel policies should be promoted. There is less interaction between the top business communities. There is no direct flight, no direct trade from Chittagong to Karachi, this needs to be addressed. Bangladesh can become a gateway to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). South Asia is the region of future connectivity in South and Southeast Asia. Bangladesh is playing a leading role in the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) which groups together Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, and Bhutan in a forum for multilateral cooperation. Pakistan is the gateway to Central Asia.

Commercial use of buildings in ICT continues

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The commercial use of residential houses in the city is still underway but the Capital Development Authority (CDA) is handsless. A number of houses have been converted into rest houses, hostels and schools but the CDA is not taking stringent actions on such matters. Three sectors including I-8, G-9 and G-6 were examined for this purpose and it was found that commercial use of buildings is underway in these sectors but the relevant Authority is not taking any action against such buildings. The courts had earlier asked CDA to take action against the owners of such buildings but no progress has been observed in this regard. When an owner of a rest house was asked as for how long he has been running his business at his residence. He said he has been running this rest house for over 4-and-half year, adding many times CDA asked them through notices to stop this business but they didn't pay heed to such directions. This is the sorry state of affairs of our society. Till the time, the institutions do not take such issues seriously, they will remain as it is.

FBR for tax exemption on Covid equipment

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Wednesday extended sales tax exemption on import of medical equipment and machines aimed at tackling the spread of coronavirus pandemic. The FBR has issued a detailed notification regarding a relief on the imports of virus-related medical equipment. The tax authority has extended the tax exemption from July 9 to December 31, 2021. According to the notification, there will be no sales tax on the import of coronavirus testing kits, N-95 facemasks, PCR kits, X-ray machines, Neulblizers, Ultrasound Machines, ECG machines, surgical masks, face shields, syringes and other items to fight the fourth wave of the coronavirus. It is to be noted that the exemption was firstly given from 25 November 2020 to July 2021, which has now been extended.

Efforts of Islamabad police marvelous towards effective policing: SAPM

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Capital Development Authority (CDA) Affairs, Ali Nawaz Awan on Wednesday acknowledged the efforts of Islamabad police for introducing best reforms in the department with the purpose to provide maximum relief to the citizens. This is the first time that the police department has been performing tasks without political pressure and taking indiscriminate actions against influential people, land grabbers and drug mafia, he said while addressing at the concluding ceremony of two-day course for investigation officers (IOs) at police lines headquarters. DIG (Headquarters) Kamran Adil, AIG (Establishment) Dr. Naveed Atif, SSP (Headquarters) Muhammad Omer Khan, Director Safe City Syed Bilal and senior police officials also attended the concluding ceremony. Following the directions of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman, capacity building training courses have been started for the policemen. One of the course titled 'Digital Sample Evidence Course' was held at School of Information Technology, Police Line Headquarters. The lectures were delivered during the course to collect evidences from the crime scene by using latest technology and 25 investigation officers of Islamabad police participated in it. Mr. Ali Nawaz Awan said the department was progressing due to the sincere efforts of police officials and jawans towards accomplishing their responsibilities. He also appreciated the capital police chief for launching a helpline 8090 and setting up gender protection unit to rescue the victims of gender-based violence. Awan underscored the need to administer justice to win public trust over the department. He assured of his government's full cooperation to bring further improvement in the force, besides addressing personnel's grievances.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser Inspected Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) developed by Ministry of Science and Technology, in Parliament House. Deputy Speaker on this occasion Qasim Khan Suri and members of the National Assembly were also present. Federal Minister Shibli Faraz gave a briefing on how to use EVM. - DNA

CDA administration against illegal encroachments in ICT

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the direction of the Capital Development Authority administration, the Enforcement Department on Wednesday with the help of the district administration and Islamabad police conducted illegal encroachments in different areas of Islamabad and Anti-construction operations were carried out at various places in which illegal buildings, houses and other illegal structures were demolished. According to the details,

the operations were launched from IJP Road area of Islamabad in which heavy machinery was used to demolish the walls of an illegal car parking on the green belt connected to Mandi turn and illegal parking of vehicles. The land was rendered useless by digging deep pits and hand over the land to the Environment Department of CDA so that tree planting could be started on the vacated land. In addition, 35 illegal houses along the rain drain behind CTTI College opposite IJP Road were demolished with the help of heavy machinery, so as to create any untoward situation in view of the flood situation in the recent monsoon rains citizens don't face any unpleasant event. In addition, four illegally established cattle pens near

a traffic sign on IJP Road in the same area of Islamabad were demolished and the land handed over to the Environment Department so that trees could be planted there as well. Later, an illegal guard room, a drop-down barrier outside a residential house in Sector F-6/3, Street number 11, Islamabad was also demolished and the seized goods by the CDA and deposited in the store. In addition, two illegal ordinary hotel constructed in Sector G-9 and Sector G-10 of Islamabad were also demolished.

COMSTech coordination meeting with R&D institutions of MoST held

We believe that there is not superman or super organization, we need to build teams, and encourage teamwork to advance: Dr. Akhtar



ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: COMSTech organized coordination meeting with R&D institutions affiliated with Ministry of Science and Technology at COMSTech secretariat on Wednesday. Secretary for Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Akhtar Nazir, chaired

the meeting. He assured full support of the Ministry to the R&D institutions. Dr. Akhtar said, we need to develop a clear vision for all R&D and S&T organizations, review it and assess its feasibility and then go for capacity building and competitive growth initiatives. He suggested that we need to review and update statutes and rules of our organizations which need to align with the current needs. He appreciated the organization of the meeting and termed it a very useful initiative. Dr. Akhtar said, we believe that there is not superman or super organization, we need to build teams, and encourage teamwork to advance. He proposed to institutions the mechanism of collaboration between S&T and regulato-

ry organizations including regular meetings. Coordinator General, COMSTech, Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary said the objective of this meeting is to find ways to make COMSTech a strongest organization in Pakistan, which is the only organization of OIC hosted by Pakistan. He said we have to find ways that how can COMSTech play role for establishing linkages and joint collaborative projects among Pakistani R&D institutions and the institutions of OIC system and member states. Dr. Choudhary suggested that the COMSTech strength needs to be utilized for promotion of Pakistan's science diplomacy initiative as well as achieve competitive growth of S&T institutions of Pakistan. Capacity building of R&D institutions, fostering collaboration, and developing international linkages of R&D institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Science & Technology.

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Maj (r) Sabih Ur Rehman
Mobile: 0300 8553342

Briefs

Control room set up to monitor security situation

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: A special control room has been set up in the office of the Commissioner to monitor security situation and ensure safety of the mourners during Muharram.

According to Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Syed Gulzar Hussain Shah, foolproof arrangements including security had been finalized by all the departments concerned. A control room had been set up to monitor all the arrangements and making monitoring system more effective.

Gulzar Hussain Shah said that the control room would be operational round the clock and focal persons nominated by all the departments concerned would also be on duty.

He said, "Muharram ul Haram is a holy month for all the Muslims and at the same time, it is also a security challenge for the security agencies."

He said that the enemies of Pakistan always try to destroy the peace and order of the country by spreading hatred through propaganda.

He said that the law and order situation in the region was satisfactory as the district administration and the police had ensured all the security arrangements on their part and due to the role of religious scholars, the citizens had also recognized the tactics being used to create misunderstandings among different sects.

PTCL Group to celebrate Youm-e-Azadi

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Grand scale preparations are afoot at PTCL and Ufone for celebrating the 75th Independence Day of Pakistan with national zeal and fervor. PTCL Group has launched a week-long employee engagement program in connection with the national day leading up to the main event on 14th of August. The employee engagement program that commenced earlier this week will help PTCL Group join the nationwide celebrations, besides strengthening its unique standing as the national telecom carrier.

To kick off the independence week, flags and badges were distributed amongst PTCL and Ufone staff across the country as they resumed office at the start of the week.

The employee engagement activities will be held virtually in view of the Covid-19 pandemic and PTCL Group staff has been encouraged to participate along with family members, especially children as well to help educate them regarding the true meaning and significance of independence.

The group will celebrate its cultural diversity and acceptance by showcasing different regional cultures in the fun-filled activities. The main event will be held on 14th of August at the PTCL Headquarters in Islamabad, where the CEO of PTCL Group and senior management, along with few employees will attend the flag hoisting and cake cutting ceremony.

Six gamblers held in police raid

RAWALPINDI: Police have arrested six gamblers and recovered bet money amounting to Rs 39,500 and seven mobile phones from their possession here on Wednesday.

According to the police spokesman, Race Course police got information that some people were gambling on the cards in the area and arrested the gamblers identified as Muneer, Kashif, Muhammad Ameer, Mansoor, Saeed and Abid. A case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is underway. - APP

Top parliamentary team from Republic of Niger visits FPCCI

President of Niger says Niger government had offered 5 years tax free incentives for foreign investors and Pakistani investors should take full advantage of these incentives

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: A high level parliamentary delegation Republic of Niger, led by Seini Oumarou, President of National Assembly of Niger is visit Federation of Pakistan Chamber Of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), Capital Office Islamabad, to strengthen the growing co-operation of economic partnership between Pakistan and Niger. Seini Oumarou, President of National Assembly of Republic of Niger extended invitation to Pakistani businessmen for investing in mines and mineral and other sectors to take full benefit of the opportunities offered by his country to foreign investors.

President of Niger said Niger government had offered 5 years tax free incentives for foreign investors and Pakistani investors should take full advantage of these incentives. "We will wholeheartedly accord warm welcome to Pakistan business community for investing in Niger Republic", he said and informed that West African country had huge reserves of uranium, copper, coal and other minerals for exploration.

He said that Niger had huge reserves of mines and minerals including coal, uranium, platinum, copper and oil, adding that Pakistani business community delegation would be facilitated to visit the Niger to assess trade and investment opportunities.



