



# Islamabad POST

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Turkey is in talks with all parties, including Taliban: Turkish FM

Detailed News On Page-07

NATO blames Afghan leaders over crisis

Detailed News On Page-01



PPP for taking parliament into confidence

Detailed News On Page-08



## Afghan soil not to be used against others

Taliban says full protection to foreigners; all foreign missions to be guarded; women will have full rights within Shariah law; West should not be worried; media will have freedom but nothing against Islamic values

### NEWS DESK

KABUL: The Taliban held their first official news conference in Kabul on Tuesday since the shock seizure of the city, declaring they wanted peaceful relations with other countries and would respect the rights of women within the framework of Islamic law.



KABUL: Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid addressing a press conference. - DNA

mer Afghan government soldiers as well as contractors and translators who worked for international forces. "Nobody is going to harm you, nobody is going to knock on your doors," he said.

in 2020 that led to the ultimate US withdrawal under current President Joe Biden. He said private media could continue to be free and independent in Afghanistan, adding the Taliban were committed to the media within its cultural framework.

himself the "legitimate caretaker president" and vowed that he would not bow to Kabul's new rulers. The Taliban news conference came as the United States and Western allies evacuated diplomats and civilians a day after scenes of chaos at Kabul airport as Afghans desperate to flee the Taliban thronged the terminal.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan received a delegation of political leaders from Afghanistan. - APP

## Pak-Saudia vow to deepen ties

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: General Fayyadh Bin Hamed Al-Rowaily, Chief of General Staff, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force in his office on Tuesday. During the meeting, both the dignitaries discussed matters of professional and mutual interest.

## Afghan leadership must work together in current situation

The premier's comments came during a meeting with a delegation of political leaders from Afghanistan

### SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: "Great responsibility" rests on the Afghan leaders to work constructively together to lead Afghanistan on the path of sustainable peace, stability, and development.

## Ready to assist for all inclusive settlement: COAS

### NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Tuesday said Pakistan is "willing to do everything possible to help Afghanistan achieve an all-inclusive settlement which is vital for regional peace and prosperity".

## Briefs

### Barrister Sultan elected as AJK president

#### DNA

MUAFFARABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) candidate Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry on Tuesday was elected as the 28th president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) by securing 34 votes.

## Consultations must to recognize Taliban govt

### ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Tuesday said Pakistan would take decision about recognizing Taliban government in Afghanistan in consultation with regional and international powers specially China, Turkey and the United States of America.



## 'Taliban on board over TTP issue'

### STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed said Tuesday that Pakistan has taken the Afghan Taliban on board over the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) issue, hoping that Afghanistan's soil will not be used against Pakistan.

## Mullah Baradar arrives in Afghanistan

### AGENCIES

KANDAHAR: Mullah Baradar, the chief of the Taliban's political office, has arrived in Afghanistan's Kandahar province along with a delegation.

## AFGHAN PEACE French president underlines Pakistan, Turkey, Iran role

Europe alone cannot bear consequences of current situation

### NEWS DESK

PARIS: Europe must come up with a "robust" response to tackle increased migration flows from Afghanistan, French President Emmanuel Macron has said.

## Pak, French ties heading towards normalcy

### DNA

ISLAMABAD: The French president Macron delivered a speech on the evolving Afghan situation. During his speech the French president mentioned role of Pakistan and other countries who can help bring peace in the country.

## NATO chief blames Afghan leadership

### AGENCIES

BRUSSELS: NATO secretary general Jens Stoltenberg said Tuesday the alliance had been surprised by the speed of the Taliban victory in Afghanistan but blamed Afghan leaders for the "tragedy".

## 'EU must talk to Taliban'

BRUSSELS: Before recognizing them, the European Union will have to talk with the Taliban after the group seized control of Afghanistan, the bloc's foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Tuesday.

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Continued on Page 06

## PM discusses Afghanistan with UK, Danish counterparts

Danish PM thanked PM Imran for assistance in evacuation process



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan held telephonic conversations with his British and Danish counterparts on Tuesday.

Tuesday exchanged views on the latest situation in Afghanistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan, who received a telephone call from British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, underscored the paramount importance of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan for Pakistan.

and respect for rights of all Afghans was critically important. The prime minister also underscored the importance of an inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan. He highlighted the positive role of Pakistan in facilitating evacuation of

Continued on Page 06

### Holiday Notice

The office of Daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on August 18, and August 19 on account of Ashura, therefore, there will be no newspaper on Thursday and Friday.

### STAFF REPORT

## AUGUST 2021

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

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Advertisement for CENTRELINE magazine featuring Suh Sangpyo and text: 'Peace, security a pre-requisite for foreign investments'.



## Briefs

CDGP  
launches  
monsoon  
plantation  
drive

PESHAWAR: The Director General (DG) City District Government Peshawar (CDGP), Khizer Hayat Khan Tuesday planted a sapling at the green belt of Tehmas Khan Football Stadium to launch monsoon tree plantation campaign under auspices of the civic body. Besides, Member Peshawar Revival Committee MPA Ayesha Bano, former member town council, Irfan Saleem, Rabia Noorain and Syed Qadeem Shah, the consultant of Archeology Department Tariq Khattak was also present on the occasion. Member of Peshawar Revival Committee MPA Ayesha Bano also planted a sapling to participate in the campaign. DG City District Government and MPA Ayesha Bano also visited Shalimar Bagh in Shahi Bagh and inspected its various sections.

Heirs of  
16 coalminers  
to get  
compensation

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labour, Shaoukat Yousafzai directed district administration Shalga to provide compensation amount to the families of 16 coalminers who were killed by kidnappers on July 9. The Minister issued these directives during a meeting with Deputy Commissioner Shalga, Abidur Rehman at his office on Tuesday. Shaoukat Yousafzai sought monthly performance report of the officers and directed DC Shalga to personally monitor the ongoing construction work on all the ongoing developmental schemes in the district. He also directed concerned quarters to ensure timely completion of the under construction project for providing best facilities to area people. He said the contractor who is showing negligence in timely completion of work would be blacklisted. On the occasion, DC Abidur Rehman assured for providing compensation cheques among heirs of killed coalminer within few days after completing legal process.

Over 1.5m  
people  
vaccinated in  
Faisalabad

FAISALABAD, Aug 17 (APP): As many as 1,504,984 [1.5 million] people have so far been vaccinated against COVID-19 in Faisalabad district. District Health Officer Dr Ataul Mun'im said on Tuesday that 1,220,073 citizens had been given the first dose while 237,554 were administered the second dose of vaccine. He further said that 28,501 health workers were also given the first dose while 18,856 received the second dose of vaccine. He said that sufficient stock of anti-coronavirus vaccine was available in the district. As of now 50,669 first doses and 33,779 second doses were in the stock at Faisalabad. He said that 37 vaccination centers and 20 mobile vaccination camps were operational in Faisalabad where registered persons were also getting anti-coronavirus vaccine doses.

## FESCO to ensure uninterrupted supply on Ashur

CEO FESCO said vacations of the staff included in emergency staff have been cancelled so that electricity problems of the consumers could be resolved on priority basis

## BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) Engr. Bashir Ahmed has visited the central control room established at FESCO Headquarters to ensure the uninterrupted power supply in FESCO region during the Moharram ul Harram. Totally 7 number control rooms have been established at Faisalabad, Sargodha, Jhang, Bhakkar, Mianwali and Chiniot and special duties have been assigned to the officers. All necessary arrangements have been finalized to ensure the continuous power supply during Yum e Ashur. CEO FESCO Bashir Ahmed would directly monitor the performance of all operation circles

DC stresses to aware students  
about tree plantation

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the excellent academic results of the college and expressed over the efforts of the administration on the clean environment of the college

## ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali visited Government Girls Degree College Ayub Research. Assistant Commissioner City Syed Ayub Bukhari also accompanied him. Deputy Commissioner planted trees in the lawn of the college along with Principal Dr. Saira Khanam, other staff members and students. He said that 70,000 saplings have been planted in the district so far this season while measures are being taken for maximum tree planting. He said that it is being implemented in the form of a movement, as it is the most urgent need of the hour to make the new generation aware of the importance of trees and fidelity. He also stressed on the

need to plant more trees in the available space in the college. The Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated the upgrade of Home Economics Lab in the college and visited various departments. Expressing that the students should be provided opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities along with quality education. The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the excellent academic results of the college and expressed over the efforts of the administration on the clean environment of the college. He also visited the anti-dengue and corona counters and urged the students to continue their efforts to protect them from epidemic diseases. Principal gave detail of educational result and plantation campaign.



FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali sapled a plant at Govt Girls Degree College Ayub Research. – DNA



KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari holding news conferences along with party officials. – DNA

Educational institutions across  
Sindh to reopen on Aug 23

Schools across the province were closed on July 14 following a surge in coronavirus cases

## DNA

KARACHI: All educational institutions across Sindh will reopen on August 23 (Monday) with 50 per cent attendance, Provincial Education Minister Syed Sardar Shah announced Tuesday. Speaking to the media, he said the government decided to allow schools with fully vaccinated teaching and non-teaching staff to reopen. He added educational institutes will reopen under Covid-19 SOPs to prevent spread of the coronavirus. The minister said random polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests would be conducted with monitoring of schools to ensure the health guidelines are adhered to in letter and spirit. Earlier in the day, the health ministry had advised

schools, colleges, universities to call students on alternate days. It recommended that primary schools should be closed for an additional 10 days. Schools across the province were closed on July 14 following a surge in coronavirus cases. Schools were closed for classes one to eight, while students of class nine and above were allowed to only sit for their exams. Educational institutions were expected to reopen on August 2 but the date has been postponed because of the lockdown imposed by the Sindh government. All malls, public offices, shops, and markets have been closed in the province till August 8 because of the rise in coronavirus cases. On August 8, the Sindh government decided to keep

schools closed till Muharram 10. Inter and matric exams, on the other hand, resumed on August 10. Schools across Pakistan reopened on August 2 with 50% attendance. Sindh Education Minister Sardar Shah has rejected the federal government's decision to bring a uniform education system across the country. "Decisions over the education policy fall under the provincial government," he said. "We have our own textbook board and a syllabus committee." Students of the Science group can have a syllabus similar to that announced by the federal board, but the syllabus of other subjects such as Arts and Commerce will be decided by the province, Shah decided. Sindh Information Minister Saeed Ghani clarified

that Sindh does not oppose teaching Quran in schools. "In Sindh, the Quran is completed in the eighth grade, while you wish that it should be completed in the fifth grade," he tweeted. On Monday, Prime Minister Imran Khan launched the Single National Curriculum in a ceremony in Islamabad. Education ministers of all provinces attended it except Shah. The PM said that he has had a vision for the last 25 years to bring a core curriculum for the whole country. "People used to tell me that it is not possible since there was no incentive to do this. [This was] because those who were in power, who had to make decisions, their children were studying in institutions where there was English medium education," he remarked.

