



Islamabad POST

Saturday, October 02, 2021

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Denmark keen to expand bilateral ties with Pakistan

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US Senator asks to stop defaming Pak

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Pacquiao files for Philippine President

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Briefs

Shehbaz slams oil price hike

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president and opposition leader in National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif on Friday has demanded to withdraw the decision of hiking prices of petrol and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). While lashing out at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), the PML-N leader said 'blind' government increases prices and says that the people are happy. The reaction came after the government jacked up the price of petrol by Rs4 per litre effective from October 1 (Friday), following fluctuation in the global oil prices. The decision was made as per the recommendation of Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA). The new price of petrol will be Rs127.20 per litre against the current rate of Rs123.20 per litre.

KSA to offer 600 scholarships

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government of Saudi Arabia has decided to offer scholarships to 600 Pakistani students for their studies in 25 different universities of the kingdom. This was told by envoy of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki in his meeting with Punjab Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar in Lahore on Friday. Praising the gesture of the Saudi government, Governor Sarwar termed the decision 'historical'. The governor described Pak-Saudi friendship solid like a rock. "Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are like brothers. No doubt, the kingdom has stood by Pakistan in times of crisis. People of Pakistan have spiritual and emotional attachment with the people of Saudi Arabia," he commented. He, on the occasion, also assured the Saudi ambassador that Pakistan would stand shoulder to shoulder with his country for its security.

Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday. - Editor

Talks continue with TTP for disarmament

PM says Afghan Taliban are "helping"; these talks, if successful, will lead to the government "forgiving" them

TTP announce suspension of hostilities

DNA

WAZIRISTAN: A cessation in hostilities between Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan fighters in South Waziristan and the army was announced by the outlawed group in a statement on Friday evening. Our leaders have asked all fighters to observe a ceasefire from today to October 20, the TTP statement said. The TTP said that their leaders are engaged in some "secret talks", without elaborating any further.

CENTRELINE REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is in disarmament talks with some factions of the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Prime Minister Imran Khan has said, as the government seeks stability in the country in the backdrop of a fast evolving situation in Afghanistan. PM Imran Khan, speaking to TRT World's Ali Mustafa in Islamabad, said: "I think some of the Pakistani Taliban groups actually want to talk to our government. You know, for some peace, for some reconciliation." When asked to confirm whether Pakistan is actually in talks with the TTP, the premier clarified to say that talks are ongoing "with some of them". He said that the Afghan Taliban are "helping",

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'World's positive messages necessary'

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday said that the positive messages and constructive measures by the international community would help prevent instability in Afghanistan and mass exodus of refugees. The prime minister, in a meeting with Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod, who called on him here, said that a peaceful and stable Afghanistan was vitally important for Pakistan and the region.

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Saudi Arabia to provide \$3.6bn for oil purchases

On June 21, Saudi Arabia had agreed to restart oil aid to Pakistan worth at least \$1.5bn annually in July

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance Shaukat Tarin has said that the federal government has finalized the financial package with Saudi Arabia. It is pertinent to mention here that this financial package will help Pakistan avert its balance of payment crisis. While speaking to the journalists, the finance minister said that Saudi Arabia has

Continued on Page 06

'Petrol cheaper than regional countries'

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Defending the hike in petrol prices, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin on Friday said the rates of petroleum products in Pakistan are still lower when compared to several regional countries. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad alongside Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib, Tarin said the government is charging only Rs2.5 petroleum levy despite the fact that we had fixed Rs600 billion under this head. He said Pakistan ranks 17th in the region when it comes to petrol prices. "Prices in the international market have increased recently forcing the government to hike local prices," he said, a day after the petrol price was jacked up by Rs4 per litre and that of high speed diesel (HSD) by Rs2 per litre.



RAWALPINDI: Minister of Foreign Affairs Denmark Jeppe Kofod Friday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of Denmark Jeppe Kofod calls on PM Imran Khan. - DNA

Denmark keen to expand relations with Pakistan

FM Qureshi says Pakistan and Denmark have an upward trajectory of bilateral relations

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Denmark have agreed to make joint efforts to further strengthen the bilateral relationship in diverse fields, including energy and trade. This was stated by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a joint news conference along with Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod after their delegation level talks in Islamabad on Friday. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Pakistan and Denmark have an upward trajectory of bilateral relations. However, he said, a lot needs to be done to further enhance the bilateral cooperation. He said the two sides discussed ways to put in extra efforts to increase bilateral trade and attract more investments into Pakistan. He said cooperation in renewable energy and advantages of enhanced parliamentary interaction were discussed.



Shah Mahmood Qureshi thanked his Danish counterpart for support on GSP Plus status for Pakistan. He said he shared with the visiting dignitary Pakistan's perspective on

the Afghan situation and the regional security situation. Speaking on the occasion, the Danish Foreign Minister said the two countries have a long and strong bilateral relationship and they plan to strengthen it further in areas of trade and energy. He said Pakistan is an important country to security and stability in the region. He said Pakistan played a responsible role for peace in the region, particularly in Afghanistan. The Danish Foreign Minister said the two sides discussed in detail the situation in Afghanistan. He said the government in Afghanistan should ensure fundamental rights to its citizens. The Danish Foreign Minister thanked Pakistan for its support in evacuation of foreigners from Kabul. To a question about Kashmir, the Danish Foreign Minister said Pakistan and India should find a peaceful solution to the issue through dialogue.

Danish FM meets Army Chief

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Minister of Foreign Affairs Denmark Jeppe Kofod Friday called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa here at General Headquarters (GHQ). Danish Foreign Minister appreciated Pakistan's role in Afghan situation including successful evacuation operations, efforts for regional stability, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release. He also pledged to further improve cooperation with Pakistan at all levels. Speaking on the occasion, the COAS said that Pakistan valued its relations with Denmark and earnestly looked forward to enhance mutually beneficial multi-domain relations based on common interest.

Italy can share its expertise in fashion with Pakistan

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The ambassador of Italy to Pakistan Andrea Ferrarese Friday said Italy can share its expertise in fashion industry with Pakistan to help meet international standards. It was stated by him while talking to Chairman UK-Pak Business Council, CEO Pakistan Furniture Council and former chairman FIED-MC Mian Kashif Ashfaq during his visit to Chenone head office here. He said that vast scope of economic cooperation exist between two countries and stressed the need to strengthen with mutual collaboration. He said that Italy is home to some of the most famous luxury clothing brands in the world.



He said the Italian fashion, textile and accessories sector is also popular worldwide. He said fashion industry cooperation will yield post impact on improving the designs of textile industry of Pakistan at par with new trends in international market. He said lauded the efforts of Mian Kashif for maintaining the quality of his brand.

TTP militants given chance, says Fawad

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Friday said the militants of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), who wanted to shun path of violence should be given a chance to return to the mainstream. In a video message, he said the statement of Prime Minister Imran Khan about TTP was being discussed right now and the need was to share its background with the people. The state of Pakistan had gone through enormous ordeal as it sacrificed hundreds of lives in the war against terrorism, he added. The minister said there were various splinter groups in the

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Pak should not depend on others for Its Own Destiny - Page 03

Huge potential of tourism and trade between Pak, Vietnam - Page 04

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Sirbaz becomes first Pakistani to climb 9*8000-M mountains - Page 06

Uzbek President discusses new co-op program with WB - Page 07

Chinese investors keen to invest in Pak agri sector - Page 08

Covid antiviral pill can halve risk of hospitalisation

US drug-maker Merck says it would apply for emergency use authorisation for the drug in the US

ALI FURQAN

NEW YORK: An experimental drug for severe Covid cuts the risk of hospitalisation or death by about half, interim clinical trial results suggest. The tablet - molnupiravir - was given twice a day to patients recently diagnosed with the disease. US drug-maker Merck said its results were so positive that outside monitors had asked to stop the trial early. It said it would apply for emergency use authorisation for the drug in the US in the next two weeks. If authorised by regulators, molnupiravir would be the first oral antiviral medication for Covid-19. The pill, which was originally developed to treat influenza, is designed to introduce errors into the genetic code of the virus, preventing it from spreading in the body. An analysis of 775 patients in the study found:

- 7.3% of those given molnupiravir were hospitalised
 - that compares with 14.1% of patients who were given a placebo or dummy pill
 - there were no deaths in the molnupiravir group, but eight patients who were given a placebo in the trial later died of Covid
- The data was published in a press release and has not yet been peer-reviewed. Unlike most Covid vaccines, which target the spike protein on the outside of the virus, the treatment works by targeting an enzyme the virus uses to make copies of itself. Merck, known by the name MSD in the UK, said that should make it equally effective against new variants of the virus as it evolves in the future. Daria Hazuda, Merck's vice-president of infectious disease discovery, told the BBC: "An antiviral treatment for people who are not vaccinated, or who are less responsive to immunity from vac-

Air travel banned for unvaccinated people

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's civil aviation authority on Friday banned air travel by unvaccinated passengers, as the country tries to make a stronger push for vaccinations and avoid stringent lockdowns in the future, media reports said. Adhering to National Command and Operation Centre's (NOC) directive, Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority, in a notification, said that from October 1, only fully vaccinated passengers aged 18 and above will be allowed to undertake air travel, to, from and within Pakistan, provided they furnish proof of certification against the Covid-19, a Geo News report said. On Thursday, Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan announced the ban with this tweet: "Only fully vaccinated passengers of age 18 years and above will be allowed to undertake domestic air travel within Pakistan." There is a catch though. Passengers below 18 years may be allowed to travel to Pakistan without a vaccination certificate, while passengers between 15 and 18 years will be allowed to travel inbound to the country without a vaccination certificate up to October 31, the report stated. Similarly, patients who have been advised against administering the vaccine will be allowed to travel, provided they have a certificate from the doctor. Passengers holding foreign passports and travelling out-bound from Pakistan have been exempted from this ban.