Pakistani investors can work in infrastructure, agriculture, including textiles, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other industries," he said, adding exploration of new markets and regional trade integration are key elements for economic and trade expansion to materialize the industrial policy. Whereas, exploration of untapped markets in Africa, the European Union (EU), North American countries besides Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) carry major potential in the quest towards increasing connectivity and trade integration with the global economy, he added.

"Pakistani investors can invest in Niger in infrastructure development, agriculture, textile, pharmaceuticals, medical devices and other industries," he said, adding that promoting trade with Pakistan in multiple sectors was the priority of his government. Khuwaja Shazeb Akaram, Senior Vice President, Qurban Ali Chairman, Capital Office & Mirza Abdul Rehman, Chief Coordinator FPCCI, discussions with the delegates and offered / assured full support of Pakistan Chamber and insisted on making Pakistan to develop and strengthen, economic, bilateral Trade,

Investment, Tourism, Mins & Minerals, Development, agriculture, Power sector of Niger through mutual agreement. Pakistan like other developing economies is adopting the strategy of value-added export based economic growth. Nation is working for value-Addition through industrialization. Pakistani Business Community sees Niger as partner in trade. Both countries should work for the Promotion of export and import from respective Countries. There is dire need of joint venture in Agriculture and Industrial Area in both countries keeping in view of

the interest of both Nations. Joint Trade Fairs and Exhibitions should be arranged in both countries for the promotion of two-way trade. The 'Engage Africa' initiative guided by Prime Minister Imran Khan's vision, highlights Pakistan's efforts to deepen cooperation with the African Continent underpinned by enhanced diplomatic footprint and economic and commercial engagement. Qurban Ali, Chairman, FPCCI, Capital Office, Said that, immense economic activity had been generated in Pakistan with CPEC. He proposed that Nigerien investors could take benefit of

the geo-economic package for investors under the umbrella of CPEC. He underlined the need for intensifying cooperation for tapping the potential for mutual benefit through interaction between business communities from both counties. He said that there was scope for increasing bilateral trade in various sectors. Chairman FPCCI, Capital Office, added here that, FPCCI is playing important role for strengthening relation between Other Country's Federation Commerce and their government concern departments, for enhancement of trade to be easy from the said platform for all related countries. FPCCI is continuously & seriously concern for bilateral trade and enhancement in exports, he added.

Mirza Abdul Rehman, Chief Coordinator, Said that, at the international level, FPCCI has its affiliation with all Regional, International Chambers and other trade and economic. Globally, FPCCI collaborates with its counterpart National Chambers of the other countries. The FPCCI is keen to strengthen trade diplomatic relations with all African Countries. Africa is a potential region for future trade and today's meeting with your Excellency would be very much encouraging for us to further enhance bilateral trade and economic relations with your Country. There is scope of increasing bilateral trade.



ISLAMABAD: Mahira Afzal has been awarded PhD degree in the subject of Communication Studies after approval of her thesis. Dr. Mahira Afzal is currently working at United Nations World Food Program (WFP) as Communication Officer.

Lok Virsa, IAP for a workshop on 'Zero Carbon Structures'

ISLAMABAD: Lok Virsa in collaboration with Institute of Architect Pakistan (IAP) organized a week-long workshop on "Lari Zero Carbon Structures for the Marginalized", which would continue till August 16. Talking to APP, Executive Director Lok Virsa Talha Ali said, after the successful webinar series and the competition regarding zero carbon structures, the next step was to conduct a workshop to create a Prototype. The workshop would help students and architects how they could construct and reproduce the Low Cost Zero Carbon Structure, especially in the context of Global Warming. He said after successful orientation session where participants were given the training program outline as well as handouts such as pencils and sketchbooks to aid in the design process, it was started with the hands on part of our training program and screening video tutorials narrated by Madam Lari. - APP

FBR increases price of steel products

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has increased the minimum prices of steel products vide SRO 985 dated August 4th, 2021, in the wake of increased prices of steel products in the domestic and international markets. Last time the prices of steel products were fixed by FBR vide SRO 992 dated 4th Sep, 2019, said a press release issued by FBR here on Wednesday. FBR is empowered to fix minimum prices of steel products under proviso to clause (46) of section 2 of the Sales Tax Act, 1990. The new prices of Bars has been fixed at Rs. 140,000/-; Billets at Rs. 125,000/-; Ingots/Bala and Ship-plates at Rs. 120,000/- and Scrap at Rs. 118,000/- per metric ton. FBR has further clarified that the said upward revision was essential in the wake of recent surge in local and international prices of steel products and to prevent possible loss of revenue.

Ten arrested; liquor, drugs recovered

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Police in their operation against drug peddlers and bootleggers arrested 10 accused and recovered 720 grams hashish, six bottles of liquor and 20 liters liquor from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Sadiqabad, Ratta Amral, Kalar Syedan, Murree and Pirwadhai police conducted raids in their respective jurisdictions and rounded up Ilyas Khan with 200 grams hashish, Mishal Khan with 160 grams hashish, Talal Khan with 220 grams hashish and Asad Hussain for having 140 grams hashish. Similarly, Javed was sent behind the bars for having a liquor bottle, Ahmed Zaib for carrying a liquor bottle, Adnan on recovery of two liquor bottles, Muhammad Nadeem for having two liquor bottles, Muhammad Ajmal for possessing 10 liters liquor and Saeedullah with 10 liters liquor.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Bulgaria Irena Gancheva visited Pakistan Science Foundation and had a very productive conversation with Prof. Dr. Shahid Mahmood Baig, Chairman PSF, on opportunities for scientific cooperation in areas of common interest between both countries. - DNA

Radio Pakistan launches its Podcast service

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Radio Pakistan has taken a leap forward in digitalization of its broadcasts by launching its Podcast service.

The podcast offers interviews of dignitaries, daily news review, current affairs programs, documentaries, music, sports and a lot more to inform, educate and entertain people through different internet platforms, said a press release issued on Wednesday. This new media service enables the people to download

the audio and video content on a variety of topics any time by using the internet. For this, they will have to just visit podcast.radio.gov.pk. The initiative, which is part of the digitalization of the state media, will greatly contribute to projecting the state narrative in an effective way. Digital media has a critical role in highlighting Kashmir issue, combating Islamophobia and depicting true culture of Pakistan. Media's role has increased manifold in narrative building and countering fake news to stop sensationalism and uncertainty.

SBP urged to introduce compliance to promote green revolution

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) in collaboration with Fair Finance Pakistan organized a roundtable moot titled "FinEx" on responsible banking in the country. The major aim of the conference was to strengthen multi-stakeholders' dialogue and action on sustainable finance in Pakistan. The FinEx Conference was well attended by RCCI members, deputy chief from the State Bank of Pakistan, senior representa-

tives from leading commercial banks including HBL, UBL, National Bank, Askari Bank, Meezan Bank, Faysal Bank, Bank of Punjab, First Women Bank, Apna officials from the Pakistan Banks' Association and civil society organizations. A joint declaration was presented at the conference which puts forward recommendations to the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Finance Minister, Governor, State Bank of Pakistan and Chairperson, Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan to play a more pro-active role in ensuring inclusive financing, espe-

cially for women. RCCI President Mohammad Nasir Mirza in his address made a strong commitment that the joint communiqué presents a holistic picture for the regulators and is a collective voice from the business community that this is the time for reform to nurture the business and harness the environment by the regulator. Group Leader Sohail Altaf in his address urge banks to provide maximum support to SMEs as they the major contributor to job creation. During the roundtable, Fair Finance Pakistan presented the findings of "Strengthen-

ing Sustainable Finance in Pakistan: A scoping review towards institutionalizing Fair Finance Pakistan," authored by Dr. Abid Aman Burki from LUMS. In her welcome remarks, Bernadette Victorio, Program Lead of Fair Finance Asia, said, "Pakistan is an important country for energy transition in Asia. The Fair Finance Asia coalition calls on Asian and international financial institutions operating in the region to urgently stop coal financing and divert resources towards renewable energy in order to align with the Paris Agreement."

India cannot usurp the rights of Kashmiris: Speakers

A conference on national appraisal on Jammu and Kashmir conundrum is organized by human security institute and institute for dialogue, development and diplomatic studies

ARIJ GHAZNAVI

ISLAMABAD: The human security institute and institute for dialogue, development and diplomatic studies have jointly organized conference on national appraisal on Jammu and Kashmir conundrum on Wednesday. The focus of this seminar was upon the history of IIOJK and what the current situation is, a wide array of stakeholders and scholars had joined as speakers, with Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal as the key note speaker followed by, Dr. Gillani, Dr. Rubina, Dr. Waleed, Dr. Saeed Ahmed, Ameer Abdullah, Ishtiaq Ahmed and Hamid Minhas. Dr. Zafar highlighted that the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir is not seven decades old, instead it has existed for a century now, this means that the uprising of Kashmiris is not because of Pakistan, it is because of the atrocities the people have been facing till date. The UN resolution 122, 123 and 126 were highlighted in the seminar, even with the



UN declaring Jammu and Kashmir as a disputed area the democratically elected government of India refuses to accept this. Dr. Rubina stated an important point where she highlighted the importance of having a

narrative and building a better story. She stated that due to the lack of a proper and strong narrative, Pakistan fails to convey the dire situation of Kashmir. Dr. Saeed Ahmed drew the attention to-

wards a crucial point that even people on the Indian side condemn the actions of the government of India, though these people are in lesser number but their presence proves that what Modi government is doing is in violation of Human Rights. He emphasized on the "Third Option" which was to declare Kashmir as an independent state but India had killed the idea, this idea needs to be highlighted again as an option for a solution to the dispute.

Dr. Waleed drew the attention towards the level of resistance that is rising in Kashmir especially in the youth, even with the Kashmiris not having access to weapons they are still resisting the Indian forces. At the end of event, Ifat Pervaiz put forward that such events will be organized by the Human security institute. The director general THSI Rafique Ahmed Qureshi thanked the speakers for gracing the event and re-uttered that the Human security institute will raise the voice for the security of human rights at every platform.