Smooth transportation  
continues at Torkham border

PESHAWAR: The district administration Khyber on Tuesday said that Torkham border crossing between Pakistan and Afghanistan is opened for cargo transit and all types of transportation with strict observance of Covid-19 SOPs. Talking to APP, the district administration spokesperson said that transit cargo vehicles are entering Afghanistan without any hindrance as officials on both side of border have taken necessary steps to allow smooth flow of

cargo transit entry. He said that around 60 Pakistani nationals have returned from Afghanistan via Torkham border during in last 24 hours. Deputy Commissioner Khyber District, Mansoor Arshid, District Police Officer Wasim Riaz, Assistant Commissioner Landi Kohat Iftikhar Ahmed and official of Frontier Corps (FC) visited zero point Torkham border to inspect overall situation, transportation of cargo transit and steps taken for the safe return of Paki-

stanis stranded in Afghanistan. The security officials deputed at border while giving a briefing to the district administration said that situation was normal at borders and commercial transportation was continuing across both sides of Torkham border. He informed that total 3005 Pakistanis have returned from Afghanistan since opening of the border after Covid restrictions were lifted about a month ago. – APP

Plantation of trees  
stressed for clean  
environment

PESHAWAR: Director General City District Government Khizra Hayat Khan on Tuesday underlined the need for making concerted efforts to plant maximum trees to provide a clean and green environment for healthy living. He expressed these views while inaugurating a tree plantation campaign under the city district government. He said unfortunately that environmental pollution was increasing rapidly and effective measures should be taken to effectively tackle environmental challenges. He said that the plantation campaign would continue in different parts of the city till the end of August. Town Member and Committee Member Irfan Sal-

eem, Architect City District Government Rabia Noorin, Administrative Officer Syed Qadeem Shah, Accounts Office Muneeb-ur-Rehman, Aziz Khan and Archaeological Department Consultant Tariq Khattak were also present in the ceremony. He said that on the direction of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan, the tree planting campaign would continue throughout the month of August for which the forest department will provide plants. After inspecting various parts, the director general directed for deployment of guards for protection of green belt and added that more measures should be taken for beautification of Shalimar Bagh. – APP

CTD arrests two  
terrorists

## DNA

PESHAWAR: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Kohat region Tuesday arrested two terrorists and recovered arms and ammunition besides Rs 6.7 million from their custody, police confirmed. Acting upon a tip off, the CTD team intercepted two persons during snap checking on Shaukel-Hangu Road. During checking police found that both are terrorists and wanted by police in killing of a labourer and ransom for kidnapping of other workers that were busy in installation of a mobile tower in district Kurram on June 29. They arrested were identified as Azizullah and Mohammad Shoaib. Police recovered Rs.6.7 million from a room situated in Qazi Banda that was identified by the arrested Azizullah during interrogation while both the arrested revealed that they had purchased a 12.7gun, heavy machine gun and three hand-grenades with the remaining amount Rs300,000 by ransom money collected against the release of abducted laborers. CTD also recovered the arms and ammunition from Ali Sherzai area of district Kurram while further investigation is in progress.

Cop injured  
by outlaws

## DNA

FAISALABAD: A police constable was shot at and injured by suspects, in the precincts of Balochi police station. Police said on Tuesday that a police team during a routine patrolling spotted three suspects near Graveyard Morh Balochi and signaled them to stop but they opened fire at the police party. As a result of which constable Shahid Jameel sustained bullet injuries. The police also returned fire, however the outlaws managed to escape from the scene. The injured constable was shifted to hospital for treatment. Special raiding team has been constituted to arrest the fleeing outlaws. 77 shopkeepers fined The price control magistrates imposed a fine on 77 shopkeepers over profiteering in the district on Tuesday. A spokesman for the district administration said price control magistrates inspected 879 shops in different markets and bazaars of the district and found 77 shopkeepers involved in profiteering. The magistrates imposed a total fine of Rs 89,000 on them.

2500 cops  
deputed for  
9th Muharram  
security

## DNA

FAISALABAD: More than 2500 police officials were deputed for security of mourning processions and Majalis on 9th Muharramul Haraam (Wednesday) in the district. Police spokesman said on Tuesday that 138 Majalis would be held in the district on 9th Muharram including 40 Majalis in Jarawal division, 32 in Iqbal division, 27 in Sadr division, 22 in Madina Town division and 17 in Lyallpur division. Similarly, 93 mourning processions would be taken out on Wednesday including 26 processions in Iqbal division, 26 processions in Jarawal division, 18 processions in Madina Town division, 19 in Sadr division and 7 processions in Lyallpur division. He said that more than 2500 police officials along with 1000 volunteers would perform security duty for the protection of mourning processions and Majalis, whereas, 5 SPs, 13 DSPs, 19 Inspectors, 93 Sub Inspectors (SIs) and 243 Assistant Sub Inspectors (ASIs) would supervise the security arrangements in their respective areas. He said that police would provide four-tier security to the Muharram activities at all places. In first circle, volunteers will conduct body search and identification of the procession participants while walk through gates and metal detectors would be used at third security circle. In other two circles, the security personnel will watch and keep vigil eye on the suspects and miscreants.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
(I.T Directorate)

## TENDER NOTICE

Capital Development Authority invites sealed tenders on single stage two envelope process from the original Manufacturers/Authorized Distributors/Suppliers having NTN & GST registration on the following date and time for the work mentioned below:

| Name of Work  | Earnest Money   | Cost of Tender Form | BIDS SUBMISSION DATE & TIME | BIDS OPENING DATE & TIME |
|---|---|---------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| PURCHASE OF IT EQUIPMENT REQUIRED FOR CDA, ISLAMABAD. | Equivalent to 3% of the total Bid amount which should not be less than Rs. 10,000/- | Rs: 2000/-          | 07-09-2021 At 10:30 hrs     | 07-09-2021 At 11:00 hrs  |

## Conditions:

- Tender documents can be obtained on Payment of cash amounting to Rs. 2000/- (Rupees two thousand only) non-refundable, from the office of Cash Branch, Information Technology Directorate, CDA, Main CDA Secretariat, Block III, G-7/4, Islamabad during office hours before the closing date.
- Sealed bid along with the earnest money must reach at office of Director IT, CDA located at Main CDA Secretariat, Block III, G-7/4, Islamabad on or before 07-09-2021.
- Bid will be opened the same day at Director IT office 30 minutes after bid closing time.
- The competent authority reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all tenders/proposals as per PPRA rules.
- Firms / Companies blacklisted by Government Agencies / Banks / Autonomous Bodies need not to apply.
- This advertisement along with tender documents may also be seen on CDA Website, [www.cda.gov.pk](http://www.cda.gov.pk) as well as PPRA web site [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk).

Mr. Rashid Hassan  
Deputy Director

Information Technology Directorate  
Block-III, CDA Secretariat, Khayaban-e-Shurwarder, G-7/4, Islamabad  
051-9253094

PID (I) No. 999/21



### SERVICES



#### Namaz Timings

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| Fajr.....    | 04:01 am |
| Zohr.....    | 12:12 pm |
| Asr.....     | 04:57 pm |
| Maghrib..... | 06:52 pm |
| Isha.....    | 08:22 pm |



#### Hotels & Restaurants

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



#### Airlines

|                       |         |
|-----------------------|---------|
| Turkish Airlines..... | 8494949 |
|-----------------------|---------|



#### Emergency

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| Rescue (Police).....                     | 15         |
| Bomb Disposal.....                       | 15         |
| Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad..... | 1122 & 16  |
| Emergency Ambulance.....                 | 1122       |
| & Rescue Services.....                   | 4451122    |
| Motorway Police.....                     | 9266044    |
| Motorway Police.....                     | 9270601-20 |
| Women Police Stations Islamabad.....     | 9222596    |
| Rawalpindi.....                          | 9270601-20 |



#### Enquiry

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| Edhi Ambulance.....   | 115       |
| PIA Flight Info.....  | 114       |
| PIA Cargo.....        | 9280979   |
| Railway Inquiry.....  | 117       |
| Railway Exchange..... | 9270831-5 |
| WASA Rawalpindi.....  | 5555489   |
| CAA.....              | 9281092   |



#### Hospitals

|                          |            |
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| 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 |
| Met Office.....       | 9250360-6  |
| RDA.....              | 5555864    |
| TMA.....              | 5770886    |
| Cantonment Board..... | 9270151-3  |



#### Complaints

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Water Tanker Service</b>     |             |
| 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 |
|-----------------|--------------|



ISLAMABAD: Managing Director Pakistan, Bait-ul-Mal, Malik Zaheer Abbas and UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi in a group photo with the disabled persons from Waziristan who were provided artificial limbs to enable their mobility. – APP

## UAE ambassador lauds pro-poor services of PBM

Underlining the brotherly relations between the two countries, Managing Director PBM said that the welfare projects of UAE in our country are echo of kindness and affection to the deserving people

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: In a ceremony held here in UAE Embassy, the persons with disabilities (PWDs) from Waziristan were invited, who were provided Artificial Limbs with the support of UAE Embassy. Managing Director PBM, Malik Zaheer Abbas and UAE Ambassador to Paki-

stan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi met with the persons encouraging them to live an independent and self-reliant life. Addressing the ceremony, Managing Director PBM expressed his gratitude to UAE Envoy to work jointly with PBM for extending generous support to provide Artificial Limbs to the PWDs ensuring their mobility. Highlighting the ceremony, Malik Zaheer Abbas briefed

the media that so far, 61 persons, who became disabled or paralyzed as a result of sad episodes of Bomb Blasts and Terrorism Activities in North and South Waziristan over the past few years, have been provided Artificial Limbs, in collaboration with UAE Embassy and Prosthetic and Orthotic Science (PIPOS). Managing Director PBM also revealed his passion to extend the

support to the PWDs of Balochistan Province as well with the aim to accommodate around 2000 PWDs, under the flagship of Prime Minister's Ehsaas Programme for resilient recovery of the vulnerable persons. Underlining the brotherly relations between the two countries, Managing Director PBM said that the welfare projects of UAE in our country are echo of kind-

ness and affection to the deserving people. Addressing the ceremony, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi was of the view that Pakistan and UAE are enjoying 50 years of brotherly diplomatic relations. He said that it's a matter of pleasure and satisfaction to me for bringing the PWDs back into the active life. Applauding the pro-poor services of PBM, UAE Am-

bassador vowed to strengthen link with the organization in serving the humanity. On the occasion, Managing Director PBM and UAE envoy also paid tribute to all the courageous PWDs who defeated their disabilities and selected the way towards the independent and honorable life. PWDs present over there were also awarded financial support from UAE envoy, after the event.

## ZTBL urged to adopt innovative banking solutions

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin, on Tuesday urged the Zarai Taraqati Bank (ZTBL) to adopt prudent lending, stringent accounting controls, innovative banking solutions and austerity measures for a long-term turnaround. He was talking to President (ZTBL), Shahbaz Jameel, who called on him here, according to press statement

issued by the Finance Ministry. The minister said that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made it imperative to implement digital transformation in operations for increasing transaction volumes. He said, ZTBL was a leading agro-financing bank in Pakistan which had been extending loans to poor farmers aimed at boost-

ing agricultural productivity at the grass root level. The minister directed the management to make concerted efforts to augment the specialized operations of the bank and make it sustainable and dynamic for promoting agro-farming in the country. The minister affirmed full support and facilitation for smooth working

of ZTBL on the occasion. Earlier, President ZTBL briefed the minister about the quarterly profit registered by the bank ending on 30th June 2021, after a gap of almost four years. The president acknowledged the guidance of the Advisory Committee, headed by the Finance Minister, which spearheaded the reform process at ZTBL. He also underscored the importance of measures adopted by the Bank in making its operations sustainable.

## Foolproof security provided to 52 processions

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police provided foolproof security cover to 52 processions and 185 Majalis of 7th Muharram whereas nearly 2500 cops ensured security and traffic arrangements for main 7th Muharram procession of Rawalpindi city. The main procession of 7th Muharram started after maghrib prayer on Monday from Sian Sadiq Imambargah, Sadiqabad and after passing through its traditional route culminated at Imambargah Qadeemi at morning. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Imran Ahmar visited the route of the main procession, reviewed the security and checked all the arrangements. He directed the police officers to ensure foolproof arrangements to protect lives and properties of the citizens. City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, DIG, Muhammad Ahsan Younas remained present from start to culmination of the procession and supervised all the security arrangements. Other senior police officers of Rawalpindi including Senior Superintendent Police (SSP) Operations Rai Mazhar Iqbal, SP Rawal, Zia ud Din, SP CIA, Tariq Mehmood, SP Headquarters Naira Zafar, SP Security Tamoor Khan and other officers remained alert and also checked security arrangements and briefed the cops deployed to ensure security of main procession of 7th Muharram. CPO appreciated the performance of police personnel and expressed satisfaction over all the arrangements made for 7th Muharram. According to a police spokesman, total 52 processions were taken out on 7th Muharram including main procession of Sian Sadiq Imambargah and 185 Majalis were organized. Total 6000 cops were deployed to provide foolproof security cover to all 7th Muharram processions and Majalis. Complete searching and sweeping of the route was conducted before start of the main procession. All the streets at the route of the procession were barricaded and all other entry points were closed with barbed wires, barriers and containers. Walk through gates were also installed at entry points of the procession. No person was allowed to carry weapon in Muharram procession except designated police officers, he said. City Traffic Police (CTP) had also finalized all the arrangements to ensure smooth flow of traffic on alternative routes during processions. Parking of vehicles and motorcycles was banned along routes of the mourning processions while all traffic proceeding towards these routes was diverted to other roads.