ines, is a very important tool in helping to end this pandemic." Trial results suggest molnupiravir needs to be taken early after symptoms develop to have an effect. An earlier study in patients who had already been hospitalised with severe Covid was halted after disappointing results. Merck is the first company to report trial results of a pill to treat Covid, but other companies are working on similar treatments. Its US rival Pfizer has recently started late-stage trials of two different antiviral tablets, while Swiss company Roche is working on a similar medication. Merck has said it expects to produce 10 million courses of molnupiravir by the end of 2021. The US government has already agreed to buy \$1.2bn (£885m) worth of the drug if it receives approval from the regulatory body, the FDA. The company said it is in ongoing discussion with other countries, including the UK, and has

also agreed licensing deals with a number of generic manufacturers to supply the treatment to low and middle-income countries. Prof Penny Ward, from King's College London, who was not involved in the trial, said: "It is greatly hoped that the antiviral task force has, like the vaccines taskforce, pre-ordered courses of this medication. "[This is] so that the UK can, at last, properly manage this condition by treating vaccine breakthrough disease, and relieve pressure on the NHS during the forthcoming winter." Prof Peter Horby, an expert in infectious diseases at University of Oxford, said: "A safe, affordable, and effective oral antiviral would be a huge advance in the fight against Covid. "Molnupiravir has looked promising in the lab, but the real test was whether it shows benefit in patients. Many drugs fail at this point, so these interim results are very encouraging."

Briefs

Danish FM lauds Pak's role in Afghanistan

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Denmark's Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod, who arrived at Islamabad International Airport (IAP) through a special chartered flight, has appreciated Pakistan's role in effective and smooth evacuation of different nationals from Afghanistan, a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) spokesman said.

The airport manager and its team along with the Foreign Office officials welcomed the visiting dignitary, where he was given a detailed briefing on the arrangements made for the evacuation operation, a news release said on Friday.

"The visiting foreign minister appreciated the efforts of the airport staff," the spokesman extending gratitude for making the extraordinary arrangements.

The spokesman said the Danish FM also lauded the tireless around-the-clock work of the airport administration and staff to deal with the emergency evacuation situation from Afghanistan.

The visiting dignitary also visited the B4 and B5 lounges of the facility.

UAF, KIUBG ink MoU for horticultural collaboration

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The Karakoram International University Gilgit Baltistan (KIUBG) and University of Agriculture Faisalabad have inked a memorandum of understanding to collaborate horticulture, food and nutrition areas and academic exchange programs. The MoU was duly signed by UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan and KIUBG Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Ataulah Shah.

Dean Faculty of Food Nutrition and Home Sciences Prof Dr Masood Sadiq Butt, Director Horticulture Dr Amanullah Malik, DG NIFSAT Dr Imran Pasha, Prof Dr Waseem Akram, Dr Ahmad Din and other notables also attended.

According to agreement, UAF will provide technical assistance for the establishment of food processing facilities and value addition of food products. UAF will help in the establishment of nutrition assessment lab at KIUBG that is the dire need of the hour. UAF will help KIUBG regarding promotion of horticulture crops in Gilgit and joint efforts will be made to formulate strategies to curtail post-harvest losses.

UAF will provide support for the revision of curriculum of food nutrition and allied discipline. UAF will also assist KIUBG for dairy products development like cheese. Exchange of the faculty, students, training programs seminars and conference will be arranged.

Dr Ataulah Shah said that collaboration will help learn from each other experiences and work jointly for the noble cause.

Nation felicitated on FBR's revenue collection

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday felicitated the nation on the upward economic trajectory as the Federal Board of Revenue collected Rs1, 395 billion revenue in first quarter against the target of Rs1, 211 billion.

"I congratulate the nation on FBR's achievement of collecting Rs1, 395 billion in Q1 of FA 2021-22 against the target of Rs1, 211 billion," the prime minister tweeted.

Imran Khan mentioned that the situation was reflective of growth in revenues by 38 percent. "This represents a growth of 38 percent in revenues over the same period last year," he said.



ISLAMABAD: Governor KPK Shah Farman speaking on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of Independence of Kyrgyzstan. — DNA

Net zero emissions: UK launches race to get companies

The High Commissioner's visit was part of an environment and climate-focused trip to Pakistan's biggest metropolis to see first-hand some of the challenges – and some of the innovative solutions

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner has been visiting Karachi to launch the race to get 26 companies operating in Pakistan to commit to net zero emissions by 2050.

So far 12 companies in Pakistan are committed - including one after meeting the High Commissioner on his visit. With one month to go until the COP 26 global climate change conference hosted in the UK, the UK Government is looking for more to take the leap. Globally more than 3,000 companies have signed up.

The High Commissioner's visit was part of an environment and climate-focused trip to Pakistan's biggest metropolis to see first-hand some of the challenges – and some of the innovative solutions –



Pakistan is offering as part of world action on climate change.

He saw how British and Pakistani expertise has been coming together to harness the power of renewable energy at Zephyr Wind

Farm at Ghoro. He was accompanied by Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Climate Change Malik Amin Aslam. There he saw how British funds have helped create green energy investments and have

helped Pakistan replace coal power.

Dr Turner was also shown how Pakistan is using nature-based solutions to help repair the environment and protect livelihoods – through the regeneration

of a mangrove forest near to the windfarm. Studies have shown mangrove barriers are cheaper and 50 times more cost-effective than concrete barriers when it comes to tidal flood protections.

Later, the High Commissioner took part in litter picking – a personal passion of his – at Clifton Beach to mark World Maritime Day. Eight million tonnes of plastic end up every year in the world's seas, which is swallowed by or entangles marine animals, causing injuries and deaths and threatening the survival of certain species.

Dr Christian Turner CMG said: "Pakistan is tackling climate change – and protecting the beauty of the natural world – and these are two key areas which the UK-hosted COP 26 conference will be focusing on.

"I'm encouraging 26 Pakistani firms to sign a commitment to make net zero emissions commitments in 2050 as part of COP 26. I2are committed but we need more companies to come forward. Together we can do this."

While on his visit the High Commissioner also met key business leaders from the "Top 6" UK firms in Pakistan - (Unilever, Reckitt Benckiser, SCB, GSK, UBL and Shell) which contribute over 1% to Pakistan's annual GDP, and rank among the biggest corporate taxpayers. He also met media house owners where he discussed the importance of a free media for accountability in a well-functioning democracy and welcomed the Protection of Journalists and Other Media Practitioners bill passed by the Sindh Assembly in May.

World urged to push India to grant Kashmiris' freedom

MONITORING DESK

ISLAMABAD: Deploring India's "state terrorism" unleashed in Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan on Thursday called for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions prescribing a plebiscite to enable the Kashmiri people to exercise their right to self-determination. Speaking in a UN panel, Ambassador Munir said that India has, by "obfuscation, oppression and intransigence", denied the right of self-determination to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for seven decades.

In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy also urged the world community to demand that India halts its human rights violations in disputed territory and allows an international inquiry commission to probe those abuses.

"High sounding proclamations of the need to respect human rights ring hollow and hypocritical if situations of grave and consistent violations, such as in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, are not effectively addressed by the international community," Ambassador Akram told the General Assembly's Third Committee, which deals with so-

cial, humanitarian and cultural issues. Speaking in the committee's general debate, he said that Pakistan awaits global condemnation of India's human rights violations in occupied Kashmir. On 05 August 2019, India, the Pakistani envoy said, initiated its so-called 'final solution' in occupied Jammu and Kashmir by eliminating its statehood, imposing a siege and changing its demographic composition, flagrantly violating the UN Charter, the relevant Security Council resolutions; and international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. Since then, he said India imprisoned the entire Kashmiri political leadership; illegally detained 13,000 Kashmiri youth; tortured many of them; extra-judicially killed hundreds of young Kashmiri boys; used rape as a weapon of war; put down peaceful protests violently, blinding even young children with pellet guns; imposed collective punishments; by demolishing and burning entire neighbourhoods and villages; and curtailed the freedom of religion and expression.

"This reign of terror – this state terrorism – unleashed on innocent Kashmiris by India's occupation forces, violate international human rights

and humanitarian laws and constitute atrocity crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide," Ambassador Akram told delegates from around the world. "Due to officially proscribed impunity, not a single Indian soldier has been punished for these crimes," he added. Some 4.2 million Indian settlers have been issued domicile certificates to transform the Indian Illegally Occupied Kashmir (IIOJK) from a Muslim majority state into a Hindu majority territory, the Pakistani envoy said. Dealing with racism, the Pakistani envoy said expressions of racial hatred, religious supremacy and violent nationalism had escalated in several parts of the world.

"Islamophobia is a pernicious manifestation of racism and hate which we must collectively combat," Ambassador Akram said, noting that the Declaration on the 20th Anniversary Durban Conference has recognized Islamophobia as a contemporary form of racism, and also by the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. PM Imran, he pointed out, has proposed that the UN Secretary-General convene a global dialogue on countering the rise of Islamophobia.