Safe Muharram

THE advent of the Islamic month of Muharram, where Muslims, especially those from the Shia community, mourn the martyrdom of Imam Hussain and his companions at Karbala, presents starker challenges for authorities this year in light of the raging coronavirus pandemic as well as the lurking threat of terrorism. Sectarian killings are sadly a decades-old reality in our country – the recurring violence faced by the Shia Hazara community being just one glaring example of the extent of this. While the past few years have not seen large-scale attacks against the Shia community during Muharram, this year brings with it an added fear of sectarian discord as well as terrorism. Last year, tensions arose during Muharram – with dozens of blasphemy cases registered, and rallies in Karachi and Islamabad that included leaders of banned sectarian groups. Even though for a while uncertainty prevailed and the state was conspicuous by its absence, violence was thankfully averted with law-enforcement agencies arresting hundreds for spreading hatred on social media and blocking thousands of websites espousing hate material. Authorities across the country claim to have taken the necessary precautions, with mobilisation of district peace committees and training of volunteers who form the first line of defence during majalis and processions, among other similar measures. Highly-sensitive areas such as Gilgit-Baltistan which witnessed heightened sectarian tension earlier this year after an incident in Naltar, along with several districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab with a history of sectarian violence require special attention. This is a month that requires reflection on humanity, resistance to oppression, and mercy. Given the violence we have seen over the years, what is most needed is an attempt to recreate religious harmony. Differences in belief cannot be used to justify mass murder. Security in this sense is essential. But that should be a means towards an end. The ultimate goal must be a tolerant society that acts against those who incite violence against persecuted communities. There was a time when this existed in our society, when Ashura processions took place without fear. We need to rediscover that reality from our past if we are to have a tolerant future.

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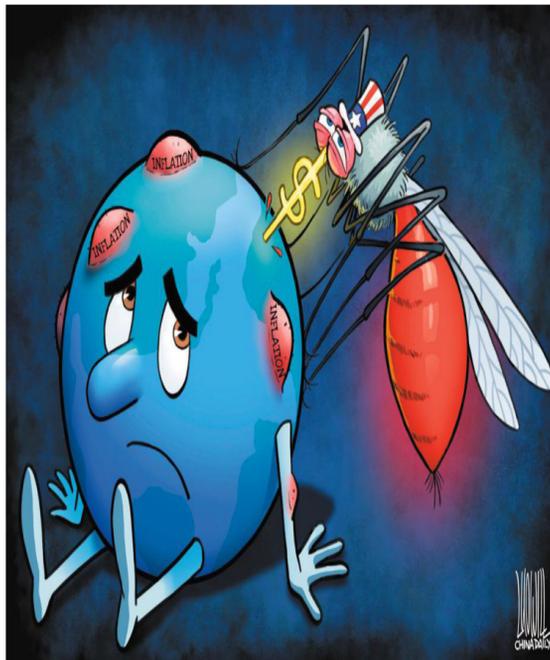
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Unsafe drinking water

SOME alarming revelations demand the government's attention—a good number of Pakistan's cities, rather the majority of them, do not have safe drinking water for citizens. This includes Multan, Karachi, Badin, Sargodha, Hyderabad, Bahawalpur, Muzaffarabad, Sukkur, Faisalabad, Peshawar, Tando Allah Yar, Sheikhupura, Abbottabad and Khuzdar, Loralai, Quetta and Gujranwala. All these cities, amongst other smaller cities, have more than 50 percent of their underground water contaminated. What is horrifying is that in three cities—Mirpurkhas, Nawabshah and Gilgit, 100 percent of the underground water is contaminated. This means all water-borne diseases—polio and many other dangerous ones included—could theoretically be contracted. Nearly everyone residing in Pakistan has a strong likelihood of being subjected to contaminated and unsafe drinking water, except residents of Sialkot and Gujrat, cities that have surprisingly been declared 100 percent safe for drinking purposes. These statistics are not coming from a small study—they were presented by the Federal Minister for Science and Technology Shibli Faraz on the floor of the National Assembly. The underground water of 29 cities was tested by the Pakistan Council of Research of Water Resources (PCRWR), with the results finding that there are 20 cities where more than 50 percent water obtained from various sources was found to be unsafe. Water in Pakistan is in crisis. The impact of this crisis cannot be understated—it can devastate agriculture, food, climate and floods—but at the same time, the health aspects must not be overlooked. Contaminated water can cause various diseases—long-term exposure to bacteria and nitrate in water can lead to skin cancer. Long-term exposure to arsenic may also cause cancers of the bladder and lungs. 27,000 children die annually due to water-borne diseases. Safe water is now a provincial matter after the passage of the 18th Amendment in the Constitution—unfortunately, that has led to it being neglected, across provinces, as shown by these statistics. Purification must be made a priority; some finances have been directed at young chemical engineers forming start-ups for innovative water purification solutions but more global, experienced efforts must be made too.

New face for aging CPEC challenges

Munir Ahmed



The CPEC Authority was suggested to get rid of bureaucratic hurdles and long delays for different departmental procedures and processes. 'One Window' for time efficient management of the CPEC projects was the only objective of the Authority. Was it achieved as claimed by the outgoing chairman? In his tweet, he said: "I bow my head before Allah Almighty for giving me an opportunity to raise & steer the important institution of CPEC Authority as one window for all CPEC projects

ABOUT a week back, the government appointed an energy specialist and former Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Hub Power Company Limited Khalid Mansoor as Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on CPEC Affairs. His appointment took place just a month after his resignation from the Hub Power Company soon after it was paid off around Rs 23 billion by the government. Khalid Mansoor, CEO of the first IPP in Pakistan under Power Policy 1995, had played a key role in striking a deal for the IPP with the government. Some careless rumours about the deal are in the air. Anyone cares? The CPEC Authority will go through a major overhauling after severe reservations from China, and slowed down the pace of progress. Next expected notification is expected soon announcing Khalid Mansoor's appointment as chairman CPEC Authority with a mandate to make required changes in the structure and the relevant teams. Looking forward to good omen for CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), the backbone of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Many speculations are in the air about the "resignation" of former CPEC chairman retired Lt. General Asim Saleem Bajwa. Several believe that he was in the hot waters after a "scoop story" about his "family business" in the US amounting to billions. Both the government and the former chairman CPEC waited for the "right time" to part ways. In fact, Chinese companies were not happy about the "one window" operations that could not expedite the procedural formalities. The security measures taken by the government could not satisfy them too. The US ally mindset is yet not accepting the emerging reality in the region while the Dasu incident proved all the Chinese apprehensions. The big challenge to CPEC at the moment is deviating from the original plans in the name of "realignment". The crap named "realignment" is politically motivated, and engineered by the vested interest of some high-powered individuals and influential institutions. Most of the insiders denote the resignation to the generally slow and sluggish performance of the CPEC projects that has caused severe res-

ervations and inconvenience to the other party known for efficiency and time management. The undue political aspirations of the present government is another huge challenge. China has been putting up their reservations on the security of their engineers and workers for quite long besides worries on the crawling projects, and interference by the irrelevant. From the Planning Commission of Pakistan to the CPEC Authority, only China's woes were increased with added personal, political and institutional vested interest of the stakeholders of the CPEC projects. The Dasu incident peaked the anger that reflected in the China government statements. The cancellation of the scheduled Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) of both countries was a red alert too. Apparently, it looks like changing the game of the "Game Changer" for some personal and vested interests. It has been the top most agenda of all that have been in power. The tradition continues even in the present government despite they have been shouting loud all the slogans of transparency, merit and accountability. We all are behaving like fifth generation zombies. In the given circumstances, the point to ponder is if the CPEC would remain a 'game change' for Pakistan or it would largely be an embarrassment? The CPEC Authority was suggested to get rid of bureaucratic hurdles and long delays for different departmental procedures and processes. 'One Window' for time efficient management of the CPEC projects was the only objective of the Authority. Was it achieved as claimed by the outgoing chairman? In his tweet, he said: "I bow my head before Allah Almighty for giving me an opportunity to raise & steer the important institution of CPEC Authority as one window for all CPEC projects, charting the future direction. Wouldn't have been possible without full confidence & support of the PM and his government. The course is set for future progression of CPEC, this journey will go on. My best wishes to Khalid Mansoor, who is fully equipped to take it forward. CPEC is the life line for Pakistan, it will transform us into a progressive and fully developed country, InshaAllah." Federal Minister for Planning, Development and

Special Initiatives Asad Umar has tweeted on the appointment of his former Engro Pakistan colleague: "I welcome Khalid Mansoor to the team as SAPM for CPEC affairs. His vast corporate experience, with extensive work with Chinese companies and his direct involvement in leading some of the biggest CPEC projects makes him an ideal person to lead the next phase of CPEC." Khalid Mansoor brings with him over four decades of experience working with multiple organisations in energy, petrochemicals and fertilizers industries. He is expected to lead the second phase of CPEC, which will focus on industrial cooperation. His extensive experience of working with the Chinese companies and has a deep understanding of joint ventures, project development and execution with Chinese partners. Mansoor is termed as a well-known business leader and has also served as President of Overseas Chamber of Commerce of Industry (OICCI). He holds a Degree in Chemical Engineering, and has over 32 years of experience and expertise in energy and petrochemical sectors in leading roles for mega projects development, execution, management and operations. Being an optimist, I personally believe that the new leadership shall expedite the laid-out CPEC plans and dynamically work on the second phase that is industrialization and sustainable agriculture. The CPEC output and impact is still behind the curtains. Shall the people of Pakistan expect from the new leadership unveiling of them? The CPEC doors remain closed for unknown reasons. No discussion on the reservations of the local communities and stakeholders. Their reservations and conflicting situations remained unaddressed. The China government is frustrated with the "realignment" of the infrastructural projects and deepening personal and political vested interests in the CPEC projects. The Chinese companies have their own woes of playful processes and procedures, and long-pending payments. Many issues upfront for the new CPEC leadership!