## Cops to manage traffic on Ashura

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) has made special deployment plan to manage traffic on alternate routes during main processions on 9th Muharram ul Haram in the federal Capital. According to the plan, police source said that more than 500 cops including one SP, four DSPs, and 17 Inspectors would perform duties on the occasion to divert traffic on alternate routes. The SSP (Traffic) would himself supervise the entire plan while traffic police officials would be present at diversion points to guide road users. ITP FM Radio 92.4 would also inform people about the latest situation on the road through special transmission. The main mourning procession would be taken out from Imam Bargah Ashra-e-Ashri G-6/2 on 9th Muharram-ul-Haram, which will culminate at same place after passing through its traditional routes. During the procession, Fazal e Haq road, roads from Poly Clinic to Kalsoom plaza will remain close. According to plan, the police source said that 7th Avenue from F-6 Chowk to Sohrawardi road, Fazal-e-Haq Road from China Chowk to Kalsum Plaza would be closed for general traffic. The road from Iqbal Hall to Melody Chowk, Municipal Road from Markazi Jamia Masjid to Poly Clinic Chowk, Luqman Hakeem Road from Poly Clinic to Lal Quarter while G-6 service road from G-6/2 Chowk to Lal Quarter Chowk will remain close for general traffic from 8 am to onward (till end of procession) at 8 pm.

## ICT, AAA Associates launch Plantation drive

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: AAA Associates, a leading group of companies launched 'Tree Plantation Drive' at the site near Sindy Dam by planting 100,000 trees under the Prime Minister's call for awareness on tree plantation. Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafiqat, Assistant Commissioner Aneel Saeed, Director General Environment Irfan Khan Niazi, and people from all walks of life attended the inaugural ceremony, said a news release. Speaking on the occasion Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiqat said "it is a good sign that Private corporate entities are supporting PM cause in turning Pakistan Green and environment friendly country". According to Global Forest Watch, Pakistan has faced 0.99% decrease in tree cover since year 2000 to 2020. Due to constant deforestation, Pakistan trends extremely low in tree per head i.e., five trees per person in Pakistan versus a global average of 422 trees per head. An official of AAA Associates said the organization believed, "We need to restore the forest cover to eradicate pollution, fight carbon emissions, prevent flooding and overcome global warming."

## Hot weather to continue in most parts of country

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) on Tuesday forecast mainly hot and humid weather for plain areas of the country during the next 24 hours. However, rain-thunderstorm is expected at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan during the next 24 hours. According to the synoptic situation, weak monsoon currents were penetrating upper parts of the country. The hot and humid weather will continue in most parts of the country with increased day temperatures till Thursday. The rainfall recorded during the last 24 hours was Balochistan: Zhob 01 mm. The highest maximum temperatures recorded during the period were Dadu, Dalbandin, NurPurThal, Nokkundi 42 C Bhakkar, Khanewal and Bahawalnagar 41 C. – APP

## 'Decolonization needs narratives not constructed by West'

Syed Abrar Hussain acknowledged the efforts of Professor Tareen for highlighting convergences and divergences between the Deobandi and Bareilvi traditions of the Hanafi school of thought

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islam is as liberal to discuss and debate differences objectively as secularism claims to be, and questioning secularism as the only way to inclusiveness, peaceful coexistence and tolerance means the decolonization of thoughts and society. This was the spirit of a discussion at a webinar titled 'Decolonial Muslim Studies & Defending Muhammad (PBUH) in Modernity', organized by the Institute of Policy Studies, Islamabad (IPS) in collaboration with the international network of scholars 'Decolonial Dialogue'. The webinar was part of the Book Discussion series, a joint effort by the two organizations in bringing international scholarly debates to Pakistani academia. Sher Ali Tareen, a professor at

Franklin and Marshall College, USA, put forth the key themes of his book 'Defending Muhammad in Modernity'. Discussants included Dr. Humeir al-Qidari of King's College London, Dr. Nauman Faizi of LUMS, and Dr. Anis Ahmed, vice-chancellor, Riphah International University (RIU), Islamabad. Nazeer Mahar from The Research Initiative and Zaigham Sarfaraz from Royal Holloway University London also took part in the discussion. Summarizing the key points of his book, Professor Tareen meticulously analyzed the Deobandi-Bareilvi polemics and debates in the aftermath of the fall of Mughal Empire and the Muslims, and the rise of the British colonial empire. Complicating the secular perceptions of 19th century Islam, Tareen termed these debates as 'competing political ideologies' that cannot be understood

through the Western Eurocentric binaries. Using the Deobandi and Bareilvi theological assertions primarily, he challenged the binaries of traditional/moderate, progressive/conservative, and legal/mystical embedded often in secular perceptions of Islamic tradition. He reflected on how the concepts of Divine sovereignty, prophetic authority of the Prophet (PBUH), and ritual practices gave birth to two intellectual streams in the Subcontinent in the 18th and 19th centuries. He regarded the understanding of modern constructions of religion and particularly the study of Islam through Eurocentric epistemology and world view in contradiction with decolonization. Secularizing or Westernizing religious concepts does not consider epistemological and ontological frames of thought of a particular religion, he added. Dr. Humeir al-Qidari noted that

much is lost in translation from the vernacular to the Western episteme. She particularly highlighted the notion of 'sovereign' and 'sovereignty' that scholars borrow from the West to use as a synonym of 'hukum' or 'hakimiyat' in Islam. She was of the view that believing in and exploring options other than secularism for ensuring peace and stability, tolerance and peaceful coexistence is tantamount to decolonization as the concept of secularism has its own history of how it developed in the West over the centuries. She maintained that criticism of the secular paradigm should not be taken as the total rejection of the secular idea, but as the valid criticism of considering secularism as the only solution to all the evils. Dr. Anis Ahmed argued that both Deobandi and Bareilvi schools of thought have the same origin and are not in contradiction with each

other. They share many commonalities in principles and practices. However, the difference lies in the theological approach adopted by scholars of both streams. He said that there is a coherence in all sects of Islam and it was the application of Western epistemology when applied to study the Muslims and their debates that particularly underscores divergences among the sects. He emphasized the need for adopting Islamic epistemology/methodology in place of Western epistemology and ontology to comprehend religious concepts and differences prevailing among various groups. He observed that Muslims have a rich corpus of words that can be explained and understood in their own context and from within the Islamic traditions, without comparing or contrasting them with the Western episteme.



## Briefs

## IHC grants bail to accused in couple case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad High Court (IHC) Tuesday granted post arrest bail to a co-accused Umer Bilal in a case pertaining to blackmailing and torturing of a couple at a residence in Sector E-11. Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri announced the verdict which was reserved on last hearing after listening arguments from both sides. The court accepted the bail against two surety bonds worth Rs10 million each and ordered to release the accused. The court had reserved its judgment on August 12. Golra Police Station registered the first information report against main accused Usman Mirza and others for blackmailing and torturing a couple after making their videos. The accused were currently in Adiyala Jail on judicial remand.

## SC declares Employees Act 2010 as void

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court on Tuesday declared the Employees (Reinstatement) Act 2010 as null and void, in a detailed verdict over petitions, regarding reinstatement of employees removed by the PML-N government in 1997 and reinstated by the PPP government in 2008. A three-member SC bench, comprising Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Qazi Muhammad Amin Ahmed and Justice Amin-Ud-Khan, had reserved the decision on different petitions filed by the employees of 72 departments including Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Intelligence Bureau and Trading Corporation of Pakistan. A 42-page judgement, authored by Justice Mushir Alam, stated that "the beneficiaries of the Act of 2010, who are still in service, will go back to their previous positions, i.e. to the date when the operation of the Act of 2010 has taken effect. However, it would be inequitable to reverse any monetary benefits, received by them under the Act of 2010 for the period they have served and those shall remain intact as they were granted against service. However, the lump sum received by such 'sacked employees' upon reinstatement shall be reversed."

## IHC suspends FIR order against Sardar Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday suspended the order of justice of peace for registration of first information report (FIR) against Senior Minister AJ&K Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan and instructed the FIA to continue its inquiry into the matter pertaining to harassing a citizen. Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case regarding the above matter. No one appear on behalf of complainer Khawaja Faheem during the hearing. Deputy Attorney General Syed Tayyab Shah pleaded that justice of peace had ordered for registration of FIR against Sardar Tanveer Ilyas. He said that the allegation leveled by the complainant regarding the controversial video did not come as crime under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016 (PECA). The justice of peace had no powers to directly order FIA for registration of FIR, he said, adding that it was necessary to conduct inquiry regarding the allegation under FIA law. The DAG said that the FIR could be registered only in light of inquiry report. The chief justice remarked that it seemed that the FIA had prepared report in favor of the accused. The DAG argued that the federation was implementing this court's directives given in other identical cases. — APP

## Global arms race affects conference on disarmament

Ambassador Hashmi pointed out the CD's membership and its composition of militarily significant countries, the rules of procedures and mechanisms, the agenda of achieving nuclear disarmament and absence of civil society's participation are major and constant internal variables that affect CD's working

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: From Pakistan's perspective, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) does not operate in isolation. It is affected by the geopolitical developments at the national and international levels, policy choices of major powers and how the CD members perceive these developments impacting their national security." This was said by Ambassador Khalil Hashmi, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to UN, Geneva at the webtalk on "Issues and Debate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD): A View from Pakistan." The webtalk was organised by the Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) on August 17, 2021. Various distinguished national and international experts attended the webtalk. Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI welcomed the participants. Ambassador Hashmi pointed out the CD's membership and its composition of militarily significant countries, the rules of procedures and mechanisms, the agenda of achieving nuclear disarmament and absence of civil society's participation are major and constant internal variables that affect CD's working. There are ongoing debates regarding further extension of membership, revision of agenda and amendment of rules and procedures. Numerous proposals had been tabled but they did not get much attention, he said. While underlining the external variables, he said that the primary rationale behind CD was to negotiate the treaty of nuclear disarmament, however, the indefinite extension of the NPT somehow legitimised the possession of nuclear weapons and sowed the seeds of existing stalemate



at the CD. Other variables are the longstanding and well-founded frustration due to non-compliance of legal obligations, lack of forward movement on the issue of Negative Security Assurances (NSA), deliberate disregard for established norms of global arms control and disarmament regime, growing mistrust among member states and contest for prioritising the issues among major powers. While highlighting the prospects, he opined that the progress at CD in terms of negotiating any treaty is difficult to achieve due to renewed global arms race, doctrinal shifts and growing

competition and antagonism among major powers. Therefore, there is a need to reverse the policies that caused the stalemate and revive the old global consensus on the issue of nuclear disarmament. He also drew attention to the integration of AI with existing weapons, nanotechnologies, synthetic material, militarisation of cyberspace, hypersonic missile race as matters of serious concern, which must be brought to the CD agenda. However, there is little appetite among major powers to bring them to the agenda. "Currently, there are no clear solutions and the global landscape for arms

control and disarmament is not bright," he said. Earlier in his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC/ISSI, said that the CD succeeded in negotiating the NPT, CWC, BWC and CTBT, however, the Conference is facing deadlock for more than two decades for not reaching a consensus on its programme of work. The new nuclear arms race, the demise of arms control treaties and agreements, military modernisation and weaponisation of outer space, militarisation of emerging technologies and new emerging realities are going to impact this impasse at the CD. He said that the CD should adopt

a comprehensive, objective and rule-based approach to break the deadlock and deal with the existing and emerging challenges. In her remarks, Ambassador Tehmina Janjua, former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, said that CD should not be seen as ineffective and irrelevant. The CD is a forum where Pakistan's views are sought, heard, understood and greatly valued. It is an important strategic forum where Pakistan can bring to attention the security challenges it is facing in the region because of the special treatment given to India. Pakistan is focused on NSA and PAROS but the western countries view the non-proliferation and FMCT as the only negotiable issues, she said. The Webtalk was followed by an extensive question and answer session. In his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG ISSI, said that CD made major progress when conditions were right but from the last two decades, it is in a stalemate. However, the CD remains an important multilateral body as it could play a greater role in dealing with the challenge of emerging technologies.