PTI to win polls after addressing price hike

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed Ahmad Thursday said Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would form the next government after addressing the challenges of price hike and unemployment in the country. Prime Minister Imran Khan was making all out efforts to provide relief to common man, he said while talking to PTI. He said the PTI would have competition with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Punjab. He said the PML-N had divided into groups as Sharif family had no future in politics of the country. Pakistan People Party was holding vote bank in Sindh only, he added. Commenting on India's role in Afghan territory, he said after control of Taliban, Indian terrorist network had badly damaged. Appreciating the role of security institutions, he said Pakistan armed forces were fully capable to handle any unusual situation in the region. About China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), he said it was a game changer for Pakistan. He said DASU and BHASHA dams would be completed in near future. To a question about rising crime incidents in the federal capital, the interior minister said security departments had been provided all necessary equipment besides mobile squad to combat crimes. Replying to a question about electronic voting machine (EVMs), he said Prime Minister Imran Khan was committed to hold next elections through EVMs. Sheikh Rasheed said overseas Pakistan would have the right of vote in general elections. To another question about price hike issues, he said subsidy would be given on essential food items besides medicines. The PTI would clinch the next elections after resolving current issues, he said. — Staff Report

Complaints resolution mechanism to be evolved

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on National Health Services Dr. Faisal Sultan on Thursday assured the students who attempted MDCAT this year that a systematic grievance resolution mechanism would be evolved after discussion with the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC).

In a meeting with a delegation of students who shared concerns about this year's Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT), Dr Faisal reassured the students that a post-exam analysis was already planned by the PMC and would be completed by the regulatory body after the completion of the MDCAT which will address many of the concerns of the students.

During the meeting, he heard their concerns at length and responded to the issues tabled, said a news release.

The SAPM highlighted that the objective of the MDCAT was to ensure that students entering this competitive field of rigorous and lifelong learning have the necessary potential in terms of academic achievement, knowledge and analytic thinking.

All this ultimately enabled the public to have safe and competent professionals serving them in the future and reinforce the public trust in the medical education system and the medical professionals.

Increasing the prices of POL difficult decision

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Energy Muhammad Hammad Azhar said the government had increased the prices of petroleum (POL) products in compulsion due to upward fluctuation of fuel rates in the international market.

"Increasing the prices of petroleum products is a difficult decision. The prices' surge in Pakistan is considerably less as compared to the world market," he said in a statement issued late Thursday night.

The minister said enhancing the prices was a difficult decision for the government, but "its reason is the rising prices of the world market." Hammad said the government was gradually reducing the tax rate on petroleum products, adding "even today, oil prices in Pakistan are lower as compared to most countries."

PM Khan for exploiting potential of pharma sectors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday directed the authorities concerned to take steps to exploit full potential of exports diversification in salt and pharmaceutical sectors. Chairing a meeting of National Export Development Board, the prime minister said the government was focused on creating business-friendly environment in the country for further strengthening the economy and increasing employment opportunities. The prime minister emphasized that business community should adopt modern technologies to achieve maximum value addition.

The meeting was attended by Finance Minister Shaukat Tareen, Minister for Industries and Production Khuro Bakhtiar, Commerce Adviser Abdul Razak Dawood, Special Assistant to PM on Health Dr Faisal Sultan, SAPM on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill, CEO Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) Asim Rauf, representatives of pharmaceutical and salt sectors and senior officials. The Prime Minister was briefed on the potential of diversification of exports, especially in salt and pharmaceutical sectors.

He was briefed that Pakistan was blessed with all types of salt available in the world including rock salt, sea salt and lake salt. With a reserve size of 6.2 billion tons, Khewra Salt Mine is the second largest salt range in the world.



RAWALPINDI: Dr Jamal Nasir President Pakistan Green Task Force, Famous Poet Anwar Masud, Dr Farhat Jabeen, Dr Bushra Yasmeen, along with others are posing for a group photo on the occasion of the closing session of the training workshop arranged by the Urdu Department of Fatima Jinnah University. — DNA

Fawad grieved over demise of Mir Khalil's spouse

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Friday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the wife of Mir Khalil-ur-Rehman, the founder of Jang Group and mother of Mir Shakeel-ur-Rehman.

In a tweet, the minister said that her role in the formation of the Jang Group and its development was very important. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr.....	04:39 am
Zohr.....	11:58 pm
Asr.....	04:10 pm
Maghrib.....	05:52 pm
Isha.....	07:15 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....	8494949
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Emergency

Rescue (Police).....	15
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& Rescue Services.....	4451122
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CAA.....	9281092



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MH.....	5611116
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RGH.....	9290301-7
Holy Family.....	9290322-7
PIMS.....	9261170-79
Polyclinic.....	9218300-09
Shifa International.....	4603666



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RDA.....	5555864
TMA.....	5770886
Cantonment Board.....	9270151-3



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

Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation

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

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125
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ISLAMABAD: Visitors taking interest in various traditional items displayed on the occasion of the Anniversary of Independence of Kyrgyzstan. – DNA

Pak should not depend on others for Its Own Destiny

He stated that the world order is in a flux and Pakistan should be prepared for more rapid developments in the region

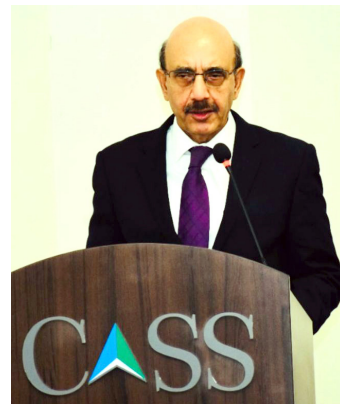
DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President Azad Jammu & Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan delivered a guest lecture on "Pakistan's Emerging Geostategic Landscape: Challenges & Opportunities" at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS). He stated that the world order is in a flux and Pakistan should be prepared for more rapid developments in the region. The Indian animosity and the evolving situation in Afghanistan have put Pakistan on the interna-

tional radar and Pakistan needs an astute approach to convert these challenges into opportunities.

He said that economic development is of pivotal and strategic importance for Pakistan. He suggested that Pakistan should diversify its international engagements and reduce external dependence, to promote both its security and economic interests.

However, he warned against relying on any single major power. Sardar Masood Khan paid rich tributes to Pakistan Air Force for its heroic contributions towards national security and appreciated PAF's vision



and commitment to develop an indigenous Aerospace industry.

He recommended that Pakistan must build its self-image as a nation, based on hope and self-confidence and take ownership of our own destiny. He urged the nation to build partnerships based on common interests but not to look for new masters. He also suggested that Pakistan should use all its instruments in a shrewd and astute manner based on realpolitik while engaging with the world. He said that India is afraid of Pakistan's defence capabilities and nuclear deterrent. That is why, New Delhi is not interested in direct confrontation with Pakistan and has developed a

strategy, based on skirting around our nuclear capability, by using hybrid warfare, terrorism and hostile narratives against Islamabad. This lecture was followed by a vibrant discussion in which a large number of senior serving and retired military officers, scholars and analysts actively participated. Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd), President CASS delivered the concluding remarks in which he appreciated the longstanding services of Sardar Masood Khan for Pakistan, PAF and CASS and also presented a memento to the distinguished guest speaker.

RPO holds 'Khuli Kutcheri'

RAWALPINDI: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi, Imran Ahmar under Punjab government's open door policy held a 'Khuli Kutcheri' here on Friday in his office to address grievances of the people. According to a Police spokesman, the RPO issued directives to the officers concerned of Attock, Jhelum, Chakwal and Rawalpindi, four districts of the region to take action and submit detail report on the complaint submitted by the citizens in 'Khuli Kutcheri'. The RPO on the occasion said, the 'Khuli Kutcheries' are being held to provide the citizens immediate relief and address their complaints besides it also helps improve standards of policing. Several persons namely Lubna Kanwal resident of Gujar Khan, Arunge Bibi r/o Gujar Khan, Muhammad Saeed r/o Chakwal and others submitted their applications. – DNA

US Embassy, NUST explore avenues for collaboration

ISLAMABAD: United States Embassy officials in Islamabad visited Innovation and Commercialization, Directorate at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) on Friday to discuss areas where NUST can collaborate with the US embassy. Pro-Rector (RIC), Dr. Rizwan Riaz, Director Innovation and Commercialization, Mr. Muhammad Anwar Fareed, representatives from NUST IP Office and CAC received the delegation. The US Embassy delegation was led by Economic Counselor Mr. Daniel Froats and accompanied by Deputy Cultural Affairs Officer, Mr. Phillip Assis, Economic Officer (IPR) Ms. Jane Park and Economist, Mr. Nasir Rao. The broader agenda of the meeting was to develop collaboration with the US through its representatives in Pakistan for enhancing the bilateral partnership in industrial and Research and Development ventures. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: Visitors posing for group photo at the ceremony of the 30th Anniversary of Independence of Kyrgyzstan. – DNA

Int'l Day of older persons observed

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: International Day of Older Persons on Friday observed across the globe including Pakistan, aiming to acknowledge the contribution made by elderly people to society. This year, the theme for International Day of Older Persons was "Digital Equity for All Ages". The theme emphasizes on active and meaningful participation of the elderly people in the digital world as well as making the digital world more accessible to them.

The United Nations will focus on the need to include the elderly in the digital arena this year. It also aims to acknowledge the stereotypes, discrimination and prejudice that is associated with the process of digitization. Various national and international organizations also organized special online seminars and workshops to highlight the importance of the day. According to UN, the section of the world's population that is aged 60 years and above will reach over 1.5 billion in the year 2050, up from 900 million in 2015. The International Day for Older Persons aims to make the world aware about the need for social care and health provisions for the elderly.

RCCI President vows to resolve issues of traders

Newly elected president of RCCI says, the geo political environment specially the recent change in Afghanistan has brought uncertainty causing slowness and contraction in the national economy

ZUBAIR AHMAD

RAWALPINDI: The business community of Pakistan is going through tough times as cost of doing business has been manifold due to increase in POL prices and rupee depreciation. The geo political environment specially the recent change in Afghanistan has brought uncertainty causing slowness and contraction in the national economy. We urged the government to keep stakeholders on board and we are ready to share our input and recommendations to get out of this challenging situation. This was stated by Nadeem Rauf, newly elected president of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) at the oath taking ceremony of office bearers of RCCI at Chamber building. Group leader and former president Sohail Altaf administered the oath to office bearers of RCCI which was attended by former presidents, executive members, representatives of trade associations and RCCI mem-

bers. Nadeem Rauf said that RCCI prime objective was to explore the existing trade potential of all viable sectors, provide maximum facilitation to members and to dig out new avenues of growth and progress for the region. He said that RCCI will approach ministries, government departments, FBR and others for early resolution of the issues faced by the business community. Group leader Sohail Altaf said that despite

the Corona epidemic, the Rawalpindi Chamber held several important events to promote trade activities and remained proactive in providing relief to traders and raising their voices for resolving their issues. RCCI also remained in touch with the district administration regarding lockdown, business hours and weekly holidays and sought relief, he added. SM Naseem congratulated the newly select-

ed team on assuming office.