— The writer is a freelance journalist and broadcaster. He can be reached at devcom.pakistan@gmail.com and tweets @Emmaysyed

Delhi' lost policy in Afghanistan

Muhammad Haseeb Qurashi



US withdrawal faced hustle by offensive operations from Taliban occupying the districts, controlling the strategic highways and choking major cities. These advancements has caused worrisome in New Delhi seeing their long investment sinking due to Taliban rise. New Delhi has tried a failed attempt to approach Taliban officials during Doha talks

INDIA departed from its cold war foreign policy posture from non-alignment policy to supporting the Soviet presence in Afghanistan on good faith basis during UN emergency special session in January 1980. The Soviet withdrawal left India in difficult position as it lost its 'friendly country' in Afghanistan. India found its ally in form of Northern Alliance by covertly supporting its commanders such as Burhanuddin Rabbani and Ahmed Shah Masoud to contain the emergence of Taliban. India had pursued a diplomatic non-engagement policy with Taliban in accordance with its "No talk with Terrorism" principles. Since 9/11, New Delhi has placed all his cards in favor of US backed governments in Kabul. Under the guise of socio-economic development Delhi has funneled in \$3 billion in order to oblige Kabul against Pakistan. India has also built consulates in Afghanistan to facilitate their engagement in Afghanistan. This investment had helped to build its soft image among Afghan nation. Down the 30 years, India is again left in uncertain situation due to hasty US withdrawal after two decades long war in Afghanistan. US withdrawal faced hustle by offensive operations from Taliban occupying the districts, controlling the strategic highways and choking major cities. These advancements has caused worrisome in New Delhi seeing their long investment sinking due to Taliban rise. New Delhi has tried a failed attempt to approach Taliban officials during Doha talks. The failure to convince Taliban has resulted in evacuation of diplomats and closing of Indian consulates in Jalalabad, Herat and Kandahar with only one consulate left functional in Mazar-e-Sharif waiting to be closed. The sudden change in New Delhi's policy posture towards Taliban is due to four strategic

interests. First, India does not want that its \$3 billion strategic investment goes futile in Afghanistan. Pakistan's leverage over the Taliban is the second concern for India. India's wish to develop diplomatic ties with Taliban is for a stable balance of power in Afghanistan which should not be completely tilted towards Pakistan. The third Indian concern is to ensure that Taliban do not provide any logistics support to anti-India outfits that poses threat to Indian security. However, the evacuation of Indian diplomatic staff from Afghanistan depicts that Taliban has failed to facilitate its years old rival. Lastly, India requires energy resources to support its 1.3 billion population. Central Asia acts as natural resource market for India to meet its energy demands. With Taliban controlling the border areas and their bitter ties with India will put Indian energy interests in Central Asia at risk. The closure of Indian consulates in Afghanistan will result in strategic blows to India. These consulates alongside of Pakistan border were of key importance for India for its operations inside Pakistan. Pakistan has leveled proofs that these consulates are key factors in sponsoring terrorism inside Pakistan. The closure of consulates will blow Indian sub-conventional war strategy to bleed Pakistan by sponsoring militant outfits in North Western areas and Balochistan. This closure will delink militants with India ultimately resulting in halting aid to these separatist terror outfits and end of encircling Pakistan from its western border. The second strategic blow will be in shape of providing strategic space to China. The immediate US withdrawal has disturbed the strategic equilibrium and creating a power vacuum in Afghanistan. The regional rival of India, China, will fill

that power vacuum through diplomatic, economic and security means to ensure the stability in the region. The elevated strategic influence of Pakistan in Afghanistan over IEA will also help China to improve its position in Afghanistan. The recent IEA statement seeing China as a 'friend' and promise not to host Uyghur militants in Afghanistan depicts their entangled economic and security interests and their commitment to increase cooperative ties. The increasing turmoil in Afghanistan is causing New Delhi to take haste decisions. India went against the winds by supplying about 40 tons of ammunition to beleaguered Kabul regime in guise of evacuation of its diplomatic staff. Indian decision to provide military assistance to Kabul regime can result in arming of local militias resisting against Taliban. This can further lead to civil unrest and instability of already security challenged Afghanistan. This also exposes the dual nature of Indian policy where it is engaging with Taliban to safeguard its interests while providing arms to its political opponent. New Delhi failure to encapsulate its strategic interests in Afghanistan depicts the lacking of its well-crafted policy. India adopted Pakistan-centric approach in Afghanistan while ignoring the ground realities. The unpreparedness of India on US withdrawal also shows the lack of engagement and mutual understanding between both allies. However, the pro-active diplomatic engagements and maneuvering of New Delhi in regard to unfolding Afghanistan developments will help to control the damage.

— The writer is an under-graduate International Relations student at Bahria University and Research Internee at Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR).

Briefs

Pakistan, Iraq
pledge to
solidify ties

FROM PAGE 01

Qureshi said on the occasion Pakistan wants durable peace in Afghanistan and will continue to play its constructive role in this regard despite baseless allegations of Ashraf Ghani. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan always played a positive role for peace in Afghanistan and Pakistani delegation is also present in the Peace Dialogue being held in Doha. He said the world is appreciating and acknowledging Pakistan's reconciliatory and sincere efforts for peace in Afghanistan.

He said that unfortunately, Pakistan is being blamed for the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan by some Afghan elements. He said the role of these spoilers should be monitored strictly. The Foreign Minister urged all stakeholders for collective hard work and efforts for regional peace as rising violence in Afghanistan is very concerning for Pakistan.

The Foreign Minister expressed deep concern over the negative role of India as president of the UN Security Council for a month. The two foreign ministers, who earlier led delegation-level talks, focused on bilateral and regional consultations on trade, energy, religious tourism, defence cooperation, human resource, employment and consular matters. Foreign Minister Qureshi mentioned that the issue of smooth issuance of visas for Pakistani pilgrims to Iraq, especially during Muharram, was taken up.

On the personal interest of Prime Minister Imran Khan, he said, a pilgrims management policy was under consideration. Also, plans are underway to set up a Pakistan House at Karbala and a medical centre to facilitate the pilgrims.

Biden urges
unity as
Taliban
make gains

FROM PAGE 01

pressure on the country's central government to stem the tide of the advance.

The group has captured the provincial capitals Faizabad, Farah, Pul-e-Khumri, Sar-e-Pul, Sheberghan, Aybak, Kunduz, Taluqan and Zaranj. The Taliban has already gained vast parts of rural Afghanistan since launching a series of offensives in May to coincide with the start of the final withdrawal of foreign forces. A senior European Union official said on Tuesday that Taliban forces now control more than 65 percent of Afghanistan, threaten to take 11 provincial capitals and seek to deprive Kabul of its traditional support from national forces in the north.

PDM rejects
electoral
reforms...

FROM PAGE 01

"Pakistan is facing isolation due to the current regime's policies," the PDM chief said, slamming the government for its "failed" foreign policy, as Pakistan was not allowed to present its case during the UNSC meeting on Afghanistan.

"PDM believes the only way forward in Afghanistan is through an inclusive political solution; Pakistan aspires for a political and stable Afghanistan," Fazl said. Fazl said the PDM leaders took an in-depth review of the internal and external matters, after which, the meeting's participants demanded that Opposition lawmakers should be taken into confidence over the situation in the neighbouring war-torn country.

"An important faction of the country is unaware of the situation as it is facts are being hidden from them," the JUI-F chief said. Speaking about the PDM's next course of action, he said PDM's steering committee would meet on August 21 in Islamabad, during which the parties will mull over the recommendations presented today after internal deliberations. "We rejected each and every electoral reform put forward by this selected government, and we believe that NAB and FIA have become political institutions, who have lost their standing."

Sports events send message
of peace to the world: Afridi

Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi said that PM is committed to establishing sports grounds and to provide opportunity to sportspersons in the country

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: Geo and Hum TV thrashed Dunya and Dawn TV and reaches in the final of RISJA Inter Media Independence Cup Cricket Tournament at National cricket ground Islamabad. Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi was the chief guest of the prize distributing ceremony while deputy commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiqat, Chairman RISJA Abdul Mohi Shah, SJAL Senior Sports Journalist Muhammad Rafiq and others were also present in the ceremony which collaborated by Park View City and NasGas. Speaking on the occasion Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi said that



Prime Minister Imran Khan is committed to establishing sports grounds and to provide opportunity to sportspersons in the country, adding that Sports events send a

message of peace to the world. He said that we have to build good grounds instead of hospitals and the role of media is important in the promotion of sports. Deputy

Chairman Senate said that Kashmir Premier League (KPL) is an excellent event and new players will get a chance in KPL. Earlier in the first semi-final of the

tournament, Hum TV defeated Dawn TV by five wickets after a tough contest. Batting first, Dawn TV scored 89 runs for the loss of seven wickets in the stipulated 20 overs. Waheed scored 27 runs and Sanaulah 15 runs. Hum TV's Sameer Butt took 2-5 and Samar Abbas 2-12 in the match. In reply, Hum TV achieved the target in the 17th over at a loss of five wickets thanks to Kamran's 24 runs to reaches in the final of the tournament. In the second semi-final, Geo outclassed Dunya TV by 10 runs to qualify for the final encounter against Hum TV on 14th August. Batting first Geo TV set the 118 runs target for victory. Geo TV's Hussam Ahmed scored 39 and Ali Tanoli 34 runs respectively while Naseer Bhatti of Dunya TV took 5-16 in the match.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan Ulanbek Totuaiev met with the ambassador of Yemen to Pakistan, Mohammed Motahar Alashabi. - DNA

Polish ruling coalition
collapses amid rift
over media bill

AGENCIES

WARSAW: Poland's right-wing ruling coalition has collapsed after a small coalition partner announced that it was leaving the government amid a rift over legislation it views as an attack on media freedom. The media bill, which is scheduled for an afternoon vote on Wednesday, would prevent non-European owners from having controlling stakes in Polish media companies. It is viewed as a crucial test for the survival of independent media in the former communist nation, coming six years into the rule of a populist government that has chipped away at media and judicial independence. After a deputy prime minister who is the head of the Agreement party expressed his opposition to the bill and other government plans, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki fired him from the government on Tuesday. Agreement party leader Jaroslaw Gowin had said he viewed the legislation as an attack on media diversity. Gowin's party, which was viewed as the most moderate partner in the conservative three-party coalition that has governed Poland since 2015, said on Wednesday that it was formally withdrawing. The party holds 13 seats in the 460-seat Sejm, the lower house of parliament, and most of its politicians plan to stay loyal to Gowin. Polish media reported that the coalition's largest party, Law and Justice (PiS), was trying to win over some Agreement members who might be wavering. A vote still was anticipated on the media amendment at the centre of the dispute.