## IIU's program accredited in Washington accord

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Department of Electrical Engineering (DEE), Faculty of Engineering and Technology of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) has been granted re-accreditation of BS Mechanical Engineering program. According to University details, the accreditation has been granted for 01 year under Washington Accord Outcome Based Education System (Level II) as such Intake Batch 2017. Washington Accord is an international accreditation agreement for professional engineering academic degrees between the bodies responsible for accreditation in its signatory countries. The re-accreditation has been conveyed by Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) through a letter to the Rector IIUI.



ISLAMABAD: Highly Motivated and skilled male and female volunteer of Imamia Disaster Management Cell performing security duties in Imam Bargahs on the occasion of Ashura. —DNA

## Security arrangements finalized for Ashura processions

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration and Capital police have finalized the security arrangements for the processions in city on 9th and 10th Muharram ul Haram. The officials of district administration and police jointly reviewed the security arrangements and expressed satisfaction over foolproof and comprehensive security arrangements in place in Capital along with contingency

plan, a source said here on Tuesday. A control room would also work to supervise and coordinate the security arrangements with all the stakeholders. Deputy Commissioner Hamza Shafaqat and SPP (Operations) Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer would conduct visits of the routes of processions and majalis to monitor the arrangements. City hospitals including Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Federal Government Services Hospital (poly Clinic) and Capital hospital CDA have

been put on alert. The ambulances of these hospitals including the district health office would be deployed in order to provide the medical cover to the participants of processions. Extra vigilance would be maintained in and around the Majalis and on the routes of the processions in close coordination with the local peace committees and organizers. Magistrates, SDPOs and SHOs would ensure contact with the local religious scholars and to monitor the security arrangements in their respective areas.

All entry and exit points on the routes of processions would be blocked on the 9th and 10th of Muharram. The district administration would be in touch with the IESCO officials for adjusting the load management schedule in the areas and stand by arrangements for generators by the organizers. The source said that district administration had held a detailed meetings with religious scholars of all school of thoughts and it was agreed to maintain atmosphere of brotherhood and religious tolerance.

## Riphah University holds 'Ideology of Pakistan' conference

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Riphah International University Tuesday organized 2nd Annual International "Ideology of Pakistan" conference to introduce new generation with the ideology of their country. The Conference was organized by the Students services department, Riphah International University, Islamabad. The conference was attended by young students from Turkey, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan,

Afghanistan, Cambodia, Burkina Faso, Rwanda and Albania and sent congratulatory messages to the Pakistani nation on the occasion of Independence Day. In the inaugural address to the conference, Riphah University Chancellor Hassan Muhammad Khan said that Pakistan is based on two nation ideology while Allama Mohammad Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam wanted to make Pakistan a truly Islamic welfare state where government economy system was idealized to be as per Islamic teaching.

## Pak values bilateral relations with Vietnam: Afridi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi on Tuesday emphasized that Pakistan values its relations with Vietnam. "Pakistan and Vietnam can learn a lot from each other's experiences in the field of trade and economic cooperation." he said during a meeting with the Ambassador of Vietnam. Deputy Chairman Senate acknowledged Vietnam efforts to take steps for economic development. He said that cooperation can also be promoted in textile, agriculture and other fields. Mirza Afridi highlighted that diplomacy at the parliamentary level can take bilateral relations to new heights. He believed that accelerating the exchange of parliamentary delegations will further strengthen bilateral ties. During the meeting, they emphasised on trade and economic cooperation between the two countries to further strengthen people-to-people



contact Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi reiterated that Vietnamese investors need to take advantage of Pakistan's improved business environment. Mirza Muhammad Afridi highlighted that Pakistan is providing visa on arrival facility for citizens of Vietnam.

Deputy Chairman Senate Mirza Muhammad Afridi acknowledged that Pakistan appreciates Vietnam's rapid economic growth. The two countries need to promote cooperation in the fields of tourism and education. Special Economic Zones under CPEC are very important for region-

al connectivity and development. Deputy Chairman also emphasized that Vietnamese investors can take advantage of investment opportunities in Balochistan, especially in Gwadar. While speaking on the Kashmir Issue Deputy Chairman Mirza Afridi

said that the international community should play its role in resolving the Kashmir issue. The Kashmir issue should be resolved in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and UN resolutions. The Deputy Chairman Senate also extended his well wishes to the Government, Parliament and the people of Vietnam. He assured the Ambassador of all possible cooperation for further strengthening of Pak-Vietnam relations. The Ambassador said that that we are proud of the friendship between Pakistan and Vietnam which spans over 50 years. He said that the two countries have excellent cooperation at the international level. The ambassador believed that there is scope for further enhancement of trade and economic cooperation. He informed that contacts were being made with various chambers of commerce and business community to promote trade and explore opportunities for multi-dimensional cooperation and linkage.

## Rescue-1122 finalizes arrangements for Ashura

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Emergency Service, Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi has finalized arrangements for Ashura while over 500 rescuers would be deployed with 34 emergency ambulances for providing emergency cover to mourning processions. According to the plan, all mobile teams and ambulances with medical kits would move along with the processions to provide the mourners with immediate medical aid. Main key points for Ashura would be established at Bani Chowk, Imambargah Col. Maqbool Hussain, Imambargah Qadeemi, Markazi Jamia Masjid, Jamia Taleem ul Quran Raja Bazar, Haider Chowk, Satellite Town, Mughalabad and Talimohri. District Emergency Officer, Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi Ali Hussain chaired a meeting held here at Central Rescue Station Rawal Road. Emergency Officer, Operations gave briefing about the arrangements. The leaves of the rescuers had been cancelled in whole division to meet any emergency. Furthermore Rescue-1122 had prepared a contingency plan, moreover, additional rescue teams would remain on stand-by. The DEO appealed the citizens to dial 1122 in case of any emergency.

## PMC to address issues of medical colleges

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) on Tuesday reiterated that the commission being the regulator was always willing and open to positive discussion to address issues related with the private medical and dental colleges. The assurance was given by President PMC Dr. Arshad Taqi and Vice President PMC Ali Raza during meeting with representatives of medical and dental colleges from Punjab. Dr. Tanveer Islam Rana, who is also the President of Pakistan Association of Private Medical and Dental Institutions (PAMI) Punjab, handed over a resolution passed by PAMI Punjab at a recent meeting and hoped that a fruitful and positive dialogue between the colleges and the Pakistan Medical College will be initiated moving forward for the common goal of improving the quality of medical education in Pakistan. Dr. Rana accompanied by Sheikh Waheed, Chairman Aicenna Medical College and Rana Yasir Islam of Islam Medical College also shared some of the concerns of different private medical and dental colleges in Punjab relating to the new regulations issued by the Commission for admissions to medical and dental colleges. Their concerns were addressed and the Commission's stance on these was explained in detail by the President and Vice President who also undertook to share these with the Council. They further agreed to respond in writing as well as issue any clarifications where necessary to remove any concerns in the mind of the colleges. — APP

Govt notifies transfer, posting of officers

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Tuesday notified the transfer and posting of high ranking officers. According to a notification issued by the Establishment Division, Khalid Khan, a BS-20 officer of Inland Revenue Service, presently at the disposal of Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on deputation basis, is transferred and posted as Joint Secretary, Interior Division, on deputation basis, initially for a period until 20-10-2022, on standard terms and conditions, with immediate effect and until further orders. Likewise, Muhammad Shamim Khan, a BS-20 officer of Secretariat Group, presently posted as Director General, Privatization Commission, on deputation basis, is transferred and posted as Joint Secretary, Federal Education and Professional Training (FE&PT) Division, with effect from 15-09-2021 and until further orders. — APP



## Corrective actions

THE fact that 41.4 million people in Pakistan have successfully gotten themselves vaccinated is the only source of comfort in the face of a raging fourth wave. However, there are still factions that dubiously eye the vaccine and have refrained from getting themselves vaccinated. For this, the government released its Pak Covid-19 Vaccination Pass app which will authenticate the vaccination status of each individual. The dire symptoms of the Delta variant have been advertised for the public to see so that they make the responsible decision to inoculate themselves. However, the rising number of deaths and health defects caused by the virus have shockingly not been persuasive enough for many who remain vaccine hesitant. One would assume then that they would adhere to the transmission prevention protocols, but adherence remains at an all-time low.

The public's apathetic attitude has only increased with time. We have reached a point now where many are falsifying vaccination certificates to obtain an escape from the restrictions that have been promised to those who have not been immunised. It is criminal for these individuals to take advantage of the system when national health is at stake. Thus, it is reassuring to see the government take action to correct this behaviour.

The Vaccination Pass app involves the digitisation of CNIC numbers and upon verification, their vaccination status would be approved or disapproved. This is a great initiative that is not only cost-effective but extremely convenient for the purposes of enforcement. It will not take much for the authorities to authenticate an individual's status and hold them liable immediately. While many may be against this kind of policing, the fact of the matter is that there is a pivotal trade-off of either getting two injections or sacrificing countless lives. The only aspect to be careful about is ensuring that the app works with exceptional accuracy so that it is able to meet its objectives. Furthermore, the government will have to facilitate the masses in the digitisation process by spreading awareness about its process and importance. Once these factors are taken care of, this may be the fool-proof method we need to encourage compliance.

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Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti  
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

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Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



## LNG Shortage

ELNGRO Elengy Terminal Limited (EETL) has raised concerns about an imminent gas shortage for the duration of 60 to 90 hours from September 7 to 11. This raises many problems for the government and supply companies. Will they be able to cater to public, private and industrial demand? How will downstream agreements be honoured if there is a deficit of 1.6 billion to 2.4 billion cubic feet in gas supply? Can a larger capacity replacement terminal be brought in for the future? The government must address and provide solutions to each of these concerns as it navigates a way out. The cause of the disruption in LNG supply will be the exchange of EETL's Floating Storage and Regasification Unit. Supply companies like the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) have already expressed their reservations and explained the complexities of the downstream agreements that it had signed with various power plants previously. The estimate provided by the EETL goes well beyond the outages forecasted before the agreements were signed and provision failure is bound to not only result in hefty capacity payments and liquidity damages but also lead to a disruption in the supply of power across the country. The trickle-down effect of this on the industries may just be too severe. In the end, it is the masses that will suffer the most.

Another aspect to worry about is the problem of inflated prices and hoarding. As the winter approaches, the demand for LNG rises dramatically. To save themselves from loss, supply companies are bound to hoard LNG so that they can distribute it for as long as possible but that too at an inflated price, as is the pricing trend when there is a shortage of a commodity. This is bound to disenfranchise the public as not only will it have to create contingency plans for the absence of LNG but it will also have to suffer from exploitative pricing. The economy and people of our country still rely on gas for a majority of their procedures and that makes the situation much more precarious. The government will have to consider all viable alternative routes and manoeuvre around this crisis extremely carefully.