Newly elected Senior Vice President Asim Malik and Vice President Talat Awan also expressed the same feelings and vowed that they will work as a team.

Outgoing President Nasir Mirza congratulated the new office bearers and expressed hope that the new team will continue the policies and carry the RCCI's values and legacy.

Chamber officials, former presidents Jalil Malik, Najam Rehan, Dr. Hasan Sarosh, Manzar Khurshid, Abdul Rauf Chaudhry, Asad Mashhadi, Javed Akhtar Bhatti, Dr. Shamail, Mian Humayun Parvez, Raja Amer Iqbal, Zahid Latif Khan, Shahid Saleem, Saboor Malik, outgoing President Nasir Mirza, Executive Members, representatives of trade associations Sheikh Hafeez, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, Arshad Awan, Taj Abbasi, Chaudhry Iqbal, Tariq Jadoon, Zafar Qadri, President Small Chamber Sheikh Asif Idrees, Nadeem Sheikh, and a large number of RCCI members attended the ceremony.



Efforts underway to eradicate dengue

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Managing Director Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) Awasi Manzoor Tarrar Friday said that all resources are being utilized to stop spread of dengue and RWMC is fully mobilized to eliminate it. According to a statement issued here, the MD said that teams were carrying out the desilting of drains, cleanliness of vacant plots and removing stagnant water from city to keep the residents safe from this deadly disease.

He said that cleanliness of bus stands, graveyards and other public places were also underway in the city while RWMC was also carrying out anti-dengue and cleanliness drive all tehsil of the district including Murree, Kahutta, Kalar Syeda, Taxila, Kotlissattian and Gujar Khan. The MD said that RWMC workers were going door to door and asked the residents to avoid throwing waste and other materials in drains and in open. Awasi said that RWMC workers were also playing a vital role as a front line force against the COVID-19 pandemic besides dengue. He said that waste containers were also being emptied while washing and sweeping of streets and roads were also being done by mechanical sweepers.

Extreme commerce to be part of tech revolution

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Special Technology Zones Authority has invited Pakistan's largest EdTech Start-up, Extreme Commerce to be part of the technology revolution in the country. STZA Chairman, Amer Hashmi in a recent meeting with Sunny Ali, the Founder of Extreme Commerce. A delegation of Extreme Commerce led by Sunny Ali met the Chairman and the team of Special Technology Zones Authority in the STZA Secretariat situated at the Prime Minister Secretariat, Islamabad. Amer Hashmi, Chairman, Special Technology Zones Authority has said that the Government of Pakistan has established the STZ Authority to position Pakistan as Asia's Next Big Technology Hub. He further said, we are on a mission to establish the knowledge economy by introducing high-tech infrastructure and regulatory framework that enables lightning paced growth in the technology sector. He also briefed the delegation that Pakistan has made unprecedented improvements in ease of doing business according to the World Bank report 2020 due to the introduction and integration of e-services at the national and provincial levels. This is a great opportunity and time for setting up new tech-based businesses in Pakistan.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday notified 3-day power suspension programme for Saturday, Sunday and Monday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period on Saturday from 08:00 AM to 04:00 PM Maritime, Bathar Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, T&T, Bhara Kahu, Golf City, NIH, Treat Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Bhikri, PAF Murid, Jamalwal, Megan, Millat Chowk, RA Bazaar Feeders, On Sunday from 08:00 AM to 04:00 PM, Maritime, Bathar Feeders, From 09:00 AM to 09:00 PM G-9 / 1, F-9 Park, G-9 Markaz, G-9/2, G-9/3, Karachi Company, G-10/3, Aziz Chowk, G-10/2, G-10/1, G-9 Express, Upper Topa, Patriata, Gharial Feeders and surrounding areas.

Briefs

Three arrested in two separate rape cases

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police on Friday claimed to have arrested three suspected rapists in two separate cases.

According to a police spokesman, Sadder Baroni police registered a case on application of a 16-year-old female victim's father and managed to net two accused namely Ashmal and Hamad alias Feroz for raping the girl.

He informed that the victim had undergone a medical examination while further investigation was underway and police were conducting raids to net their accomplice. The accused would be challenged with solid evidence, he added.

Meanwhile, Gunjmani police also arrested a suspected namely Numan for allegedly attempting to rape a four-year-old girl.

Superintendent of Police, Rawal Zia ud Din said that Rawalpindi District Police on the directives of City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas are pursuing a zero tolerance policy against violence, abuse and harassment of women and children. — APP

Two POs, mobile snatcher arrested

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police have arrested two proclaimed offenders (POs) and a mobile snatcher from different areas.

According to a police spokesman, Naseerabad police arrested Tahir Butt wanted in a murder of Faizan Butt and the case registered in Naseerabad police station in 2019.

City Police Officer, Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas during a meeting held here the other day to review murder cases directed the police officers of Pothohar Division to arrest the PO within 24 hours. Police had already rounded up five accused in the murder case. In another raid, Taxila police rounded up a PO namely Tanveer Hussain, wanted in a cheque dishonor case registered in Taxila Police Station in 2020. Meanwhile, Bani police arrested a mobile snatcher identified as Zabiullah and recovered snatched mobile phone from his possession. — APP

PHMA elects new central chairman

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers Association (PHMA) has elected Shahzad Azam Khan, the former provincial caretaker minister for labour and manpower, as its new Central Chairman for 2021-22 unopposed in the annual general meeting of central executive committee of the association held.

The other office-bearers who were elected unopposed included Kashif Aslam Zia and Tariq Mahmood Bhatti as North Zone Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively.

This is third time that Shahzad Azam was chosen for this prestigious position, as in the past he served as PHMA central chairman in 2007-8 and 2013-14 with dedicated services to the knitwear and hosiery industry. He has also worked as the director of Punjab Industrial Estates Development & Management Company (PIEDMC), besides serving as the President of Sundar Industrial Estate Lahore.

After being elected as chairman he pledged to work with renewed zeal and a sense of commitment for the betterment of the knitwear and hosiery industry and the value-added apparel sector at large. He paid tribute to the outgoing chairman Riaz Ahmed, saying that the outgoing body in his lead had been actively promoting the interests of the textile industry throughout 2020-21. The new chairman vowed to continue with his efforts for the promotion of the value-added knitwear industry.

Huge potential of tourism and trade between Pakistan, Vietnam

“Pakistan is an important country in the region and we have a special interest in promoting investment”

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Vietnam's Ambassador Nguyen Tien Phong has said that Pakistan and Vietnam have great potential for tourism and trade. Vietnam has increased its exports to 300 billion dollars in the last few years, which Pakistan could benefit it's experience.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Co-Chairman, Pakistan ASEAN Friendship Association at his embassy

here yesterday. He added that Vietnam is earning 100 billion dollars by exporting electronic and mobile parts. “Pakistan is an important country in the region and we have a special interest in promoting investment,” he said. He said that Pakistan and Vietnam are important exporters of textile products and we should benefit from each other's experiences and rather than competing each other.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, co-chairman of the Pakistan-ASEAN Friendship



Association, said that establishing direct air links between Pakistan and Vietnam would boost tourism and trade between the two countries.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that Pakistan is a member of ASEAN Regional Forum while becoming a full dialogue partner of ASEAN would boost trade and investment. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added that the two countries would launch joint efforts with the Ambassador of Vietnam to promote trade and investment.

GDA ceases Ayubia Chairlift, declares dangerous for riding

ABBOTTABAD: Galyat Development Authority (GDA) Friday declared the Ayubia chairlift dangerous for tourists and stopped its operation till the replacement of the installation.

This was stated by the Director General GDA Raza Ali Habib in a press statement. He further said that the Ayubia chairlift was no longer safe for human life and running a chairlift in such conditions is a huge risk for precious lives. Raza Ali Habib said that the current chairlift was installed in 1965 and was declared extremely dangerous by WPK International firm in 2019.

The DG disclosed that the Ayubia chairlift has spent 20-25 more years than its life, during the current tourism season they had seen an unprecedented influx of tourists which was four times more than the capacity of the chairlift. GDA has also directed the contractor of the Ayubia chairlift to increase safety measures as human lives are more important than any other thing, he said.

Raza Ali Habib said that on the basis of Austria international consultant company WPK they had decided to cease the operation of the Ayubia chairlift with immediate effect and would reopen it after replacement of old installation with new modern and state of the art machinery, the new chairlift would be safer and would also provide comfort to the tourists.

Ayubia Chairlift was the first of its kind recreation facility in Pakistan which was constructed in 1965, in addition to riding trails, hiking places, picnic spots where the chairlift takes the tourists to a nearby peak for a view of beautiful forested hills. — APP

STZA invites Extreme Commerce to be part of tech revolution

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Special Technology Zones Authority has invited Pakistan's largest EdTech Start-up, Extreme Commerce to be part of the technology revolution in the country. STZA Chairman, Amer Hashmi in a recent meeting with Sunny Ali, the Founder of Extreme Commerce.

A delegation of Extreme Commerce led by Sunny Ali met the Chairman and the team of Special Technology Zones Authority in the STZA Secretariat situated at the Prime Minister Secretariat, Islamabad.