Int'l teams 'degrading' Pakistan
by not selecting main players

DNA

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Inzamam-ul-Haq feels that international teams are degrading Pakistan cricket as they are not selecting their main players. The statement came after main New Zealand players opted out of the upcoming white-ball series against Pakistan to participate in IPL 2021. New Zealand is set to tour Pakistan in September-October for a three-match ODI and five-match T20I series. The ODI series will be played from September 17 to September 21 while the T20I series is scheduled to take place from September 25 to October 3. However, 7 key Kiwi players who are part of the T20I World Cup 2021 squad will not be part of the Pakistan



series. Kane Williamson, Trent Boult, Kyle Jamieson, Lockie Ferguson, Jimmy Neesham, Mitchell Santner, and Tim Seifert will play IPL 2021 instead. "Wherever the Pakistan team is going, they are not getting a chance to play against the main players. When we went to South

Chinese court jails
Canadian for 11 years
on spying charges

FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: A court in China has found Canadian businessman Michael Spavor guilty of spying, sentencing him to 11 years in prison, in a decision likely to further undermine already poor relations between China and Canada. Spavor, who for years ran a travel and cultural exchange business between China and North Korea, "was convicted of espionage and illegally providing state secrets", Dandong city's Intermediate People's Court said in a statement on Wednesday. "He was sentenced to 11 years

in prison." The court said Spavor, whose closed-door trial in March lasted little more than two hours, would also be deported but did not say when, and confiscated some of his personal property. Spavor is one of two Canadians who were detained in China in December 2018, shortly after Canada arrested Meng Wanzhou, chief financial officer of Chinese telecoms giant Huawei, on an extradition request by the United States. Michael Kovrig, an analyst with the International Crisis Group, also faces spying charges and was tried shortly after Spavor in March. He is still awaiting a verdict.

Dr. Alvi for
boosting
cooperation
with Iraq

FROM PAGE 01

He highlighted that cooperation between Pakistan and Iraq in the field of defence needed to be further strengthened for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. He asked the Iraqi Foreign Minister to help the Pakistani Zaireen (pilgrims) by granting them visas as well as facilitating them during their visit to the holy places in Iraq. The President also apprised the Foreign Minister that the Muslims of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) were being subjected to worst form of repression and terror by India. He called upon the international community to put pressure on India to stop the human rights abuses in IOJK and grant Kashmiris their right to self-determination in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Dr. Fuad Hussein said that Iraq considered Pakistan an important country and wanted to further develop cooperation with Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest, particularly trade, culture and defence. He informed the President that he had directed the Iraqi embassy in Islamabad to facilitate the Zaireen in visas and travel. He also thanked the Government of Pakistan for training Iraqi diplomats and conveyed warm regards and best wishes from the Iraqi leadership to the people and leadership of Pakistan.

England add
Mahmood to
Test squad

DNA

LONDON: Lancashire fast bowler Saqib Mahmood has been added to England's squad for this week's second Test against India at Lord's as cover for the injured Stuart Broad, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Wednesday. Mahmood's call-up came with veteran paceman Broad facing a scan on a calf injury which threatens to rule him out of the second of a five-match series starting on Thursday. Broad missed Tuesday's net session at Lord's after discomfort in his calf during the warm-ups and will be assessed by medics before a decision is made over his availability for what would be his 150th Test. Mahmood, 24, is uncapped at Test level but was named man of the series during the recent one-day internationals against Pakistan. He is the second additional call-up to the England squad following the inclusion of off-spinning all-rounder Moeen Ali. England and India are all square at 0-0 after last week's rain-marred first Test at Trent Bridge ended in a draw.

PFF
announces
draws of
13th PPFL

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has announced draws of the 13th Pakistan Premier Football League. The competition will start from August 14 in Multan. Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) Rawalpindi will defend the title. Twelve teams from across the country will take part in the league, including Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), Pakistan Army, Sui Southern Gas Company, Pakistan Air Force, PCCA, Muslim Club Chaman, Pakistan Navy, Pakistan WAPDA, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines, Lyallpur FC, Karachi United, and Huma Club Islamabad.

The Manager's meeting was held at the PFF House in which the draws and technical regulations of the league was announced. The meeting was attended by Secretary General, Pakistan Football Federation, Director (Competitions), Arshad Umer Zia, Khalid Khan and Syed Raza Yousof of SNGPL, Muhammad Pervaiz Malik and Ahmed Mushatq of PAF, Sajjad Mehmood and Ijaz Butt of KRL, Muhammad Javed (SSGC), Mirza Nadeem Sarwar (Lylapur FC), Siddique Sheikh (PCCA), Sheikh Huyyan (Karachi United), Burhan Ali and Tanveer Ahmad of WAPDA, Naveed Ahmed (Navy), Abdul Qadeer (Muslim FC), Fareed Malik (Huma FC) and Khurram-Shahzad (M.A Instructor).

Germany arrests British diplomat
suspected of spying for Russia

BERLIN: German police have arrested a British national who worked at the United Kingdom's embassy in Berlin on suspicion of passing documents to the Russian intelligence service in exchange for cash, according to prosecutors. German prosecutors said in a statement that the man's apartment and workplace had been searched and he would be brought before an investigating judge later on Wednesday to determine whether he should be remanded in custody. The statement added that the suspect, identified only as David S, "on at least one occasion passed on documents he acquired as part of his professional activities to a representative of Russian intelligence". "The accused received a cash payment in an unspecified amount in return," it said. The suspect was believed to have been spying since November 2020 "at the latest". Germany's Foreign Ministry said it was taking the case seriously, adding that spying on allied states on German soil is unacceptable. A spokesman for the ministry said that it would closely monitor the German public prosecutors' investigations. The man was arrested on Tuesday in Potsdam, just outside Berlin. He was employed as a local staff member at the UK embassy until his arrest, the result of a joint investigation by German and British authorities, prosecutors said. British police confirmed in a statement that the 57-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of offences relating to being engaged in "Intelligence Agent activity" under German law and that the German authorities would retain primacy over the probe. In May, the UK set out plans to crack down on hostile activity by foreign states, introducing a proposed law to give security services and law enforcement new powers to tackle growing threats. UK spy chiefs say China and Russia have sought to steal commercially sensitive data and intellectual property as well as interfere in politics. In 2018, Russian agents were accused of carrying out an attack on former Russian spy Sergei Skripal on British soil. Beijing and Moscow say the West is gripped with a paranoia about plots and deny they meddle abroad, seek to steal technology, carry out cyberattacks or sow discord. - Agencies

Nadal withdraws from
ATP Toronto Masters

WEB DESK

TORONTO: Rafael Nadal withdrew from the ATP Toronto Masters with the chronic foot injury which has bothered him since Roland Garros and now appears to threaten his US Open chances. Officials said the second-seeded five-time champion will be replaced in the draw by fellow Spaniard Feliciano Lopez. "I've had this issue for a couple of months," said Spain's Nadal, who skipped both Wimbledon and the Tokyo

Olympics after a French Open semi-final loss to Novak Djokovic. "Of course it is not a happy situation after all the success that I had here in Canada," the 35-year-old said. "I need to go back (to Mallorca) and try to find a way to be better again. "The most important thing is to enjoy playing tennis," he said. "With this pain, I'm not able to enjoy (playing)." Nadal had returned to competition after a two-month layoff with a third-round loss to 50th-ranked South African Lloyd Harris in Washington.

Germany, Netherlands halt deportations to Afghanistan

Kabul urged all European countries in early July to halt forced deportations for the next three months while security forces fight the Taliban. The European Commission, the EU's executive arm, had said it was up to individual member states to determine whether Afghanistan is a safe country for returns

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: Germany and the Netherlands are temporarily halting any efforts to deport Afghan asylum seekers, a move that acknowledges the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the war-torn country. The countries announced the U-turn on Wednesday, although both countries had earlier warned against halting deportations, insisting on their continued right to do so. They were among six European Union member states who last week petitioned the bloc not to suspend returns

to Afghanistan, where the speed of the Taliban's blitz has shocked the government and its Western allies. The others were Austria, Denmark, Belgium and Greece. Taliban fighters battling Afghanistan's US-backed government captured a ninth provincial capital in less than a week amid a blistering offensive launched as foreign forces withdraw. The Dutch government said it would not deport Afghans seeking asylum for six months. Germany has yet to clarify how long its suspension would last.

In a letter to the parliament, Dutch deputy Justice Minister Ankie Broekers-Knol

said the Netherlands's decision was "in light of the quickly deteriorating situation" there. "The situation is undergoing such changes and developments and is so

uncertain for the coming time, that I have decided to impose a freeze on decisions and deportations" in continuing asylum cases, Broekers-Knol wrote.