# Role of the SCO in Afghanistan peace process

Khalid Taimur Akram



The SCO is a great model of extensive partnership and regionalism. Regional integration via SCO would pave the way for supranational regulatory systems and a flexible model of future alignments. The organization has eight member countries, i.e., China, Pakistan, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and India, including four observer countries interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia)

AFGHANISTAN has been engulfed with complexities and flames of war for many decades. However, the fall of Kabul and the Taliban taking over Afghanistan have created many questions. The defeat of a superpower in Afghanistan is not a new thing. However, losing 20 years of war and misadventure of the U.S. in Afghanistan has provided pride to the Taliban as they consider the take-over their victory. America has failed to understand Afghanistan, and policies towards the country have not achieved positive results. Moreover, a dramatic change in Kabul is the result of U.S. flawed policies and misadventure in Afghanistan. The drastic sweep of the Taliban across the Afghanistan landscape in the face of crumbling resistance from the Ashraf Ghani regime presented a unique challenge. Afghan Former President Ashraf Ghani secretly slipped away from the Presidential Palace, leaving the country into great misery and internal chaos. The Kabul leadership and representatives were non-resident Afghans. They were not aware of actual needs and cannot advocate the true rights of the Afghan people. The rogue militia has taken over the capital, raising significant concerns for the future about the conduct of statecraft, how can the Taliban cater to the peace and stability of the Afghan people, and what will be the form of government. It has been reported that the senior Taliban leader Amir Khan Muttaqi is in the Afghan capital negotiating with Kabul's political leadership, including former President Hamid Karzai and Abdullah Abdullah, who once headed the country's negotiating council. In the backdrop, the system has astonishingly collapsed like a sandcastle.

**Security Implications and Pakistan's Stance:** With the changing socio-political dynamics, Pakistan has made it clear that we have no favorites in Afghanistan. Pakistan will never intervene in the internal matters and government system in Afghanistan. The time for musing is over. Thereby, Pakistan must establish a robust policy framework to tackle security implications and work on future layout. The leadership of Pakistan is optimistic that there will be no Afghan refugee crisis within Pakistan this time. It has a clear stance over the ongoing situation in Afghanistan. The country has always played a pivotal role in bringing countries together and believes that there can be no military solution. Therefore, all regional countries must join hands and formulate a holistic framework that can bring regional peace and stability and also foster inclusive economic development. Recently, a National Security Committee (NSC) meeting was convened to discuss the emerging Afghanistan situation and policies for Pakistan. The National Security Committee (NSC) of Pakistan made a clear stance that all parties in Afghanistan must respect law and protect the human rights of all Afghans. National Security Committee reiterates Pakistan's

commitment to an inclusive political settlement in Afghanistan. Pakistan was the victim of a decades-long conflict in Afghanistan. Therefore, it aspires to create peace and stability in the region while bringing all stakeholders together.

**The Taliban Façade: Power Struggle** It has been anticipated that the Taliban take-over is no guarantee that peace would result. As a matter of fact, this could signal the advent of a fresh wave of hostility and radicalization. As water retains no constant shape, so in warfare, there are no permanent conditions. Warfare is still going on, adding to internal chaos in Afghanistan, and one cannot predict permanent circumstances. Afghanistan, a land of breathtaking beauty, torn by ethnic, tribal and religious divisions, has been at the center of geopolitical contests for centuries. The internal division in Afghanistan hovers between the two mindsets. The one in view of negotiated settlement exclusively on its terms, and the other asserting both its de jure and de facto legitimacy to rule the country. It is the fusion of clashes among the parties.

Presently, the Taliban's statements like: 'the people of Afghanistan will be safe and provided by all rights or there will be no bloodshed', and 'women rights will be ensured' can be considered as a diplomatic tool to demonstrate positive gesture to the international community or the Afghan people. However, the practical implications and credibility of such statements are yet to be seen in the days to come. There is no doubt that after the 9/11 event, the Taliban have evolved, educated and understand international politics. Nevertheless, they have to come up as a political party to get legitimacy. The situation in Afghanistan is changing with each passing day. The international community will not allow any terrorist group to operate from the Afghan territory against any other country. It will not be possible for the international community to recognize such a radical regime under the auspice of international law. In this regard, the Taliban may go towards interim settlement, followed by the election. In this regard, negotiations are going on in the Afghan Presidential Palace to transfer power to the Taliban with Ali Ahmad Jalali as head of the new interim government. This can be the only way to get legitimacy by the international community. The people of Afghanistan always suffered and bear the horrific outcomes of this brutal conflict. Now, this is the time when the prerogative of plebiscite must be given to the Afghan people only. They have to decide their future and fate.

**Potential Role of SCO in Afghan Peace Process:** The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is a great model of extensive partnership and regionalism. Regional integration via SCO would pave the way for supranational regulatory systems and a flexible model of future alignments. The organization has eight member countries, i.e., China, Pakistan, Russia, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and India, including four observer countries interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia) and six Dialogue Partners (Turkey, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Armenia). Provided the multifarious nature of integration in implementing different initiatives, the most substantial contours of SCO are harmonizing national interest based on negotiations, political coordination, mutually acceptable solutions to the problems, enhancing people-to-people contacts, promoting inclusive economic development and solid steps for collective activities.

At present, all neighboring countries of Afghanistan, i.e., Central Asian Republics (CARs), Iran, China, Russia, Turkey, and Pakistan, must formulate a consolidated framework to discuss future discourse and to maintain regional peace. The time for musing is over. Regional powers need to make decisions that they would stand firm. All regional countries must send a strong message to the Taliban that there will be consequences if their country is used to host transnational terrorists. After all, one should not forget that Al-Qaeda or ISIS has a large foothold in Afghanistan. Russia, China and Central Asian countries have shown interest in holding meetings and negotiations with the Taliban leaders. After the negotiations, the regional stakeholders will likely devise future strategies. Moreover, the role of multilateral regional organizations will be instrumental in bringing peace and catering to the requirements of Afghan people. In this aspect, the Shanghai Cooperation organizations (SCO) can play a constructive role in integrating all parties.

SCO has a comparative advantage that entails in its broad mandate. SCO is in a position to address security, economic and human development agendas of Afghans simultaneously, combining support for political stability, implementation of large-scale economic projects and assistance for social capital building. In this aspect, SCO also provides an integrated platform to all the member countries and periphery nations of Afghanistan for negotiations and settlement. SCO can play a constructive role in offering mediation and providing its platform to the Taliban and U.S. to discuss or reach an agreement. Catering to the peace and stability and engaging Afghanistan in major railway and energy infrastructure projects is indispensable for strengthening regional connectivity between Central and South Asia and in the SCO space. Therefore, these significant agenda points must be included in the upcoming meeting of SCO's head of states/ministries/official delegations in September 2021. If the organization manages to succeed, this success would be the best possible illustration of the changing nature of international relations.

- The writer is Executive Director, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad

# Afghanistan is 'Talibanistan'

Dr M Ali Hamza



Mr. Biden admitted that after nearly 20 years of war; America's longest war on foreign soil, it was clear that the US military could not transform Afghanistan into a modern and stable democracy. This confession seems unacceptable over the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians in the region and around the world

AN international combat mission with a ruthless enemy and a corrupt as well as perplexed Afghan government partner has at last reached to an end. The Taliban's summer-long military campaign has forced surrenders and retreats by Afghan government forces. Six hundred fifty troops that were left behind to secure US embassy and international airport in Kabul appear to be helpless. Since 2018 the quarterly reports by SIGAR (Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction) have been pointing out the footprint of Taliban on 65% of the rural land of Afghanistan. But now all rural and Urban Afghanistan is Talibanistan.

Mr. Biden admitted that after nearly 20 years of war; America's longest war on foreign soil, it was clear that the US military could not transform Afghanistan into a modern and stable democracy. This confession seems unacceptable over the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians in the region and around the world. Surprisingly Mr. Biden appears to be a president of a naive country that never had such poor war decisions in the past. The deaths of US soldiers, and casualties of civilians in Vietnam war belongs to some alien forces, and got nothing to do with US war experiences. More surprisingly the trillions of dollars cost of lives and money on training, reconstruction and providing ammunition to Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), Afghan National Army, Afghan Air Force could not resist a blow of Taliban; apparently untrained and poorly armed. A natural question arises that 'did US stabbed Ghani's government?'

In December 2001, Taliban offered an unconditional surrender. US rejected the offer. Nearly 20 years later, the world witnessed that US as-

sembled on negotiating table with the Taliban to agree on a political settlement with the US-backed Afghan government. Let us recall the memories of this interesting voyage. Almost exactly two decades back, junior Bush ordered to launch attacks against the Taliban. The publicized purpose was to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operations, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban regime. US demanded to hand over Al Qaeda leaders who planned 9/11. "Now Taliban will pay a price. Operation Enduring Freedom would entail a lengthy campaign unlike any other we have ever seen" said the then US president Bush, on refusal to the US demands. By December 2001, the Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and other top commanders fled. American forces did not pursue them rather inside Afghanistan US troops quickly toppled Taliban government and crushed its fighting forces as 2001 drew to a close. In May 2003, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld announced an end to major combat operations in the country. Now US and NATO designed rebuilding a failed state and establishing a Western-style democracy. A pro-Western government was installed. Resources were spent to build schools, hospitals and public facilities. Then Barack Obama came into power. He promised to withdraw US troops from the foreign lands by 2014, but on the contrary the deployment kept increasing. On the other side Taliban did not just kept quiet. They often engaged with the foreign forces, captured the most of the rural land, developed secret diplomatic ties, got stronger and smarter. In May 2011, a US Navy SEAL team claimed to kill Ousama Bin Laden; wasn't it face saving tactic? In or around 2014 the Pentagon realized that Afghan fighters

defeated the British army in the 19th century and the Russian military in the 20th century, thus war could not be won militarily and only a negotiated settlement could end the battle. What a quick realization. Nearly three years after this realization, the Trump administration held talks with the Taliban, leading to formal negotiations that excluded the Afghan government, led by President Ashraf Ghani.

In February 2020, the Trump administration signed an agreement with the Taliban that called for all American forces to leave Afghanistan by May 1, 2021. Objectives of the 2020 deal were for Afghan leaders and the Taliban to negotiate a political road map for a new government and constitution. Though the objectives were not met in letter and spirit, but after some hiccups finally the US troops abandoned the Ghani's government. And Afghan forces that were trained on modern weapons could not hold their land for good.

US exit could have been better executed. If neutralizing the threat from al-Qaeda and denying them safe haven in Afghanistan had actually remained the yardstick of success, US and its allies could have left the country a decade ago. It is a long-term strategic competition with China that forced US to prolong effort in Afghanistan. Trump and Biden administration recognized that the unnecessary rift with China is distracting the US from necessary shift. Once again the realization is too late.

We must expect that China and Russia will fully take advantage of this episode and will strategically use to diminish US standing in the world and undermine its leadership of the free-market world order. Comprehending this most probable fact can help Pakistan to re-energize some of its diplomatic relations, such as with Russia.



## Briefs

## Afghan leadership must work...

FROM PAGE 01  
political leaders from Afghanistan, a statement from the Prime Minister's Office said. "No other country is more desirous of peace and stability in Afghanistan than Pakistan," the premier told the delegation. PM Imran Khan expressed strong support and solidarity for the fraternal people of Afghanistan, linked to the people of Pakistan through immutable bonds of faith, history, geography, culture and kinship, the statement said. Pakistan has also made it clear that although it welcomes the "peaceful" transfer of power in Afghanistan, it will not take a unilateral decision to recognise the Taliban government, the statement underscored. The prime minister also highlighted the importance of all sides working to secure an inclusive political solution. Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to a peaceful and stable Afghanistan, PM Imran Khan assured the delegation of Pakistan's steadfast support for efforts in this direction. The delegation members thanked the prime minister for his hospitality and appreciated Pakistan's support for the peace efforts, the statement said.