Amer Hashmi, Chairman, Special Technology Zones Authority has said that the Government of Pakistan has established the STZ Authority to position Pakistan as Asia's Next Big Technology Hub. He

further said, we are on a mission to establish the knowledge economy by introducing high-tech infrastructure and regulatory framework that enables lightning paced growth in the technology sector. He also briefed the delegation that Pakistan has made unprecedented improvements in ease of doing business according to the World Bank report 2020 due to the introduction and integration of e-services at the national and provincial levels. This is a great opportunity and time for setting up new tech-based businesses in Pakistan.

He further said that Pakistan has improved in accelerated business climate reforms, whereas, over the last few years, Pakistan has restructured the business climate enabling efficient coordination among institutions and

reducing red-tapism which has led to significant improvements.

He briefed the Extreme Commerce delegation that, in recognition of the crucial need to harness the opportunities of the digital age, the Prime Minister has issued a mandate to establish the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), which is ready to provide legislative and institutional support for the development of the national technology sector.

This body, under the Cabinet Division of Government of Pakistan, will work to develop a technology-driven knowledge ecosystem and encourage modern innovative solutions and futuristic entrepreneurship. Sunny Ali, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Extreme Commerce informed the STZA Chairman and his team that,

Extreme Commerce is Pakistan's largest EdTech company and has surpassed one million community membership, whereas more than 150,000 students are enrolled and benefiting from the Video Boot Camp, which hosts the largest number of online training resources in the region.

The founder Extreme Commerce said that with the launch of Extreme Commerce Incubators across Pakistan's eight cities has the facility to host more than two thousand students at a time, making it the largest Freelance Incubator Network in Pakistan. Sunny Ali also informed the STZA that Extreme Commerce has plans to launch its own Freelancers University in Pakistan and this has been initiated with the establishment of the Extreme Commerce College (EC College).



ISLAMABAD: Editor Islamabad POST Ansar M Bhatti, Ambassador of Iran Ali Hosseini and ambassador of Palestine Ahmed Rabei at a function organized by the Kyrgyz embassy. — DNA

'Robotics and STEAM Weekend Camp' for kids from October 02

ISLAMABAD: LearnOBots has planned to arranged 'Robotics and STEAM Weekend Camp' for kids from October 02 (Saturday) to enable the students explore scientific knowledge and gain experience in a practical way.

According to an official source, the students between 8 - 14 years of age will be able to participate in the camp where they will have an opportunity to explore the domains of Science and Technology and discover their passion in the supervision of experts.

The activities include Robotics, Coding, Electronics, Engineering, Game

Development, Application Development, Computer Programming, 3D Modeling and Printing, Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, Creating Digital Art, Renewable Energy Resources, Tinkering and Making and Home Inventions.

The camp will be held at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in collaboration with the National Science and Technology Park. LearnOBots is an educational technology company, having its head office in Islamabad (CIE-NUST).

The company develops creative and fun activities along with educational technologies and products that are

used to impart concepts of Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics to students in Pakistan. LearnOBots is a fast growing company with some of the best schools of Pakistan working with it and pursuing a mission to promote a learning and research culture in Pakistan.

The company provides hands-on training to kids in the domains of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) enabling the kids identify their passion and channelize it into a productive hobby; make exciting stuff, create new things and find solutions to real life problems. — APP

Future of Afghanistan-China ties bright

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Taliban has the capacity to provide security to the Chinese projects, said Amb. Javed at a roundtable conference organized by the Institute of Regional Studies on 'China's future role in Afghanistan'.

Foreign investments, however, would only be possible when the Taliban was able to create a conducive environment, and for that, the Taliban would certainly strive, he opined. He was of the view that Pakistan would be greatly benefited from the stability in Afghanistan as it could resolve security dilemmas that Pakistan was facing for decades.

Amb. Javed was quite hopeful that the Taliban would live up to Chinese expectations. Since the Afghan Taliban was looking for China's bigger role in peace and the development of Afghanistan, they would do their best to ensure their soil was not used against terrorism, he maintained. While highlighting the historical ties between Afghanistan and China, Amb. Javed stressed that Afghanistan was not new to China as it had been under China's sway during Tang Dynasty in 618 AD. Only after the battle of Talas against the Abbasid in 751, China lost its control, he added.

Amb. Javed was of the view that China's olive branch to

Taliban was based on Beijing's farsighted approach that the Taliban could play an effective role in reviving the Silk Road. Since the Taliban and China had some kinds of similarities in their governance approach, both could develop mutually beneficial relationships, in the long run, he opined. Historical relationships between the people of Afghanistan and southern Xinjiang would be an added advantage in promoting peace in the bordering region, he said.

Afghanistan has been central to the US's calculations to destabilize China, said Amb. Javed, adding that China was preparing its medium and small enterprises to invest in the mining sector. In the coming years, bilateral trade between the two countries was anticipated to be grown exponentially, said Amb. Javed. However, the security of Chinese workers in Afghanistan would be a concern that Taliban needed to be ensured, he added.

AIIOU holds meeting for advance research

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIIOU) held 59th session of its Board of Advance Studies and Research (BASR) yesterday and approved 15 and 22 research proposals of PhD and MPhil students respectively of various academic departments.

The meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, Vice Chancellor, AIIOU here at the main campus.

Prof Dr Syed Amir Shah, Director, BASR, presented the agenda and the members carefully analyzed quality standards of university's M Phil and PhD programs offered by various academic departments. They showed satisfaction with the quality of education imparted and emphasized the need of further improvement. Dean, Faculty of Science, Prof Dr Irshad Ahmad, Dean, Faculty of Education, Prof Dr Nasir Mehmood, and prominent educationists Prof Dr Qaisar Mushatq and Prof Dr Yousaf Khushk also attended the session. — APP

Anti-beggary squad established

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed on Friday that an anti-beggary squad headed by Assistant Superintendent Police (ASP) has been established to eliminate professional beggars from the federal capital.

Parliamentary Secretary for Interior Shaukat Ali told the house during question hour that a big gang of beggars was recently arrested and action was taken against it as per the law. He said eight police personnel found hand in glove with this gang were also terminated.

Shaukat Ali said that the metro bus project from Peshawar Morrt to New Islamabad International Airport will be made operational by 23rd March 2022.

He said the CDA has engaged consultants to design the missing facilities including procurement of buses and construction of Command and Control Center. The Opposition parties resorted to protest against the recent hike in prices of petroleum products. The House has now been prorogued. — APP

Police arrest six for possessing weapons

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police in their crackdown against lawbreakers rounded up six persons from different areas and recovered 2801 grams charras, a liquor bottle and three 30 bore pistols with ammunition from their possession, said a police spokesman on Friday.

He informed that Westridge police held a drug peddler namely Numan Manzoor and recovered 2150 grams charras from his possession. Sadder Wah police rounded up Riaz Khan with 651 grams charras.

New Town police netted Muhammad Mudassar for having a 30 bore pistol and ammunition while Airport police nabbed Abdul Wahid for carrying a 30 bore pistol and ammunition.

In another raid, Taxila police held Hamad Javed and seized a 30 bore pistol. Similarly, Bani police also held an accused namely Ahmed Jan for having a liquor bottle. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations are underway. — APP

FBISE to announce SSC-II results on Monday

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE) will announce the annual results of Part-II of Secondary School Certificate (SSC) 2021 on October 04, Monday.

According to the Federal Board, Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mahmood and Secretary Federal Education will grace the ceremony as special guests. Results announcement ceremony will be held in the Auditorium Hall of Federal Board Islamabad. — APP

Metro Bus project to be operational by March 2022

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Interior Shaukat Ali on Friday informed the National Assembly that the Metro Bus project from Peshawar Mor to the new Islamabad International Airport (IIA) would be made operational for commuters by March 2022.

During question hour in the Lower House, Shaukat Ali said the tender had already been floated for the procurement of buses and hoped that the procurement of buses would be completed within one month period. He said the infrastructure work on the Metro Bus has been executed by the NHA. However, certain essential

items and equipments such as ticketing system, security surveillance system, ITS, command & control centre, bus depot with ancillaries have not been undertaken by NHA but is required to operationalize the system, he added. Parliamentary Secretary said that for the purpose a separate PC-1 was prepared by the CDA and has been approved by the government. Shaukat Ali said that certain works included in the NHA scope is yet to be completed by the Authority such as road safety works and signboards, fixing of Cat-eyes & lane marking, missing light fittings & fixtures and lane separation. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign minister of Denmark Jeppe Kofod, planted a saplings in the lawn of foreign office Islamabad. — DNA

Military cooperation

THE third round of the Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee (JMCC) culminated in fruitful discussions between the two states. On our part, we have looked to further cement regional ties in the past few years, especially since our policy focus has looked to switch towards one of economic cooperation and connectivity. Even though it might sound counter-productive, security partnerships can help in establishing stronger links that can be used to leverage more economic cooperation. The history of the Russia-India relationship bears testament to this. Since 2014, Russia and Pakistan have been steadily increasing defence cooperation as well. Military exercises and consultative dialogues have taken place, and greater cooperation with the Eurasian giant has already resulted in more engagement with Central Asian partners. Pakistan and Russia are currently engaged in Druzhba VI in Krasnodar. The two-week drills will focus on counter-terrorism strategies and operations.

In light of the renewed threat from non-state actors ever since the Afghan withdrawal, this is an important series of drills to undertake, but that is only the added bonus. Ultimately, a close relationship with both China and Russia will help Pakistan stave off any threats and attempts to coerce on part of the US and its allies. Pakistan has already forged a multifaceted, lasting partnership with China. Russia must also be fully brought into the mix. With the blame being levied on Pakistan for the US' failure in Afghanistan, we need support from other partners. Even if we ignore the warning of potential sanctions, states will use subversive activities to try and destabilise Pakistan and stronger alliances will help stave off those risks. Where once encirclement was our biggest concern, looking at the region it is clear that at the very least, complete encirclement is not an urgent concern. However, threats from both states and non-state actors in the region and beyond indicates that we must shore up our defences and work on strengthening these partnerships as much as possible.