A spokeswoman for the ministry noted that while last week's letter represented the government's view at the time, it had not conducted any forced deportations in the past six months and had not had any planned. Germany and the Netherlands are now in line with EU member states Finland and Sweden, as well as EEA member Norway, which recently announced they were suspending deportations to Afghanistan. Kabul urged all European countries in early July to halt forced deportations for the next three months while security forces fight the Taliban. The European Commis-

sion, the EU's executive arm, had said it was up to individual member states to determine whether Afghanistan is a safe country for returns. "At an EU level, there isn't a list of countries considered safe relating to asylum applications or for returns," a spokeswoman for the commission told Reuters on Tuesday. Last week, the European Court of Human Rights temporarily halted the imminent deportation from Austria of an Afghan man whose request for asylum was turned down. The court cited Afghanistan's stance on deportations and the violence in the country as factors.

Briefs

Flag hoisting ceremony at London HC

DNA

LONDON: To mark Independence Day of Pakistan, a flag hoisting ceremony will be held at the Pakistan High Commission, London on 14 August 2021 at 10:00 a.m. Pakistan High Commissioner to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan will hoist the Pakistan's flag. Messages of the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan will also be read out on the occasion. The High Commissioner has invited the members of the Pakistani community along with their children, British friends of Pakistan and representatives of the media to attend the event.

Uzbekistan allowed to hold Friday prayers in mosques

DNA

TASHKENT: From 13 August, it is allowed to hold Friday prayers in mosques with a sufficient level of vaccination of workers and employees. To read Friday prayer in mosques, you will need a QR code or a certificate of vaccination. It is allowed to conduct Friday prayers in those mosques whose employees and employees (with the exception of persons with health contraindications) have a certificate of vaccination with at least 2 doses of coronavirus vaccine (regardless of type). Those visitors who have a QR code or a certificate of coronavirus vaccination (except for those with contraindications for health) will be admitted to the mosque for reading Friday prayers.

Algeria wildfire toll rises to 65

WEB DESK

ALGIERS: At least 65 people, 28 of them soldiers deployed as relief firefighters, have been killed as dozens of wildfires raged for a second day in Algeria Wednesday, state television reported. "The death toll from the forest fires has climbed to 65 dead - 28 soldiers and 37 civilians - most of them in Tizi Ouzou district" east of the capital, it said. Another 12 soldiers were "in hospital in a critical condition", the television added, following the latest wildfires to hit the Mediterranean this summer. President Abdelmadjid Tebboune on Tuesday night tweeted that the soldiers who died saving 100 people from the fires in two areas of the Kabyle region are "martyrs". Kabyle is home to the North African nation's Berber population. At least 11 other soldiers were burned fighting the fires, four of them seriously, the defence ministry said. Prime Minister Aïme Benabderrahmane said on state TV that 17 civilians had died, raising the count from seven previously. He provided no details.

Researchers visit Shusha

DNA

SHUSHA: A delegation of Egyptian and Lebanese researchers has visited Azerbaijan's liberated Shusha city, Azertag reported on August 11. During the visit, the delegation has been to various points in the city, including the place where the historic Shusha Declaration between Azerbaijan and Turkey was signed on June 15. The guests were informed about the lives and work of famous Azerbaijani public figures Uzeyir Hajibeyli, Khursidbanu Natavan and Bulbul whose statues are displayed in Shusha. It was noted that the statues were damaged by Armenians during the First Karabakh War and were brought to Baku to be displayed in the yard of the Art Museum. After the liberation of Shusha in 2020, the statues were returned to their original place in line with the presidential order.

India has no right to preside over UNSC: Masood Khan

"Under the Geneva Conventions and international law, India must be held accountable for heinous crimes and the cover of impunity given to India should be withdrawn"



DNA

LONDON: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Sardar Masood Khan has said India has no right to sit in the United Nations Security Council or preside over it after committing war crimes against humanity and genocide in the Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK). "Under the Geneva Conventions and international law, India must be held accountable for heinous crimes and the cover of impunity given to India should be withdrawn," he said in a video message to International Solidarity Conference on Kashmir, arranged in the Canadian city of Toronto under the joint aegis of Friends of Kashmir and the Canadian Council for Justice and Peace. Consul General of Pakistan Toron-

land has been expropriated for Hindu settlements and businesses and millions of Hindus from India have been illegally domiciled to reduce Muslim majority in the occupied state. He vowed the Kashmiris would repulse Indian designs of colonization and secure their freedom through self-determination. "We are grateful to the world parliaments and media networks for speaking up for Kashmiris in the past but now when the very identity of the state and its people is being erased, the world is silent," he said and demanded the world stop India and take action to save the Kashmiris from decimation and destruction. In his speech, Consul General of Pakistan Toronto Abdul Hameed told the participants the real objective of the measures of 5th August was to change the demo-

graphic structure of IOJK and make the holding of plebiscite impossible. The pace of issuing domicile certificates by India for facilitating outside settlers during the last 15 months in IOJK is far faster than the speed with which Israeli government issued similar documents to settlers. Similarly other cases of settler colonialism in Palestine and other parts of the world have happened in the past while in IOJK, it is happening now and at the fastest pace which means that humanity has not learnt anything from the bitter experience of the past. Abdul Hameed declared the measures of 5th August 2019 null and void as they violated the UNSC resolutions, international law, the fourth Geneva Convention, Simla agreement between India and Pakistan besides several UNSC reso-

lutions including resolution 122 of 1957. He particularly underscored the UNSC resolution 122 of 1957 which was drafted after the UNSC had dealt with Kashmir for nine years and its view of the dispute had become quite mature and ripened being based on the accumulated wisdom of various UN sponsored formula for the solution, different proposals, reports and debates. "This resolution clearly states that 'the final disposition of the state of Jammu and Kashmir will be made in accordance with the will of the people expressed through the democratic method for a free and impartial plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the UN', he said, adding the same 1957 resolution underlines that no sham exercise of elections can be a substitute of the plebiscite to be held under the auspices of the UN, he said.

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23 civilians killed by Armenian mines

WEB DESK

BAKU: The Azerbaijan Prosecutor-General's Office has unveiled the number of civilians killed and injured in blasts of Armenian-planted mines in the country's formerly occupied regions. Twenty-three civilians were killed and 36 were injured by mine blasts in the country's liberated territories since November 10, 2020, the Prosecutor-General's Office said. Over 140 Azerbaijanis, civilians and the military, have been killed or injured in the explosion of mines planted by Armenians in Azerbaijan's formerly occupied regions since the end of the war in autumn 2020 that saw Azerbaijan liberate most of its territories in and around the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Azerbaijan has warned its citizens against traveling to formerly occupied territories without permission, citing mine threats. On June 12, Armenia submitted to Azerbaijan mine maps for Aghdam, and on July 3 mine maps for Fuzuli and Zangilan. The mine maps show that Armenians planted 97,000 mines in Aghdam and 92,000 mines in Fuzuli and Zangilan.

Floods hit Turkey's north

AGENCIES

ANKARA: Floods caused by unusually heavy rainfall are ravaging Turkey's northern coast, tearing down a bridge and leaving villages without power. The floods on Wednesday came after some of the largest wildfires in the country's history spread across the southwest. State broadcaster TRT Haber said one person died from a heart attack in the northern province of Bartin amid the flooding, and emergency workers were looking for another person who was missing. Thirteen people were also injured after a bridge collapsed in Bartin and there were power outages in 12 villages, the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD) said. In Sinop province, 240km (150 miles) east of Bartin, a house collapsed due to the deluge and cars were left stranded in water, Reuters news agency footage showed. AFAD said a hospital was being evacuated and some roads were closed in Sinop, warning that strong rains in the area were expected to continue. Turkey's north is prone to flash floods in the summer when rains are particularly strong. Last year, at least six people were killed in the floods in the region.

Huawei CFO fights extradition

AGENCIES

VANCOUVER: Lawyers for Huawei Technologies Co.'s chief financial officer made a final push for a Canadian court to reject a U.S. extradition request, as Beijing raised pressure on Ottawa with a series of rulings in criminal cases against Canadian nationals. Meng Wanzhou's defense lawyers argued that allowing her to face fraud charges in New York would encourage improper demands by American authorities. The U.S. "is not in charge of policing the world," and halting the extradition was the only way to remedy alleged abuses by U.S. and Canadian authorities, lawyer Tony Paisana told a judge in Vancouver on Monday. "Misconduct of this sort cannot ever be tolerated, for to do so is to condone, perhaps even to invite, similar conduct," Paisana told Associate Chief Justice Heather Holmes in British Columbia Supreme Court. Meng has been fighting extradition since her arrest in Vancouver at the request of the U.S. two and a half years ago. American prosecutors claim she lied to HSBC Holdings Plc about Huawei's operations in Iran as part of a scheme to violate U.S. trade sanctions. The Communist Party views her case as a politically motivated attack on one of its chief technology champions.

Silk Road Samarkand preps for 2022 opening

DNA

SAMARKAND: Silk Road Samarkand, a multifunctional tourist complex housing cultural, recreational, medical and business facilities, is set to open come 1H2022. The new complex will be home to hotels, public spaces, parks, recreation and sports areas, restaurants, cafes and bars, as well as an international congress hall and sites of cultural interest. Silk Road Samarkand centers around the affluent waterway of the Samarkand rowing canal. The name of the centre was selected deliberately: the

routes of the Great Silk Road passed through the territory of current-day Uzbekistan from the II century BC until the XV century, and ancient Samarkand was one of the most important stops for trade caravans. Located in the eastern part of the city, Silk Road Samarkand covers an area of about 260ha and comprises various thematic zones. The Business Cluster includes a congress hall and four upscale hotels, while the Southern Cluster includes four boutique hotels, an eco-village, the Eternal City historical and ethnographic complex, as well as some shopping areas.