## Ready to assist for...

FROM PAGE 01  
Ustad Muhammad Karim Khaili, Ahmed Zia Masoud, Ustad Muhammad Muhaqiq, Ahmed Wali Masoud, Abdul Latif Pidram and Khalid Noor met with. The current situation in Afghanistan was discussed at length, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). The delegation acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's sacrifices, untiring efforts and contributions for peace, stability and socio-economic development of Afghanistan, it said, adding the delegation also expressed their views regarding way-forward for Afghanistan.

## French president...

FROM PAGE 01  
In a pre-recorded televised address evening, Macron warned that "the destabilisation of Afghanistan also risks leading to irregular migratory flows towards Europe". "We must anticipate and protect ourselves against major irregular migratory flows that would endanger those who use them and feed trafficking of all kinds." "Europe alone cannot bear the consequences of the current situation," he said. Macron's address came as distressing images out of Kabul showed desperate Afghans attempting to leave the Taliban-led country by clinging to departing aircraft and falling to their death. Kabul airport was overrun with thousands of Afghans crowding the tarmac in the hope of getting out of the country while western countries including the US, the UK and multiple EU member states such as Germany, Italy, Belgium and the Czech republic scrambled to evacuate their nationals and Afghan employees. France dispatched two military planes on Monday to carry out its evacuation. He also stressed that France will not abandon Afghans who have worked for the country - from translators to kitchen staff - as well as artists, activists, journalists and others under threat from the Taliban. The country has evacuated about 1,400 Afghan employees and their families since 2013, including 600 since May. The French leader also warned that terrorist groups may try to take advantage of the events in Afghanistan. He called for the United Nations' Security Council to "provide a responsible and united response" and said he discussed the situation with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "Afghanistan must not become the sanctuary for terrorism that it once was," he went on. "We will also do everything to ensure that Russia, the United States and Europe can cooperate effectively because our interests are indeed the same.



LAHORE: Chief Minister Sardar Usman Bazardar is giving a check to Arshad Nadeem, an athlete who has shown outstanding performance in javelin throwing at Tokyo Olympics. - DNA

# Rawlakot Hawks win inaugural KPL T20 title

The Hawks scored a total of 169 runs in 20 overs at the loss of 7 wickets. Hawks' Kashif Ali remained prominent as he scored a half-century with 54 runs

SPORTS DESK

MUZAFFARABAD: At the end of the first innings, Rawlakot Hawks on Tuesday gave Muzaffarabad Tigers a target of 170 runs in the Kashmir Premier League Final but Tigers didn't chase the target as The Hawks win the Final Trophy by 7 runs. The Hawks scored a total of 169 runs in 20 overs at the loss of 7 wickets. Hawks' Kashif Ali remained prominent as he scored a half-century with 54 runs. Kashif Ali was followed by Bismillah Khan (30), Sahibzada Farhan (28), and Umar Amin (23). At the bowler's end, Tigers' Muhammad Hafeez and Usama Mir managed to snatch 2 wickets each. Earlier, the Tigers won the toss and elected to bowl first. The Afridi and Hafeez-led teams are battling it out one last time today to take home the KPL trophy. Hawks' captain Afridi stated that his team has been playing well and they will try to continue the momentum in the final. He added that the Hawks are confident and he himself will try to give a good performance tonight. The Tigers' captain Hafeez won the toss and thought it best to field first. The team has one change in the squad, Hafeez said.



FROM PAGE 01  
The delegation acknowledged and appreciated Pakistan Army's sacrifices, untiring efforts and contributions for peace, stability and socio-economic development of Afghanistan, it said, adding the delegation also expressed their views regarding way-forward for Afghanistan.



ISTANBUL: The President of Pakistan Dr. Alvi with his wife Samina Alvi arrived on the set of the Turkish historical drama serial "Korolush Usman". Actors Korolush Usman greeted the President and posed for pictures with him. - DNA

## Turkey in talks with Afghan parties, including Taliban

Turkey's FM Mevlut Cavusoglu says Ankara welcomes the Taliban group's "positive messages" to the international community following their seizure of power in Afghanistan.

DNA

ANKARA: Turkey is in talks with all parties in Afghanistan, including the Taliban. Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said on Tuesday that Turkey views messages from the Taliban group positively. "We would like to say that we welcome the messages given by the Taliban so far," said Cavusoglu. Speaking at a news conference in Jordan on Tuesday, Cavusoglu said Ankara would continue talks with the United States and other allies over the security of Kabul airport and the transition in Afghanistan. Evacuation flights would continue as the airport was secured, he said. Turkey, which planned to take control of the airport after NA-



TO's withdrawal, scrapped the plans on Monday. Turkey will continue to support Afghanistan's economic development, stability and peace, Cavusoglu said. Turkey relocated its embassy staff to the airport as Taliban forces moved in on the capital over the weekend, and evacuated more than 300 Turkish nationals from Afghanistan. Cavusoglu earlier had said Turkey's embassy in Kabul would continue its operations. All necessary measures have been taken regarding Turkey's diplomatic missions and personnel in Afghanistan, he said. While some Turkish citizens are leaving Afghanistan amid the latest developments with the Taliban, Cavusoglu said there are Turkish citizens who wished to remain in the country.

## PM Imran discusses Afghanistan with UK...

FROM PAGE 01  
diplomatic personnel and staff of international organizations and others from Afghanistan. The two prime ministers agreed to remain in contact with respect to the evolving situation in Afghanistan. In the bilateral context, Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted the extensive measures taken by Pakistan to contain the Covid-19, noted that the relevant data had been shared with the UK side, and called for removal of Pakistan from the Red List. Separately, Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Danish counterpart Mette Frederiksen talked about the situation after the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan over phone, the media reported on Tuesday. Imran Khan shared Pakistan's perspective, reiterating Islamabad's resolve to continue backing reconciliation. He highlighted Pakistan's facilitating role for the safe return of envoys, diplomatic staff and workers of international organizations from Afghanistan. Mette Frederiksen thanked Pakistan's support and assistance in their evacuation endeavours.

## Consultations must to recognize...

FROM PAGE 01  
He said Pakistan firmly believed that Taliban would adhere to respecting and protecting human rights in Afghanistan. The minister Pakistan had earlier asked former President of Afghanistan Ashraf Ghani to establish a broad based government by including other stake holders in his government. Prime Minister Imran Khan had also urged the former Afghan government to establish an inclusive government in Afghanistan, he added. He said at the very outset of the meeting, the prime minister felicitated the cabinet on completion of three years in government and stressed transforming the country on pattern of state of Madina. The functions of sharing three years performance of the government had been postponed due to Ashura, he added. Fawad said the prime minister had categorically told the cabinet that all stake holders should be consulted for finalizing electoral reforms as the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) was imperative for holding free, fair and transparent and dispute free elections. The minister said the cabinet was told that the final decision about the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM) in next elections would be made within the next fortnight.

## 'Taliban on board over TTP issue'

FROM PAGE 01  
the Taliban took hold of the capital on Sunday. "The outlawed TTP and Daesh militants are present in the mountainous ranges of Nooristan and Nighar," he said. "We have taken the Taliban on-board over the TTP issue and told them that Pakistan will not allow its soil to be used against Afghanistan and it hopes Afghanistan won't allow its soil to be used against Pakistan." When pressed further, the minister said he couldn't disclose to the media what Pakistan has discussed with the Taliban. "Previously, Pakistan was supporting the US due to which the TTP and the Taliban were on the same page. That is not the case now," he noted.

## Pak, French ties heading towards normalcy

FROM PAGE 01  
mentioning of Pakistan in his speech has sought to normalize relations between the two countries who have maintained very close and cordial relations. There is a strong realization on both sides that bilateral relations should not be held hostage to petty issues and both countries need to resume normal ties in order to reap benefits of each other's expertise in various fields.



## Briefs

## Azerbaijani diaspora visits Shusha

DNA

BAKU: Another group of representatives of the Azerbaijani diaspora are visiting the liberated Shusha city, local media reported on August 17.

According to the report, 102 diaspora representatives from 26 countries are taking part in the visit to the historical Shusha city. During the one-day visit organized by the State Committee on work with Diaspora, the guests are expected to visit the historical places of the city such as "Bazarbashi", the "Jidir" plain, the Armenian-vandalized "Shot Statues", Khurshidbanu Natava's house, "Khan gizi spring", Ganja Gate, "Saatly", "Ashsagi" and "Yukhari Govhar Agha" mosques and other important venues. The representatives of the diaspora will also be informed about the restoration and renovation processes that are being carried out in Azerbaijan's cultural capital.

It should be noted that this is the second visit to Shusha organized by the State committee. The first visit took place on July 27, 2021, which was met with great interest and appreciation by the public and Azerbaijanis around the world. The State Committee has announced that regular visits of foreign journalists and representatives of the Diaspora to Karabakh will be organized in the future as well.

## Azerbaijan seizes 33kg of drugs at Iranian border

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Azerbaijan's State Border Service has stopped the smuggling of 33 kg of drugs and 314 psychotropic substances from the neighboring Iran, the service reported on its website on August 17.

The incident occurred in Horadiz border detachment's border post in Beylagan region's second Shahsevan village on August 17. As a result of search and operational measures, a suspect with packages was detained while violating the state border and trying to escape. The detainee, Beylagan resident Agayev Vusal sought to smuggle 33 kg of drugs (25,3 kg heroin, 5,8 kg methamphetamine, 1,7 kg marijuana, 60 grams of opium), as well as 284 methadone M40 and 30 pregabalin pills into Azerbaijan. Criminal proceedings have been launched into the incidents, the Border service reported. The Horadiz border detachment operates on the border with Iran on the territory of Azerbaijan's liberated Fuzuli region. After liberating its lands from Armenia's occupation in the 44-day war with Armenia in 2020, Azerbaijan restored control over the 132-km section of the Azerbaijan-Iran border.

## Qatar, Taliban discuss Afghanistan situation

WEB NEWS

DOHA: Qatar's foreign minister on Tuesday discussed with a delegation from the Taliban movement the latest security and political developments in Afghanistan.

A statement by the Qatari Foreign Ministry said the meeting between Foreign Minister Mohammed bin Abdulrahman AlThani, and the Taliban delegation headed by Abdul Ghani Baradar "emphasized the protection of civilians". Talks also focused on the "necessary efforts to achieve national reconciliation, work for a comprehensive political settlement and a peaceful transfer of power with the importance of preserving the gains made by the Afghan people," the statement said.

Following the meeting, bin Abdulrahman said on Twitter he met "with a Taliban delegation and discussed the necessity of reaching a comprehensive political settlement that achieves a peaceful transfer of power, preserves the gains made by the Afghan people, and heightens the desired stability in Afghanistan."

## Armenia plundered our lands during occupation: Aliyev

Aliyev made the remarks on August 16 during his visit to Kalbajar and Lachin districts where he laid a foundation stone for a tunnel to be built on Kalbajar-Lachin highway, as well as the Lachin International Airport

NEWS DESK

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that Armenia destroyed Azerbaijan's Kalbajar city and many other cities and villages and plundered natural resources there during three decades of occupation.

He also said that Azerbaijan's main task at this point is to consolidate the results of the war, to reinforce its positions in the liberated lands and to further strengthen its positions on the Azerbaijani-Armenian border. Aliyev made the remarks on August 16 during his visit to Kalbajar and Lachin districts where he laid a foundation stone for a tunnel to be built on Kalbajar-Lachin highway, as well as the Lachin International Airport. The president reminded that while retreating from Kalbajar in line with November statement last year, Armenians destroyed all the buildings, hydroelectric power stations. "These destructions are further evidence of Armenian savagery."

The president also said that Armenians sought to blow up the tunnel connecting Kalbajar with Lachin while retreating, but they failed,



as they were in a hurry.

Aliyev said legal proceedings have been launched against foreign companies that illegal exploited Azerbaijan's gold deposits Soyudlu in Kalbajar, Vajnali in Zangilan and elsewhere during the Armenian occupation. He said that these companies must reimburse the damages and pay compensation to Azerbaijan.