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Curbing inflation

THE surge in global commodity prices can have serious consequences for the country's domestic inflation rate and the current account balance. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has projected that inflation in Pakistan would remain the highest in the region at 7.5 percent. Inflation on its own is not necessarily a bad thing but when the hike in prices is of necessary perishable items like foodstuff such as vegetables, potatoes, tomatoes, fruits and meats, it is a cause for serious concern. The government is already dealing with the blowback of the global rise in petroleum and oil, and cannot afford to let the people suffer more if the prices of necessary food items also become a heinous burden for the majority.

In this regard, Finance Minister Shaukat Tarin asked the Ministry of Commerce to speed up the process of enforcing a ban on the export of perishable commodities this week. The logic behind banning exports is to increase supply in domestic markets, and not let imports, impacted by the global commodity price hike, sweep the market. The plan, for now, is to ban the export of perishable commodities for a period of three months to secure the availability of such commodities at an affordable price to the consumers. This is a good decision in hindsight of the high inflation the country suffered in the case of sugar and wheat. In August, the government had to approve the import of 200,000 tonnes of sugar and 400,000 tonnes of wheat because of the non-availability of supply. Had the export policy been managed well, this dent on our current account, as well as on the prices, could have been avoided. It is good then that the government is learning from its experiences; however, this decision has to be expedited and not taken time over.

Afghanistan: soft power and Gulf security link

James M. Dorsey

The minister was implicitly referring to the Taliban's refusal to allow Afghan female secondary school students to resume their studies two weeks after schools opened for boys and hanging the bloodied corpse of a man accused of kidnapping on a crane in the main square of the western Afghan city of Herat. Elsewhere in the city, three other men were also strung up for public viewing. Sheikh Al-Thani's effort to position his country as a model of Islamic governance was not only an effort to offer the Taliban an alternative but also a bid to garner brownie points in a competition with Saudi Arabia and the UAE for religious soft power in the Muslim world and international recognition as an icon of an autocratic, yet 'moderate' show of Islam

WHEN Qatari foreign minister Sheikh Mohammed Abdulrahman Al-Thani this week described the Taliban's repressive policies towards women and brutal administration of justice as "very disappointing" and taking Afghanistan "a step backwards," he was doing more than holding Qatar up as a model of Islamic governance and offering the militants cover to moderate their ways. Sheikh Al-Thani was seeking to shield the Gulf state from criticism should Qatari efforts fail to persuade the Taliban to shave off the sharp edges that marked their rule 25 years ago before they were toppled by US military forces and characterize their governance since they retook control of Afghanistan in mid-August with the US withdrawal. The minister was implicitly referring to the Taliban's refusal to allow Afghan female secondary school students to resume their studies two weeks after schools opened for boys and hanging the bloodied corpse of a man accused of kidnapping on a crane in the main square of the western Afghan city of Herat. Elsewhere in the city, three other men were also strung up for public viewing. Sheikh Al-Thani's effort to position his country as a model of Islamic governance was not only an effort to offer the Taliban an alternative but also a bid to garner brownie points in a competition with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates for religious soft power in the Muslim world and international recognition as an icon of an autocratic, yet 'moderate' interpretation of Islam. Sheikh Al-Thani's remarks constituted his first sharp rebuke of the Taliban and have gone further than statements issued by the kingdom and the Emirates that so far primarily urged the group to ensure regional security and stability. "We have...been trying to demonstrate to the Taliban how Muslim countries can conduct their laws, how they can deal with the women's issues," Sheikh Al-Thani said. "One of the examples is the State of Qatar, which is a Muslim country; our system is an Islamic system (but) we have women outnumbering men in workforces, in government and in higher education." The minister warned that the Taliban risked misusing Sharia or Islamic law. Hoping for Taliban moderation may be wishful thinking. "Policies are pitched at the group's lowest common denominator to preserve concord. That makes it

difficult for the Taliban to change," The Economist reported. Against the backdrop of the rivalry, the stakes are higher for Qatar's religious soft power rivals to be seen as distancing and differentiating themselves from the Taliban. To be sure, the UAE competes with Qatar in having made significant progress on women's rights while Saudi Arabia has substantially enhanced women's professional and social opportunities since the rise of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. Yet, Saudi Arabia and the UAE were alongside Pakistan the only three countries to recognize the first Taliban government in 1996. Saudi Arabia, moreover, together the United States, created the Taliban's cradle by funding and arming the mujahideen who forced the Soviets to withdraw from Afghanistan in the late 1980s. "In the name of common decency as well as political expediency, the Gulf states must exert their maximum leverage, whether financial, political, or moral, on the Taliban to dissuade them from reimposing the barbarous regime of twenty years ago. Through their financial support of the mujahideen, the Gulf has been inextricably linked with Afghanistan from the beginning of its troubles in the 1980s and own what happens now," said former US ambassador to Qatar Patrick Theros. While the same could be said about the United States, Mr. Theros' remarks appeared to include a dig at Saudi Arabia and the UAE despite an agreement in January to end a 3.5 year-long diplomatic and economic boycott of Qatar led by the kingdom and the Emirates. To be fair, Mr. Theros buffered his criticism of Gulf states by noting that they needed to bury their differences to confront the threat posed by Iran. Mr. Theros is a strategic adviser for the Washington-based Gulf International Forum, a Qatar-linked think tank, launched in 2018 days after the U.S.-Qatar Strategic Dialogue, an annual series of bilateral meetings between high-level U.S. and Qatari officials was inaugurated. Former Saudi intelligence chief Prince Turki al-Faisal, in a bid to distance Saudi Arabia from the Taliban, recently distinguished Wahhabism, the kingdom's ultra-conservative strand of Islam, and Deobandism, another ultra-conservative interpretation of the faith that originated in India and constitutes the theological wellspring of the Taliban. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed's social reforms

have shaved off sharp edges of Wahhabi practices but have not involved attempts to tinker with Islamic jurisprudence that justified them. Likewise, decades of Saudi theological influence and funding shaped the evolution of Deobandism in Afghanistan as well as Pakistan. Media reports suggested that Prince Turki secretly met Taliban leaders in August. Prince Turki reportedly seemingly unsuccessfully sought to convince the group to moderate its policies and put flesh on the notion of a changed Taliban 2.0. As head of Saudi intelligence from 1979 to 2001, Prince Turki dealt with the mujahideen during the war against the Soviets and sought to persuade the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden after Al-Qaeda bombed US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998. The need to distance Islam as practiced in conservative Gulf states from the Taliban's interpretation of the faith takes on added significance amid doubts about US reliability reinforced by the withdrawal from Afghanistan and the United States refiguring its commitment to guaranteeing security in the region. It is where religious soft power meets defence and security policy in a court of public opinion that may not delve into the nuanced differences between Wahhabism and Deobandism. "The unsavoury reputation of Gulf regimes' human rights practices has lessened the American public's appetite for committing troops to their defence over the past decade. The Gulf states must come to grips with the possibility that the US willingness to fight Iran in their defence has significantly declined and may well disappear over the coming years... If the intellectual and political elite of the region do not start thinking about how to manage the future, it will turn and bite them," Mr. Theros said. Most immediately, Saudi Arabia fears that Houthi rebels in Yemen may take a page out of the Taliban playbook and fight the war in Yemen till victory while paying only lip service to a negotiated end to the war. US President Joe Biden's national security advisor, Jake Sullivan, met on Monday in the kingdom with Prince Mohammed to discuss the war 6.5-year-old Saudi intervention in Yemen. It was the first encounter between a senior official of the Biden administration and the crown prince, whose image has been severely tarnished by the 2018 killing in Istanbul of journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

It's time Israel's extremists took a look in mirror

Ray Hanania



Israeli fanatics know that, by simply throwing words like "Nazi" and "anti-Semitism" at the Palestinians, the biased news media will fire up the anti-Palestinian propaganda and deflect the world's attention from their own crimes, such as the racism against non-Jewish citizens of Israel and the brutality against non-Jews living under horrible conditions in the Occupied Territories