BISHKEK: Sri Lankan High Commissioner Mohan Wijewickrama who is accredited as the ambassador extraordinary to Republic of Kyrgyz handed over the copies of credentials to Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Mr Ruslan Kazakbaev. - DNA

Uzbekistan set to increase solar targets

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan is considering raising its 2030 renewables deployment targets following the success of solar tenders carried out in the last two years. The country's energy ministry said the current goal of reaching 5GW of installed solar PV by 2030 may be increased to 7GW, while its wind generation target could be raised from 3GW to 5GW. Despite COVID-related economic slowdowns last year, electricity demand in the country has shown resilient growth, according to the energy ministry, which hailed the low prices discovered in the solar tenders. Masdar has been particularly active in Uzbekistan, recently securing rights to develop two PV

plants with a combined capacity of 440MW. The Abu Dhabi-based renewables developer posted the lowest bid of US\$0.0179/kWh in that tender and is expected to reach financial close for the two projects later this year before starting construction work in Q1 2022. In June, it was announced that Masdar was awarded another solar plant with a capacity of 457MW, taking the firm's awarded PV capacity through Uzbekistan's tenders to almost 1GW, having been successful in the country's 1st solar tender in 2019. Energy ministry revealed in a report published last year that Uzbekistan has 12.9GW of generating capacity, with 84.7% corresponding to thermal plants, 14.3% to hydropower facilities and remaining 1% to consumers' generators.

Russia, Uzbek, Tajik troops end drills near Afghan border

The war games began last week, involving about 2,500 Russian, Tajik, and Uzbek troops at a training ground in Tajikistan about 20 kilometers from the Afghan border

DNA

TASHKENT: Russia completed joint military exercises with troops from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on August 10 as the Taliban gained control of much of northern Afghanistan bordering Moscow's Central Asian allies. The war games began last week, involving about 2,500 Russian, Tajik, and Uzbek troops at a training ground in Tajikistan about 20 kilometers from the Afghan border. "The exercise was conducted against the background of the

aggravation of the situation and the threat of penetration of radical terrorist groups into the border countries of the Central Asian region," Russia's Central Military District commander, Colonel General Alexander Lapin, said. Russia's Defense Ministry said the drills involved tanks, armored personnel carriers, Su-25 attack jets, helicopters, and other weaponry in a simulated joint response to cross-border militant attacks. Lapin said the combined forces for the first time used tactics gained by Russian forces fighting in Syria.

Russia, which has a military base in Tajikistan, has vowed defend the former Soviet Central Asian states against any security threat from Afghanistan. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan are members of the Moscow-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization. The exercises followed smaller Russian-Uzbek drills held near Uzbekistan's border with Afghanistan that concluded last week. Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said at a separate event on August 10 that Russian forces will continue

to conduct regular drills with its Central Asian allies near the Afghan border. Central Asian states bordering Afghanistan are concerned about security threats emanating from Afghanistan and the potential for tens of thousands of refugees to pour over the border. The Taliban has sought to reassure neighboring countries and Russia that it poses no threat as it gains control over much of Afghanistan's territory and captures provincial cities from the government in Kabul as U.S.-led forces leave the country.

Russia urged to end Armenian troops' deployment

DNA

BAKU: Baku has urged Russian peacekeepers, which have been temporarily stationed on Azerbaijani territories under the November 10, 2020, trilateral peace deal, to put an end to the Armenian troops' deployment on the formerly Armenian-occupied Azerbaijani territories currently under their control. In an official statement published on its website on August 11, the Azerbaijan Defence Ministry said: "In accordance with the provisions of the tripartite statement, the Russian Federation's peacekeeping forces must put an end to the deployment of the Armenian armed forces on the Azerbaijani territories where they are temporarily stationed." The ministry underlined that under the trilateral deal signed by the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian leaders in 2020, the remnants of the Armenian armed forces have not been fully removed from the Azerbaijani territories. The statement stressed that Armenia has recently been flagrantly violating the trilateral deal by moving its armed forces to Azerbaijan, where Russian peacekeepers are temporarily stationed, and setting up new Armenian posts near Mukhtarkand and Shushakand, as well as in the eastern part of

Baku protests to Tehran over Iran vehicles' illegal Karabakh visits

BAKU: Baku has sent a protest note to Tehran over the illegal travel of Iranian trucks to Azerbaijan's Karabakh region, the Foreign Ministry reported on August 11. The Iranian ambassador to Azerbaijan was summoned to the Foreign Ministry on August 11. At the meeting, the diplomat was informed about the undesirable facts revealed in connection with the illegal visit of Iranian cargo vehicles to Karabakh, the report added. "The [protest] note expressed our dissatisfaction with the fact that multiple-purpose vehicles belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran constantly enter and leave Azerbaijan's Karabakh region without official Baku's permission," the ministry said. The concern previously expressed to Iran in a verbal form was now raised before the Iranian ambassador during the meeting. It was stressed that Iran's new administration should put an end to the cases that run counter to close friendship and partnership relations between the two states. Earlier, on August 11 Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry urged Russian peacekeepers, which have been temporarily stationed on Azerbaijani territories under the November 10, 2020, trilateral peace deal, to put an end to the Armenian troops' deployment on the formerly Armenian-occupied Azerbaijani territories currently under their control. The past three weeks saw the worst escalation of tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia since the signing of the November statement that ended the last year's hostilities. - DNA

Kalabajar and Lachin regions. "The Azerbaijan army undertakes adequate steps and suppresses such cases. The Armenian side is purposefully resorting to such provocations to aggravate the situation," the

ministry said. It pledged that the Azerbaijani army will continue to take all appropriate measures to thwart similar provocations. "All this is happening against the background

of irresponsible and provocative order of new Armenian Defence Minister Arshak Karapetyan to the Armenian armed forces to use force by any means. We would like to remind that former Armenian Defence Minister David Tonoyan also spoke out with a provocative military doctrine that he used to call 'new wars, new territories'. His shameful destiny is well-known," the ministry said. The past three weeks saw the worst escalation of tension between Azerbaijan and Armenia since the signing of the November statement that ended the last year's hostilities. Nakhchivan's Sadarak region and Kalabajar region, which was liberated from Armenia's occupation in the last year's war, have been in the centre of this escalation over the said period. It should be noted that the presence of any Armenian serviceman on Azerbaijan's internationally-recognized territories is in violation of the November 10 peace deal signed by Baku, Moscow and Yerevan that ended the 44-day war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 2020. About 2,000 Russian peacekeepers have been deployed for five years in Karabakh under the Moscow-brokered trilateral cease-fire deal. The signed agreement obliged Armenia to withdraw all its troops from the Azerbaijani lands that it had occupied since the early 1990s.

Briefs

WHO for reversing 'disgraceful' vaccine inequality

AGENCIES

NEW YORK: The World Health Organization (WHO) has pressed the 20 most powerful world leaders and pharmaceutical chiefs to reverse the "disgraceful" inequity in global access to Covid-19 vaccines by the fall, in order to avert yet another deadly wave of cases over the winter.

WHO's Bruce Aylward said the world should be "disgusted" with the imbalance in available tools to fight the pandemic and appealed to the wealthiest nations to focus on helping all countries vaccinate at least 10% of their populations by September. Only 1.1% of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose, due to a lack of supplies. "I can't help but think: if we had tried to withhold vaccines from parts of the world, could we have made it any worse than it is today?" Aylward, senior adviser to the WHO director-general and head of the ACT Accelerator initiative, which is aimed at providing pandemic resources to developing countries. Aylward's comments come a week after WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called for a moratorium on coronavirus vaccine booster shots until September, urging the G20 to do more to improve access globally. "I understand the concern of all governments to protect their people from the Delta variant."

Germany, Netherlands halt Afghan deportations

WEB DESK

BERLIN: Germany will temporarily stop deportations to Afghanistan due to the unstable security situation, the German Interior Ministry told DW on Wednesday. It comes after the Netherlands suspended deportations to the country for six months. Earlier in the day, the German Interior Ministry said it believed it would still be possible to deport Afghan asylum seekers, despite the Taliban quickly retaking parts of the country. Interior Ministry spokesman Steve Alter said Wednesday nearly 30,000 Afghans in Germany were slated for deportation. Alter told reporters the Ministry "continues to be of the view that there are people in Germany who need to leave the country, as soon as possible."

In the Netherlands, Ankie Broekers-Knol, the state secretary in the Ministry of Justice, told parliament in The Hague Wednesday deportations would be suspended for the next 12 months due to the Taliban's advances across Afghanistan.

Greece: Over 100,000 hectares of forest burned

ATHENS: Nearly 100,000 hectares of forestry and farmland have burned in less than two weeks in Greece in the worst wave of wildfires since 2007, the European Forest Fire Information System (EFFIS) said Wednesday.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis described the 586 fires that ravaged several regions of Greece in just a few days as "a natural disaster of exceptional magnitude". More than 93,600 hectares (231,000 acres) went up in smoke in just 14 days, fuelled by an extraordinary heatwave that struck at the beginning of August, according to AFP calculations based on EFFIS data from July 29 to August 11. The average burn over the same period between 2008-2020 was 2,330 hectares. "They are still very destructive today everywhere, and have a rare high level of intensity," according to Mark Parrington of Copernicus, the European Climate Change service, which includes EFFIS. - APP

PM assures to extend all possible assistance to farmers

Today, every family in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a health card, adding that universal health insurance is not even in rich countries and all citizens of Punjab will get health cards by the end of this year

DNA

BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said that it is his vision to support farmers, enabling them to increase their income, which is critical to decrease poverty, bring down prices of essential items, and reduce inflation in the country. Addressing Farmers Convention in Bahawalpur on Wednesday, he assured the farmers that he was not doing them any favors and it was his duty to help his farmers to bring prosperity in the country. The federal and Punjab governments will always stand by the farmers.

He paid tribute to the Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar for giving him health cards in the province. "I had planned of giving health cards to the poor people before entering politics, he said and added Shaukat Khanum Hospital provides free treatment to 70 per cent of poor patients. "Today, every family in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has a health card, adding that



BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Imran Khan distributing Kissan Cards in Kissan Convention. - APP

universal health insurance is not even in rich countries and all citizens of Punjab will get health cards by the end of this year. He said the government is providing direct subsidy to farmers through Kissan Card to procure agri inputs.