The president furthermore spoke about destruction of forests and contamination of rivers in Azerbaijan's formerly-occupied territories.

"Our forests have been destroyed by the Armenians. We have photos of 'Azercosmos' - how much forests we had before the occupation and how much we have now. Armenians have destroyed about 60,000 hectares of trees and forests. They cut down and took away the trees. From what I heard, the parquet business was developing fast there. This is also looting. They will be held accountable for this looting too. "They poisoned our rivers. Look at the condition of the Okhchuchay river?"

The Okhchuchay is a natural disaster, and it is a foreign company that did that. That company must and will be held accountable. The entire damage is being calculated. Monitoring is now being conducted on all liberated lands, towns and villages, certification is underway, certificates of all houses are being prepared, the damage is being evaluated, and we will demand compensation for all the damage in international courts."

Speaking about post-war rehabilitation, Aliyev said that

Baku has started large-scale restoration work, including Kalbajar and Lachin districts and the East Zangazur region, adding that some of the work has already been completed such as the construction of a hydroelectric power plant. "A groundbreaking ceremony of an international airport has been held in Lachin. We have laid the foundation of two tunnels. Other infrastructure projects are underway. At the same time, as a pilot project, we have sent residents of Kalbajar and Lachin districts

engaged in beekeeping and animal husbandry here, created conditions for them to start work, and this work has already begun." Furthermore, the president said Azerbaijan is strengthening its state border in the direction of Kalbajar and Lachin that was in Armenian hands for about 30 years. He stressed that the entire border infrastructure and military units are being established by the Ministry of Defense and the Border Troops along the border - from Mount Murov all the way to the Araz River.



ISLAMABAD: General Fayiadh Bin Hamed Al-Rowaily, Chief of General Staff, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff. - DNA

## Pak-China co-op to enhance textile sector: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pak-China co-operation plays an important role in our textile industry as now all the metal items are imported specially from China, as well as advanced production machines, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Tuesday.

"Firstly, the relationship between Chinese and Pakistani governments is very good, and people's relationship is also very good. We feel like more comfortable to invest in Pakistan," said Karen Chen, manager director of Challenge Fashion, a Chinese company that is investing \$150 million in an

industrial park on Lahore's border with Kasur. As a foreign direct investment (FDI) in an export industry in Pakistan, the project is made by the Shanghai-based Challenge, which is already operating as Challenge Apparel since 2017 with its garment manufacturing unit on Multan Road near Lahore fetching nearly \$44m in export revenue during the last fiscal year. The industrial park is set to house state-of-the-art fabric units, dyeing facilities, and garment manufacturing units for exporting sportswear from Pakistan to the Americas, Europe, Asia-Pacific, and other regions of the world.

## US calls on Iran to halt 'nuclear escalations'

TEHRAN: Iran has made progress in its work on enriched uranium metal, the UN nuclear watchdog said in a report to member states, despite Western warnings that such work threatens talks on reviving the Iran nuclear deal. The United States responded to the report by demanding that Tehran halt its "nuclear escalations".

Iran's work on enriched uranium metal has angered Europe's three top powers and the US because that technology - and knowledge of how to produce it - can be used to make the core of a nuclear weapon. Iran insists its aims are entirely peaceful and it is developing a new type of reactor fuel. "Iran has no credible need to produce uranium metal, which has direct relevance to nuclear weapons development," US State Department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement.

"Iran should cease its nuclear escalations and return to negotiations toward full implementation" of the nuclear agreement, he said. In the report issued by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Director-General Rafael Mariano Grossi said his inspectors confirmed on Saturday that Iran had now produced 200 grammes of uranium metal enriched up to 20 percent. - Foreign Desk

## IFC ramps up impact investments in South Asia to protect Jobs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to protect the most vulnerable people and help companies maintain operations and jobs, IFC's focused and sustained investments in South Asia continued to have strong impact in the fiscal year 2021, with support for medical facilities, vaccines and supplies, and to hard-hit micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) while also spurring investments in renewable energy, affordable housing, and distressed assets resolution. In the midst of a difficult year with massive and on-

going social and economic disruptions caused by COVID-19, IFC committed over \$3.8 billion, including mobilization and short-term finance, in South Asia as of June 2021—resulting in a record investment volume of over \$14.9 billion in the last five years in the region, towards a green, inclusive, and resilient recovery. In India, IFC's largest client country globally, total commitments at the end of June stood at \$1.7 billion representing an increase of over 51 percent from last year. Likewise, in Bangladesh, IFC made total commitments of \$791 million, an increase of almost 33 per-

cent from last year. "The COVID-19 crisis has drastically impacted the region's private sector, which has severely affected the region's most vulnerable people," said IFC's Vice President for Asia and the Pacific region, Alfonso Garcia Mora. "COVID-19 has laid bare the region's existing vulnerabilities in the financial sector, disrupting businesses—particularly micro, small, and medium enterprises—and leaving so many people exposed. That's why we've focused our attention on supporting moves to improve resilience on multiple fronts, as all indications are that the road

to recovery will be long." IFC has committed \$590 million in COVID-response deals in South Asia—with additional deals worth over \$100 million in the pipeline. IFC's fast-track financial support has helped clients across sectors at a time when the economic fallouts of the pandemic have severely impacted market sentiment. Further, IFC committed \$353 million in climate finance and \$490 million in IDA/FCS (International Development Association/Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations) IFC already provided financing and advisory support for

## USAID to harness Uzbekistan's export potential

From 2015 to 2020, USAID's Agricultural Value Chain activity contributed to increased horticultural exports by 250 percent. USAID supported 510 organizations and businesses, linking Uzbek exporters and consolidators to global buyers ready to pay higher prices for quality products

DNA

TASHKENT: The USAID (United States Agency for International Development) will continue to harness Uzbekistan's export potential through its recently launched Agribusiness Development Activity project, USAID told media. It was noted that over the past decade, USAID played a pivotal role in developing Uzbekistan's horticulture sub-sector; cold storage capacity; and supporting small, medium, and large-scale facilities throughout the country that now provide a diverse array of offerings for different storage volumes and needs.

From 2015 to 2020, USAID's Agricultural Value Chain activity contributed to increased horticultural exports by 250 percent. USAID supported 510 organizations and businesses, linking Uzbek exporters and consolidators to global buyers ready to pay higher prices for quality products. "With its rich soil, temperate climate, and abundance of fruits and vegetables, Uzbekistan has the potential to become Central Asia's leading exporter of high value horticulture. Uzbekistan is diversifying its ag-



ricultural base by increasing production of higher value-added crops," the USAID said. In addition, recent estimates indicate that fruit and vegetable production in Uzbekistan accounts for as much as 50 percent of the value of crop production and over 35 percent of the country's agricultural export value. "Not only do these crops generate higher incomes per unit of land than traditional crops, but they also provide better-paid jobs, and an important source of



all-season employment in rural areas and create a significant number of jobs for women," USAID stressed. Also, USAID added that since Uzbekistan is landlocked, transportation to key markets in Asia and Europe is one of the most significant barriers to increasing horticultural exports, especially for fresh fruits. "To reduce the transportation and logistics barriers for Uzbekistani exporters eager to test new markets, USAID introduced pal-

let-ready technologies and market-specific packing materials to facilitate shipments," the message said.

Moreover, USAID's activities helped farmers achieve immediate results by applying improved techniques and better technology to disease-resistant plants. USAID trained households to dry fruits and introduced affordable methods for creating on-farm cold storage facilities. "Leveraging the gains made in advancing Uzbekistan's exports through USAID's Agricultural Value Chain activity, USAID will continue to harness the country's export potential through its recently launched Agribusiness Development Activity project," USAID said.

The Agribusiness Development Activity supports Uzbekistan's private sector, while enabling the country to create meaningful jobs in the formal economy for its burgeoning workforce. It is noted that these efforts are focused on increasing value-added production within Uzbekistan, engaging vulnerable populations, including youth and women, linking educational institutions with the private sector, and fostering a favorable environment for agriculture.

## Turkish, Uzbek FM's discuss situation in Afghanistan

WEB NEWS

TASHKENT: The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov held a telephone conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu.

During the meeting, various issues of Uzbek-Turkish cooperation of mutual interest were discussed. An exchange of views took place on certain aspects of regional policy, including the situation in Afghanistan. Abdulaziz Kamilov expressed condolences to his Turkish colleague in connection with the recent natural disasters in Turkey and numerous human casualties.

## Afghanistan's currency falls to record low

AGENCIES

KABUL: Afghanistan's currency extended losses to a record low as the departure of the acting central bank governor added to political turmoil weighing investor sentiment.

The Afghani fell as much as 4.6% on Tuesday to 86.0625 per dollar, a fourth day of decline, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. The central bank was told there would be no more dollar shipments on Friday, which curtailed its ability to supply currency and led to more panic, acting Governor Ajmal Ahmadly wrote in a Twitter thread.

Ahmadly boarded a military plane at Kabul airport, where thousands sought to leave as the Taliban's rapid territorial advance led to the collapse of the government. There was no evacuation plan, and President Ashraf Ghani's departure without creating a transitional government contributed to the chaos, Ahmadly wrote.

"Currency spiked from a stable 81 to almost 100 then back to 86," the central banker wrote. "I held meetings on Saturday to reassure banks and money exchangers to calm them down." On Sunday, the governor left the central bank and went to the airport where he saw other government leaders. More than 300 passengers were packed into his flight, though it had no fuel or pilot, he wrote.

"It did not have to end this way. I am disgusted by the lack of any planning by Afghan leadership," he wrote. The turmoil in Afghanistan spilled over into markets in Pakistan. Sovereign dollar bonds due 2031 for Pakistan dropped 1.8 cents on Monday, the biggest decline since the government priced the notes in March. Pakistani dollar bonds were the biggest losers in Asia on Monday, according to a Bloomberg Barclays index. The notes rose 0.4 cents on the dollar on Tuesday to 100.9 cents.

Investors are concerned over any impact on law and order in Pakistan, and whether "global forces will try to isolate Pakistan" due to its alleged support of the Taliban, said Abdul Kadir Hussain, the head of fixed-income asset management at Dubai-based Arqam Capital.

## There is no Afghanistan leader in Uzbekistan

FOREIGN DESK

TASHKENT: Uzbekistan has denied information about the presence of Ashraf Ghani, Abdurashid Dostum, Ata Muhammad Nur and other Afghan leaders in the country, Dunyo news agency of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan reported.

"Recently, the mass media and social networks have been circulating reports about the alleged presence of certain figures and leaders of the ethnic groups of Afghanistan on the territory of Uzbekistan. In particular, the names of Ashraf Ghani, Abdurashid Dostum, Ata Muhammad Nur and others were mentioned," the agency said.

The agency, citing official data, noted that this information does not correspond to reality.



**Briefs**

**Govt for maintaining peace during Ashura**

DNA

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Inter-Faith Harmony, Middle East and Chairman Pakistan Ulama Council, Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi on Tuesday said the government would take all possible measures to maintain peace and law and order during Ashura Moharram.

Addressing a press conference here at press club, Tahir Ashrafi said there was an ideal atmosphere of inter-faith harmony in the country and people of all schools of thoughts were performing their religious obligations with complete freedom.

He said protection of rights of minorities was the prime responsibility of the government and strict action would be taken against those who found involve in any such activities. Ashrafi said effective security measures have been taken for peaceful observance of Ashura.

Besides coordination centers, control rooms have also been set up at CM Secretariats, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Interior Ministry, Home Departments and District Commissioner offices for effective coordination among government departments, field staff of law enforcement agencies, Ulema-Mashaikh and leaders of different schools of thoughts during Muharram Haram.

**US to announce Covid vaccine booster**

WASHINGTON: The US government will announce that Americans should get booster shots for coronavirus vaccines eight months after their last shot, part of a campaign that could begin as early as mid-September, according to US media.

The move could be announced as early as this week, The New York Times reported, citing unnamed sources in President Joe Biden's administration.