ISRAELI activists, former ambassadors and right-wing fanatics claimed this week that "Palestinians" flew a Nazi flag in the village of Beit Ummar. To such people, one flag represents the entire Palestinian fight against Israel's war crimes, human rights violations and contempt for the international rule of law. Pro-Israel activists and the censored Israeli press inundated social media with a video showing a flag bearing the swastika symbol being disentangled from power lines and dropping to the ground. Proof positive, they asserted, that Palestinians do not want peace and fuel anti-Semitism. In fact, the use of such stereotypes of the apparent actions of some Palestinian extremists, while ignoring the constant violence by the racist settlement movement, is the real force that fuels anti-Jewish hate. Some Israeli extremists attempt to push innocent people so hard in the hope that, in their anger, they speak out with a rage that can then be propagandized by the media and hate-driven zealots. They will take any incident and blow it up into a scandal, which they hope will overshadow their own violence and anti-Semitic hate, as the Palestinians are also Semites, many of whom are descendants of Jews who converted to Christianity (like my own family) or to Islam. Certain Israeli zealots love to use the word "Nazi" against their critics, but they are quick to scream when their critics compare Israel's violence and brutality to that of the Nazis, fluffing up their hate with assertions that this is a "denial" of the Holocaust. My father George and my uncle Moses, both Christian Palestinians born in Jerusalem, came to America and didn't hesitate to enlist in the US military to fight the Nazis after America entered the Second World War in 1941. They fought in Europe against the Nazis, with my

father serving in the Office of Strategic Services, which targeted Nazi leaders. My uncle served on a battleship in the North Atlantic, taking on Nazi U-boats and protecting the supply lines to the Allied base that ultimately liberated Europe and freed all the victims of the Nazi concentration camps, including Jews. More than 6 million Jews were murdered by the Nazis, who wanted to annihilate European Jewry entirely. They also murdered more than 12 million non-Jews, including Eastern Europeans, Russians, Slavs, the disabled, and Arabs. Israeli fanatics know that, by simply throwing words like "Nazi" and "anti-Semitism" at the Palestinians, the biased news media will fire up the anti-Palestinian propaganda and deflect the world's attention from their own crimes, such as the racism against non-Jewish citizens of Israel and the brutality against non-Jews living under horrible conditions in the Occupied Territories. They know that these biased stereotypes and propaganda fuel the lies they fan in America. If US politicians were ever to shake off the Israeli political headlock and the American people were able to see and hear the truth of the conflict — that Christians are among the millions of Palestinians who are being killed, brutalized and denied their fundamental human rights on a daily basis — then those Americans would challenge Israel. Instead of giving away \$38 billion and more in US tax dollars to support Israel's apartheid system, which denies Palestinians their rights, they would be condemning it for its violations of international law. I didn't hear any of the pro-Israel exaggerators scream about how Israel shoots Palestinian civilians in the head — killings that are intentional because the Israeli military uses sniper rifles to target their victims. Those killed include nurses, children, teenagers and protest-

ers. In fact, anyone who stands up and confronts Israel's war crimes. So, yes, I denounce whoever placed that single Nazi flag in the village of Beit Ummar, which is just north of Hebron, a city that harbors one of the most extremist and violent settlements of Jewish fanatics. I have been to Hebron and was confronted by these fanatics face to face. I watched as Israeli soldiers protected the settlers as they screamed racist anti-Christian and anti-Muslim slander. I was serving as the national president of the Palestinian American Congress in 1995 and was on a fact-finding mission in support of peace. I watched the Israeli soldiers stand by and laugh as I stood firm against the Jewish settlers' calumny and name-calling. I believed the only way to achieve peace was to separate the fanatics from the moderates on both sides. But I didn't see any of the Israeli fanatics who posted the Nazi flag on Twitter this week put that image in the same context and denounce all extremism, including their own side's. How many times have they spoken out against settlers painting slogans such as "Death to all Arabs" or destroying Palestinian farmland through arson and vandalism under the noses of the Israel Defense Forces? Have they denounced the killings of Palestinian children or women? Or the clear violations of human and civil rights when the authorities violently respond to peaceful protests that challenge the Israeli government's apartheid? Instead, they do what they always do and hope to foment more hatred to push the conflict toward a violent conclusion. Let these Israelis bring up the issue of the Nazis and Nazism all they want. It makes it easier for their critics to point out the similarities with their own brand of fanaticism.

— Courtesy: Arab News

Briefs

Talks
continue
with TTP...

FROM PAGE 01
in the sense that the talks are taking place in Afghanistan. The premier said that these talks, for disarmament, if successful, will lead to the government "forgiving" them, "and then they [will] become normal citizens". Stressing that he does expect for some sort of deal to emerge with the TTP, he said: "I do not believe in military solutions. I am anti-military solutions. So I always believe that you know, as a politician, political dialogue is the way forward, which I always believed was the case in Afghanistan with the US." The premier noted he always believed that a non-military solution was the only way forward for Afghanistan — and he has reiterated it time and again on national, international forums.

The Afghan Taliban took over Kabul in mid-August, and since then, the country remains in turmoil, with Pakistan continuously urging the international community to support the newly-formed government in a bid to avert a humanitarian crisis, which might lead to instability in the region.

'World's
positive
messages
necessary'

FROM PAGE 01
He recalled his earlier conversation with Prime Minister Fredericksen and said that they had a fruitful exchange of views on the situation in Afghanistan as well as bilateral relations. The prime minister stressed the need for international community's constructive engagement to prevent humanitarian crisis and economic collapse in Afghanistan and to help build durable peace and stability in the country. He underlined that an inclusive political structure was important for stability of Afghanistan. The prime minister expressed satisfaction at the growing cooperation between the two countries. He added that Pakistan was committed to further diversify bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade and investment and renewable energy besides increasing people-to-people contacts between the two countries. There was detailed exchange of views on climate change and the need for concerted efforts by the international community to mitigate its adverse effects.

Saudi
Arabia to
provide...

FROM PAGE 01
affirmed financial support worth \$3.6 billion to Pakistan to buy petroleum products or crude oil. "This funding arrangement will be placed for two years. Pakistan is expected to get \$150 million per month from Saudi Arabia," Shaukat Tarin maintained. Two days earlier, while addressing the National Assembly, the finance minister said that Pakistan had requested Saudi Arabia after the rise in global crude oil prices. "The oil supply agreement with Saudi Arabia is nearing completion," he added. On June 21, Saudi Arabia had agreed to restart oil aid to Pakistan worth at least \$1.5bn annually in July, Financial Times reported. The oil facility would help ease external account position of the country; however, the FT reported that the new facility would be less than half of the previous oil facility of \$3.4bn approved in November 2018.

TTP
militants...

FROM PAGE 01
TTP and amongst them some individuals wanted to honour their pledge of allegiance to the country by returning to mainstream. The peace loving individuals, who wanted to move forward in accordance with the constitution of the country, should be allowed to return to lead a normal life, he added. Fawad said the country had defeated terrorist organizations like Al Qaeda in Pakistan and completely ended India's conspiracies.

Sirbaz becomes first Pakistani
to climb 9×8000-M mountains

Sajid Ali Sadpara, the son of legendary mountaineer late Mohammad Ali Sadpara and a climber himself, tweeted: "Lots of congratulations to Sirbaz Khan to climb Dhaulagiri. After climbing Dhaulagiri he is first Pakistani to summit nine 8000 mountains"

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Mountaineer Sirbaz Khan became the first Pakistani on Friday to climb nine of the world's highest 14 peaks — each of which has a height of more than 8,000 metres — after he scaled the 8,167-metre-high Dhaulagiri mountain in Nepal, said Alpine Club of Pakistan Secretary KarrarHaidri. Sirbaz was part of the 19-member 'SST Dhaulagiri I Expd. 2021 Autumn' expedition organised by trekking company Seven Summits Trek. According to Seven Summit Trek officials, the climbers

summitted the world's seventh highest peak on Friday morning, with Sirbaz raising Pakistan's national flag upon reaching the mountain's top. In his recent communication with Dawn from Dhaulagiri on Thursday, Sirbaz had said he was determined to summit the peak on Friday morning. Dhaulagiri, which forms part of the Himalayas mountain range, is widely known as one of the hardest peaks to climb due to its steep sides and bitterly cold climate. As Sirbaz achieved the feat, congratulations poured in for him. Sajid Ali Sadpara, the son of legendary mountaineer late



Mohammad Ali Sadpara and a climber himself, tweeted: "Lots of congratulations to Sirbaz Khan to climb Dhaulagiri. After climbing Dhaulagiri he is first Pakistani to summit nine 8000 mountains."

Summit nine 8000 mountains." Sirbaz, 32, hails from the Aliabad area of Hunza in Gilgit-Baltistan and began his climbing career in 2016. In 2019, he became the first Pakistani to summit Mount Lhotse, the world's fourth-highest mountain at 8,516m in Nepal, without the use of supplementary oxygen. Moreover, he summited the 8,125-metre-high Nanga Parbat in 2017, 8,611-metre-high K2 in 2018 and Broad Peak, which has a height of 8,163 metres in 2019. Earlier this year, he climbed the 8,091-metre-high Annapurna mountain, 8,848-metre-high Ev-

erest and 8,035-metre-high Gasherbrum II. On four of these expeditions, he had been accompanied by late Muhammad Ali Sadpara. Sirbaz is aiming to become the first Pakistani to climb all 14 of the world's highest peaks. Before setting on the mission to summit Dhaulagiri earlier this month, he had said: "I am looking forward to his expedition and reaching closer to the dream of my mentor Ali Sadpara, who had the similar dream of scaling the 14 highest peaks, but tragically lost his life earlier this year during a winter expedition on K-2."

Russia raises
concern over
AUKUS deal

MOSCOW: Russia has voiced concern over the AUKUS defence deal between Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom, warning the pact threatens global nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Under the trilateral agreement for the Indo-Pacific region, announced last month, Australia will become only the second country after the UK to be given access to the US nuclear technology to build nuclear-powered submarines. Moscow said earlier this week it was seeking more information about AUKUS. On Friday, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov admitted the Kremlin was uneasy over the deal. Moscow is "concerned" about the partnership that will allow Australia "after 18 months of consultations and several years of attempts, to obtain nuclear-powered submarines in sufficient numbers to become one of the top five countries for this type of armaments", Russia's TASS news agency quoted Ryabkov as saying. "This is a great challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime." Currently, only six countries possess nuclear-armed submarines — Russia, the US, the UK, France, India and China. The AUKUS deal has also unnerved China, which wields growing influence in the Indo-Pacific, and angered France, a longtime ally of the US, Australia and the UK. — APP

Asad, Haniya
win Midcourt
ATF C'ships

ISLAMABAD: Asad Zaman beat Athesham Humayun 6-2,7-6(4) to lift boys singles Midcourt ATF Championships 14 & Under 2021 Leg 2 at Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) Complex here on Friday. In girls singles final Haniya Minhas beat Anna Qayum 6-1,6-0 to clinch the girls singles title. Salim Saifullah Khan, President PTF was the chief guest at the closing ceremony. He lauded all the players, parents as well as their coaches, who participated in the championships. He appreciated Zaira Ahmad Zaka (founder Midcourt) for her continued efforts and interest in organizing the Midcourt ATF Championships 2021, in collaboration with PTF. The president PTF praised the hard work and efforts of the PTF nominated ITF Referee Arif Qureshi for ensuring the smooth organization of the event in close coordination with PTF officials. He also hailed the efforts of the sponsors and the media for their wholehearted support to make this event highly beneficial for the young players. — APP

KPCTA
arranges
cycling race

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) in collaboration with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association (KPCA) organised the All Pakistan Cycle Race in Orakzai to mark the World Tourism Day 2021 and boost tourism and sports in the merged districts. The organisers had established 17.5 kilometer track for the race between the lush green hills from Ziara area to Khawah Darra in the scenic Orakzai tribal district. Over 34 cyclists from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Ordnance Factory, Wah Cantt, participated in the event. All the contestants vigorously pedaled the cycles to test their luck to clinch top positions.