He said we have to help farmers by providing them fiscal assistance and technological support. He said the government believes in encouraging research in the agriculture sector to increase per acre yield. The prime minister also appreciated performance of the Islamia University Bahawalpur in promoting the culture of research, especially in the field of agriculture. Imran Khan went on to

say that current account is our challenge at present, adding that the dollars go abroad when we import a machine and with the shortage of dollars, we have to go to the IMF again. "The things that are imported from abroad can be made and grow in Pakistan but we have to increase research in the country," he said.

'Pakistan to help advance Afghan peace process'

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said Pakistan will continue to make every effort to help advance the Afghan peace process and to realize a political solution. He was talking to Turkish Minister for Defense who called on him in Islamabad on Wednesday.

Imran Khan said Pakistan and Turkey enjoy historic fraternal ties marked by unique mutual trust and mutual support. On regional issues, Prime Minister Imran Khan underlined that a negotiated political settlement was the only way forward.

He expressed hope that the Afghan leaders would recognize the importance of international convergence on the way forward and achieve an inclusive, broad based and comprehensive political settlement.

The Prime Minister expressed deep concerns over the forest fires in Turkey and reaffirmed Pakistan's solidarity and readiness to extend all possible assistance to help cope with this calamity.

The Prime Minister expressed satisfaction at the existing level of bilateral defense cooperation. He thanked Turkey for Turkey's strong and consistent support to Pakistan on all issues particularly Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The Turkish Minister for Defense reiterated Turkey's support to Pakistan on all issues including Jammu and Kashmir.

He concurred with Prime Minister Imran Khan on enhancing cooperation in all areas to the mutual benefit of both the countries including in the defense field. He also underlined Turkey's efforts to promote a political solution in Afghanistan. - DNA

Afghans must decide their future: Sh Rashid

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior, Sheikh Rashid Ahmad on Wednesday said that Afghans would take initiatives for the future of their country and reiterated that Pakistan had no favourites in Afghanistan.



Addressing a press conference, he said Pakistan was itself a victim as the nation had paid a huge price with 70,000 casualties, in addition to huge economic losses. He said India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW), National Directorate of Security (NDS) and Israeli spy agency were trying to hamper peace in Pakistan, besides also carrying out media campaign against it.

He said that it was high time to jointly counter the conspiracies of hostile forces against the motherland and added opposition parties were not cognizant of regional changes during the upcoming six months.

He said that special instructions had been issued to chief secretaries and police officials to ensure foolproof security for the processions of Muharram-ul-Haram across the country. The minister said that effective measures would be adopted to maintain law and order, security and harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram.

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Pak seeks Afghan co-op on abduction incident

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday hoped that the government of Afghanistan would cooperate in expeditious provision of the requested information regarding the July 16 incident involving the daughter of Afghanistan's Ambassador in Islamabad.

"We have seen the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement and the complainant's video. It is once again highlighted that the visiting delegation was given a comprehensive briefing on each aspect of the complaint," said Foreign Office Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chuahdri.

He was responding to media queries regarding the Afghanistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs' statement on the complaint of the daughter of Afghan Ambassador to Pakistan. The Foreign Office Spokesperson said that "The Pakistan side facilitated the delegation's visit to all areas which the complainant had independently visited on 16 July, including F-7, G-7, Rawalpindi, Daman-e-Koh, F-6 and F-9 Park."

"The delegation was informed that the technical data (geo-fencing) matched with the actual movement of complainant on the day contrary to statement of the complainant, which was further confirmed by the statements of the taxi drivers," he added.

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Covid infects 4856 more people

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Over 4,800 people tested positive for the coronavirus in the last 24 hours in Pakistan. This was revealed by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Wednesday. Meanwhile, another 81 people lost their lives to the virus.

As many as 4,856 people tested positive for the virus after 64,690 COVID-19 tests were taken, as per the NCOC's data. This brings the positivity rate to 7.50%. The total number of active cases in the country rose to 84,177 on August 11.

A total of 972,098 people have so far recovered from the virus while the total number of deaths, with the fresh count of 81 fatalities, have risen to 24,085. Pakistan's total confirmed case count now stands at 1,080,360. A day earlier, the coronavirus death toll crossed the 24,000 mark in Pakistan after the country reported 86 deaths.

Jordanian envoy calls on naval chief

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Jordan Ibrahim Al-Madni Wednesday visited Naval Headquarters and called on Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS) Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi.

The Jordanian ambassador also thanked Pakistan Navy (PN) for participation of PN Ship in centenary celebrations of Jordan, said a Pakistan Navy news release.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and maritime security in the region were discussed. Both the dignitaries, reiterated the commitment to further enhance bilateral relations between the two countries. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Naval Chief Admiral Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with Ibrahim Al Madani, Ambassador of Jordan. - DNA

Media bodies reject proposed media authority

The major stakeholders believe that the PMDA is an attempt to tighten Federal Government control over the media from one platform

DNA

KARACHI: The representatives of media organizations i.e. All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS), Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE), Pakistan Broadcasters Association (PBA), Pakistan Federal Union of Journalists (PFUJ) and Association of Electronic Media Editors and News Directors (AEMEND) in a joint statement, have totally rejected the proposed Pakistan Media Development Authority (PMDA)

and termed the concept as an unconstitutional and draconian law against the freedom of press and expression and step toward imposing the state control to regulate all segments of media under over-centralized body. The representatives of the media organizations in a joint statement, vehemently objected to the proposed PMDA as it appears to be aimed at to subjugate the freedom of press and expression.

The major stakeholders believe that the PMDA is an attempt to tighten Federal

Government control over the media from one platform and ignores the fact that print, electronic and social media are separate entities each with their own defined features.

The move to bring under state control smacks of an authoritarian streak that should have no place in democratically elected dispensation. The representatives of media organizations have urged upon the joint meeting of the Senate and National Assembly on Information to reject the Proposal completely.

NCOC reduces interval between two vaccine doses

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has reduced the interval between both doses of COVID-19 vaccinations from 42 to 28 days in a bid to speed up vaccination drive across the country.

According to the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC), the decision has been taken after consultation with the Ministry of Health officials and the doctors. It has also decided to make both Covid vaccine doses mandatory of air travel from September 10 and all concerned institutions have been informed about the decision. - DNA

Forensic report finds Noor raped before murder

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The forensic report released on Wednesday ascertained that Noor was raped before she was butchered and the DNA of accused Zahir Jaffer matched with the samples collected from the crime scene. The report said that the fingerprints of accused Jaffer were found on the weapon of murder. The forensic lab has sent the report to the Islamabad police. The forensic report also declared the CCTV footage original. The 27-year-old Noor Mukadam, who was the daughter of

former ambassador Shaukat Mukadam, was brutally murdered on July 20 in Islamabad area of F4 in the precincts of Kohsar police station.

Accused Zahir Jaffer was arrested from the scene of the crime. Noor's throat was slit open by a sharp-edged weapon then the murderer severed her head in the most brutal manner. He also used knuckledusters to torture Noor before killing her. The alleged killer, Jaffer, was reportedly her acquaintance.

Earlier, sources in the federal capital police said the cell phone record of Zahir Zakir Jaffer, made starting revelations.

India behind vicious social media campaign

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain Wednesday said India was leading a vicious propaganda campaign against Pakistan with the help of fake social media accounts and certain internal elements were also involved in spreading fake Indian trends on social media deliberately or unintentionally.

Addressing a news conference flanked by National Security Advisor Dr Moed Yusuf, he said an organized hybrid media warfare had been initiated against Pakistan. Some 845 fake websites were spreading disinformation against Pakistan - The campaign was spearheaded by Indian news agency ANI, he added.

Certain foreign elements were involved in fanning hatred and violence in the country, he said, adding that the campaign involving Afghanistan, Israel also mainly aimed at triggering communal hatred and linguistic conflicts, violence in Pakistan - all this was being supported by some foreign countries.

India used its vast network for Websites to give credence to fake news based trends by Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) and Baloch Separatists.

Some of the Indian trends were # State Killed-KarimaBaloch; #StateKilledUsmanKakar and



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information & Broadcasting Ch. Fawad Hussain and Advisor to PM for National Security Moeed Yousuf jointly addressing a press conference. - APP

RapistArmyBalochistan. While Israeli attempts were SAPM Zulfi Bukhari Visit to Israel. PTM got support from India.

He said Indian TV channels recently uploaded multi hour videos propagating that Pakistan was not safe for women by quoting Noor Mukadam case. Ironically the murderer of Noor had already been arrested, he added.

He said the Digital Data Wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting had prepared

a two years detailed analytical Report from June 2021 to August 2021, in which it has elaborated how the social media was being used against Pakistan. Unfortunately majority of the social media trends were led by India by using people from within the country. Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM) had harnessed over 150 anti-state social media trends. A total of 3.7 million tweets were against Pakistan. Anti state trends for over 1,000 hours by PTM

- majority of these tweets supported Baloch separatists.

On August 14, 2020, some 150,000 anti state trends against Pakistan were tweeted from India on #Balochistsolidarityday - the target of some 145,000 tweeters were from Pakistan. The target was Pakistan Army.

Senator Usman Kakar was died due of brain hemorrhage, but India spreaded dis-informative trends on social media stating that #StateKillsUsman. Over 2,000 tweets were from social media account of India. Media wings of PML-N and JUI-F participated in the campaign to spread confusion.

A social media campaign was launched with over 10,000 tweets stating that former Special Assistant to Prime Minister Zulfi Bukhari had visited Israel with #ZulfiBukhari's visit to Israel. Unfortunately the social media wings of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) also intentionally or unintentionally played their role in spreading the Israeli trend.

Another trend titled #RejectKillPolicy was launched propagating that Asad Khan Achakzai of ANP but ironically Asad was killed in a dacoity attempt. Surprisingly the tweets of Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan were supported by 400,000 tweets from India.

The Indian contribution in another trend #ExposeProQadiyani Minister was over 122,000 tweets.