The campaign is likely to kick off with booster shots for nursing home residents and health care workers, followed by the elderly, all of whom were among the first to be eligible to receive their initial vaccinations. The general public would then follow, according to the Times.

**Pakistan wants durable peace in region: FM**

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mehmood Hussain Qureshi Tuesday said Pakistan wanted lasting peace, stability and development in the region.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony here at the Central Imambargah Hussainabad, Daulat Gate, according to a press release issued. Qureshi stated "it is the responsibility of all countries in the region, and especially the Afghan leaders, to work together for durable peace in the region."

If there is peace in Afghanistan then there will be peace in Pakistan and in the region as a whole. The foreign minister stated that Pakistan performed a conciliatory role for promotion of peace in region and will continue to do so in future too. Some forces wanted to disrupt peace in the region, Qureshi said and added "we have to foil nefarious designs of such forces." - APP

**Pakistan for an inclusive settlement of Afghan issue**

Ambassador Hamid Asghar addresses a press conference; says PM Imran Khan had categorically stated that there was no military solution

DNA

RABAT: Pakistan as a responsible member of the international community and also being an immediate neighbor is deeply concerned at the unfolding situation in Afghanistan. We deem it essential that Afghanistan must move towards peace and stability. We deeply regret the loss of precious lives due to the un-controlled situation at Kabul airport yesterday.

We hope that no further loss of lives nor violent acts will take place and that the human and civil rights of all citizens, especially women and children shall be safeguarded.

Pakistan has always maintained, as repeatedly articulated by the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan that there was no military solution to the Afghan situation.

Pakistan over the years has suffered the most from the negative spillover of the conflict in Afghan-



istan. We expect that in future Afghan soil will not be used to perpetrate terror in Pakistan, and that 3.5 million Afghan refugees will be able to return home with dignity. Pakistan is fully committed to working with the International community for a negotiated, inclusive, political settlement that will allow Afghanistan peace. This will also allow for much needed regional integration and development. We note that President Biden in yesterday's address also underlined many of the same points,

emphasizing that governance deficit, corruption, a non inclusive approach and the absence of will characterized the Ghani government.

These are the actual factors that contributed to the collapse of the Ghani regime and created an enabling environment for the Taliban. Any other irresponsible and unfounded assertions, falsely attempting to lay blame elsewhere such as on Pakistan have been laid to rest by President Biden's address.

**ECP expresses satisfaction over EVM**

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Syed Shibli Faraz on Tuesday said that the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has expressed its satisfaction over the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) developed by his ministry.

"The ECP has expressed its satisfaction over the EVM during the today's meeting however the commission gave some valuable suggestions regarding the role of Presiding Officer", Shibli Faraz said while talking to media outside the ECP after giving presentation on EVM. Speaking to the media, the federal minister said that ECP authorities asked 75 questions about the EVM all of which were responded to their satisfaction. "The consensus has been developed on the use of technology in the election", he said. "Since it has been decided that Election 2023 will be conducted through the use of EVM, we have to decide such strategies and timelines now so that all the process including tender for the EVMs may be initiated after the satisfaction of all the stakeholders", he said.

**Qureshi, Blinken discuss Afghanistan**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has underlined that Pakistan would remain closely engaged with the United States and other international partners in promoting efforts for supporting of a peaceful and stable Afghanistan.

He expressed the resolve during a telephonic conversation with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, in which both sides discussed the rapidly changing situation in Afghanistan. The Foreign Minister shared Pakistan's perspective noting the significant change in the situation within a short span and the avoidance of violence.

He stressed the importance of inclusive political settlement as the best way forward. Shah Mahmood Qureshi further stressed that continued US economic engagement with Afghanistan is of crucial importance as well. He also apprised the US Secretary of State of Pakistan's efforts to facilitate the evacuation of personnel and staff of diplomatic missions, international organizations, media and others.

**SC declares Employees Act 2010 as null and void**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan, while issuing a detailed verdict on reinstatement and promotion of employees, declared the Employees (reinstatement) Act 2010 as null and void. SC Justice Mushir Alam wrote a 42-page judgment. The court annulled the Act 2010 and ordered immediate stop of benefits provided to all employees through the Act. The top court remarked that the PPP had reinstated and promoted employees under the 2010 Act during its tenure. The verdict stated that the employees who benefited from the Act would return to their previous positions as the rights of permanent employees were abolished through the Act 2010. The apex court also ordered withdrawal of lump sum payments after reinstatement and said that benefits should not be withdrawn for promoted employees as opposed to their posts. In its decision, the court clarified that the judgment will not apply to retired employees. It is pertinent to mention here that the petitions were filed for this decision by the employees of 72 agencies including Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Intelligence Bureau (IB).



ISLAMABAD: Nigerian High Commissioner-designate Nigeria Mohammad Abelo Abioye calling on Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. - DNA

**Afghan crisis: PPP for taking parliament into confidence**

Bilawal maintained that there should be no compromise on terrorism in Pakistan

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has asked the government to give up its "terror appeasement" policy keeping in view the fast-emerging situation in neighbouring Afghanistan and take Parliament into confidence in this regard.

Addressing a news conference in Karachi on Tuesday, Bilawal Bhutto, flanked by senior party leader Sherry

Rehman and Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, said the Taliban should be warned that any 'activity' inside Pakistan should not be tolerated and will be responded with full force. "We will take prompt action on our soil against such activities," he further said. Bilawal maintained that there should be no compromise on terrorism in Pakistan. "The National Action Plan (NAP) should be further pursued with full might of the government and forces," he added. He also demanded to review the security of the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), projects. Bilawal Bhutto said that national

action plan should be implemented immediately. CPEC projects are very important for the development of Pakistan. If the government does not pay attention the incidents of terrorism will increase, he warned. He said in the give scenario CPEC projects and workers should be given complete security. Calling upon all the stakeholders of the Afghan conflict to work for peace in Afghanistan, Bilawal called for that kind of a setup in the country which represented people of all ethnic backgrounds. He also stressed the need for protecting women and

children in Taliban regime in Kabul. He praised Pakistan Army for fencing the country's border with Afghanistan in order to keep 'terrorists' from entering and creating a mayhem in Pakistan. PPP chairman said that terrorists in the past had attacked politicians as well as ordinary people. He was of the view that Pakistan should immediately clarify its stance on the emerging situation in Afghanistan. "People of Pakistan have rejected those resorting to terrorism in the name of religion," he said, and added, "Pak Army took on these people and saved Pakistan."

**China to continue its constructive role in Afghan issue**

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry's spokesperson Tuesday said that China would continue playing a constructive role in the political settlement of Afghanistan issue and hoped that Afghan Taliban will fulfill their promises of the establishment of an inclusive government.

"China as Afghanistan's largest neighbour will always respect the country's sovereignty, integrity and independence and will stick to non-intervention. Our friendly policies are towards the entire Afghan people," Hua Chunying made these remarks at her regular briefing here while responding to several questions regarding current situation in Afghanistan. The spokesperson said that the China on the basis of respecting the country's sovereignty and will of all the factions had maintained close contact and communications with Afghan Taliban and had been playing a constructive role in the political settle-

ments. In the last month, China's State Councilor Foreign Minister Wang Yi attended a series of meetings with foreign ministers of the Central Asia countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan and the SCO Afghanistan Contact Group. China also engaged in close communication and interaction with Russia, Pakistan, the US Central Asia countries, EU, Iran, Turkey and other stakeholders and proposing solution, she added. Hua Chunying said that the Chinese government's special envoy on Afghan issue recently visited Qatar, Russia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan on the intense mediation efforts, adding, State Councilor Wang Yi also met with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar in Tianjin and expressed the hope that Afghan Taliban would put nation first, work for peace, jointly build a positive image and adopt an inclusive policy. - APP

**Russian military plane crashes killing three**

MOSCOW: A Russian light military transport aircraft crashed during a test flight on Tuesday, killing all three crew members on board, the aircraft's developers said. Images broadcast by Russian state TV and shared on social media showed the Il-112 prototype aircraft catching fire before plummeting to the ground and exploding. The incident took place "during the final approach for landing near the Kubinka airfield" outside Moscow, the press service of the United Aircraft Corporation (OAK) told AFP. The OAK later said that all three members of the crew had died. "According to information from the place of the IL-112's crash, there are no survivors," the group wrote on Twitter. It added that there were no victims of the crash on the ground. According to preliminary information, the plane's right engine caught fire before the crash, the OAK told the TASS state news agency. - APP

**New Zealand imposes lockdown over Covid case**

FOREIGN DESK

AUCKLAND: New Zealand went into a three-day national lockdown on Tuesday after the country recorded a new case, potentially of the delta variant, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a statement.

"We have seen what can happen elsewhere if we fail to get on top of it. We only get one chance," Ardern said in a national address, arguing that her government could not take chances with the "game changer" delta strain. New Zealand had not re-

corded any locally transmitted cases of the virus in six months when a 58-year-old Auckland man tested positive for COVID. Ardern said they were assuming the patient had contracted the highly contagious variant but genome sequencing had not been completed. The country will be put on lockdown for at least three days, while Auckland and Coromandel, a coastal town where the patient also spent time, will be locked down for seven days. With businesses, schools and offices closed, only services deemed essential will be up and running.

**Shaukat Tarin for boosting overall exports to Korea**

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin has expressed the desire of increasing exports to Korea. He was meeting with Suh Sang-Pyo, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea, who paid a courtesy call on him at the Finance Division on Tuesday. While extending a warm welcome to the Ambassador, the Finance Minister stated that Pakistan enjoys friendly relations with Korea and is looking forward to further strengthening bilateral relations between the two coun-

tries. The Finance Minister thanked Korea for 3-year Framework Arrangement under which \$500 million are being provided for projects in IT, education and health. Both sides exchanged views on economic potential and stressed the need to further promote mutual trade and investment linkages. The Finance Minister briefed the Korean Ambassador about the recent economic developments and initiatives. The current Government aims at achieving all inclusive and sustainable economic growth with key focus on "bottom-up" approach. The government has chalked out

short, medium and long term plans to spur growth in key priority areas, he said. Furthermore, the Government is coming up with a comprehensive policy for expansion of auto industry in Pakistan by increasing the production of cars, motorcycles, tractors etc. The government is determined to encourage and incentivize foreign investors who are keen to undertake investment ventures in respective fields. The government also stands committed to revive the business and industry that has been hit hard due to Coronavirus pandemic. The ultimate focus of the government is employ-

ment generation, efficient resource mobilization and industrial growth, he added. The Finance Minister welcomed plans by Samsung to start cell phone assembly in Pakistan and promised full facilitation in this regard. The Korean Ambassador thanked the Finance Minister for his time and underscored the importance of people-to-people contact between the two countries. He also highlighted potential for furthering cooperation in hydropower generation and stated that Korean companies are satisfied with the business environment in the country.

**Pak-Uzbek cultural connectivity need to be enhanced**

Aybek Arif Usmanov discussed the Central and South Asian Connectivity initiative taken by President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: A meeting was held between His Excellency Aybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan and Senior Management of CGSS with Ms. Shahera Shahid, Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, Government of Pakistan.

Aybek Arif Usmanov, Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan discussed the Central and South Asian Connectivity initiative taken by President of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. He also appreciated the active participation and suggestions presented by Imran Khan,



Prime Minister of Pakistan and President of Uzbekistan. It was decided that measures will be taken to enhance the cultural connectivity of Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

The Secretary of Information & Broadcasting assured the support and assistance to promote the historical and cultural similarities of both countries. It was also decided to initiate projects for the collaboration of media from Pakistan and Uzbekistan. It was agreed that these kinds of cooperation will enhance people to people contact and ensure strong bilateral ties of both countries. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Ashfaq Ahmed Gondal, Former Federal Secretary & Vice President (Federal Region), CGSS and Mr. Khalid TaimurAkram, Executive Director, CGSS.