Yousaf, a cyclist from Peshawar, won first position by covering the track within 30:52 minutes. Sadiqullah covered the track in 31:07 minutes and stood second. Similarly, Imran from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa grabbed third position by cycling for 31:08 minutes while Mohibullah from Balochistan bagged fourth position. Commandant Orakzai Scouts Colonel Rai Kashif Amin was the chief guest while Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Khalid, KPCTA Project Director for Merged Districts Ishtiaq Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cycling Association president Nisar Ahmad and others attended the event. Talking to media, Ishtiaq Khan said that KP government was striving hard to promote tourism in tribal district and holding the cycle race was the first step towards that end. — APP

Conspiracy involved
in getting Indian
visas: Asif Bajwa

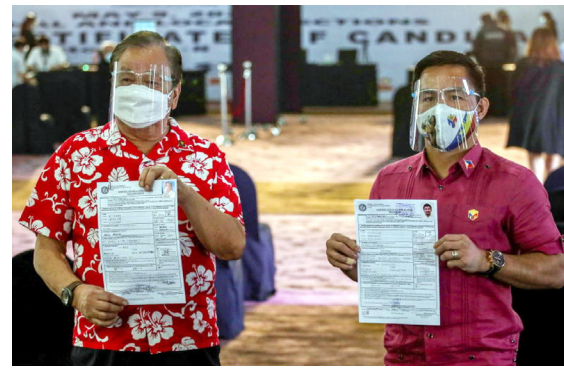
LAHORE: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) Secretary Asif Bajwa believes that there is a conspiracy involved from Hockey India in getting visas for Junior Hockey World Cup. According to Bajwa, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) invited PHF to participate in the World Cup on September 23 but the next day, they were told that the last date to submit visa application was September 24. "On September 23, we were told that Hockey India had sent an email on September 18. But we did not receive any mail from Hockey India on September 18," he said. Bajwa questioned that the Junior World Cup schedule was released on September 23, so how did Hockey India mail on September 18? "We had asked Hockey India for ten days to apply for visas. I have spoken to FIH President Narendra Batra and Chief Executive Asian Hockey Tayyabkram on the issue. Both have assured support," he added. "We have sent the preliminary list of players and officials to Hockey India. We have also completed 90% of the visa application process," Asif Bajwa added. Asif revealed that they have asked the government of Pakistan for the NOC. "PHF wants to play in the World Cup but will abide by the decision of the government over participation." The 12th Junior Hockey World Cup is scheduled in India from November 24 to December 5. Pakistan got direct qualification to the mega event after Junior Asia Cup was postponed due to COVID-19. — DNA

Pacquiao files for president as
Philippine campaigning starts

WEB DESK

MANILA: Newly retired boxing icon Manny Pacquiao was the first to file his candidacy for the presidency of the Philippines at the start of registration for thousands of political posts in what is expected to be a hotly contested election in May next year. The week-long registrations, usually a festive event with big crowds, will be more sober this year with restrictions in place to fight one of Asia's deadliest COVID-19 epidemics.

Pacquiao, who was joined by his wife and running mate, house deputy speaker Lito Atienza, submitted his certificate of candidacy to the poll body without fanfare, before saying a few words to the media about his plans should he get elected. "My priority is to resolve the pandemic so we can drive the economy to recovery," said Pacquiao, who was wearing a maroon polo shirt and a white face



mask with his and the Philippine flag's image. On his way to the registration building, Pacquiao was greeted by dozens of supporters waiting by the roadside and waving banners that read "Fight, Pacman." Pacquiao said he was unperturbed by the results of an opinion poll showing him in fourth spot among preferred presidential contenders, saying: "The voices of the poor have not been heard." One of the greatest boxers of all time and the only man to hold world titles in

eight different divisions, Pacquiao announced his retirement from the ring earlier this week to run for the presidency. He is a two-term congressman and currently a senator. The registration process should put an end to months of speculation over who will vie to succeed firebrand President Rodrigo Duterte, 76, who under the constitution cannot seek re-election and will contest the vice presidency race instead. Aside from Pacquiao, two other contenders have declared their intention to run

for president. Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso, a former actor, and Senator Panfilo Lacson, an ex police chief, were expected to file their certificates in the following days. But the spotlight will be on Sara Duterte-Carpio, the president's daughter, despite her ruling out running for the office next year. Duterte-Carpio, 43, replaced her father as Davao City mayor when he became president, and she remains by far the most popular presidential prospect, according to successive opinion polls this year. Analysts say it is crucial her father's successor is a loyalist, to insulate him from potential legal action at home or by the International Criminal Court, over the thousands of state killings in his war on drugs since 2016. Critics say his interest in the vice presidency is also a self-preservation move. Duterte says his motivation is public service, not power.

Iran army holds
drill near Azerbaijan
border amid tensions

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran's military has launched a large military drill near the country's border with Azerbaijan, in a show of force amid tensions with its neighbouring country partly linked to the latter's close ties with Israel. State television on Friday showed footage of tanks, helicopters, artillery and soldiers being deployed in an unspecified area in northwestern Iran. The army also said it was testing a locally manufactured long-range drone and other "achievements" for the first time. It came after Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps deployed equipment and troops near the border area last month, shortly after Azerbaijan, Turkey and Pakistan conducted a military drill in Baku. Iran has openly said it is concerned about Azerbaijan's close military ties with its arch-foe Israel, whose provision of high-tech assault drones and other equipment to the Azeri army is thought to have helped tip the balance in its favour during its 44-day war with Armenian forces last year. Welcoming Azerbaijan's new envoy to Tehran on Thursday, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian warned that Iran "does not tolerate the presence and activities of the Zionist regime against its national security and will do whatever necessary in this regard". During the military drill on Friday, Kioumars Heydari, the commander of the Iranian army's ground forces, told state TV that Iran is also concerned about the presence of fighters that Azerbaijan brought in during last year's fighting over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh. "The Islamic Republic of Iran has never started any invasion. But when there was war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, a considerable number of ISIS terrorists were called to the area," he said, referring to the armed group also known as ISIL. "We're really not sure they've left the area. But they must leave the area." Earlier this week, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev said during an interview with Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency that he was surprised by the planned military exercise. "Every country can carry out any military drill on its own territory. It's their sovereign right. But why now, and why on our border?" he said, pointing out that this would be the first time since the fall of the Soviet Union that Iran is making such a show of force so close to the border.



ISLAMABAD: Bulgarian ambassador to Pakistan Irena Gancheva called on Secretary of Information (BOI) Fareena Mazhar. The ambassador expressed special interest in Pakistan's IT sector and underscored the significance of Pakistan's strategic location. — DNA

Top two face
off in another
big weekend in
Premier League

LONDON: The big matches keep coming thick and fast as the Premier League moves into its last round of games before the forthcoming international break. The standout clash of the weekend sees league leaders Liverpool at home to second-placed Manchester City in what

promises to be another fascinating contest between title contenders. Pep Guardiola's City travel to Anfield after a week that saw them produce a fine display to win away to Chelsea, but then fail to convert their chances as they lost 2-0 to Leo Messi's Paris Saint Germain in midweek. Liverpool meanwhile cruised past Porto in the Champions League but were held to a thrilling 3-3 draw by Brentford last weekend in a performance that raised some doubts over their defensive capabilities. So the big questions about the game are whether Manchester City can turn chances

into goals or whether Liverpool's back four will tighten up from last weekend, while there seems to be little doubt that if Liverpool's forward get chances, they will take them. It has been a chastening week for Chelsea with their defeat at home to Manchester City followed by a 1-0 setback away to Juventus. Southampton's visit to Stamford Bridge should allow Thomas Tuchel's side to recover, but the visitors are better than their four points from six games suggest and their high pressing down the flanks will limit the ability of Chelsea's full-backs to get forward as much as they like. — DNA

SP continue losing streak in National T20

Aamer scored a quickfire 25 off 12 balls while Khushdil Shah contributed 25 off 22 while tail-enders Umar (12) and Naseem Shah (11) not out helped Southern Punjab reach 174 for nine

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Southern Punjab suffered their fifth successive defeat as Balochistan stayed in hunt for a semi-final place in their National T20 Cup in Rawalpindi on Friday. Abdul Wahid Bangalzai and Abdullah Shafique added 84 runs. Abdullah's 44 included five fours and one six, the right-hander faced 28 balls. Abdul Wahid posted the second T20 half-century of his young career, the right-hander had scored a fifty against the same side

in their earlier clash that Balochistan had won by seven wickets. Abdul Wahid's 50 came off 42 balls and the right-hander hit seven exquisite fours before he was dismissed lbw by Aamer Yamin. Haris Sohail remained undefeated on 47 off 35 balls. The left-hander hit six fours in his innings. Haris finished the match in the company of Sohail Akhtar who remained not out on 16, the two added 41 runs for the unfinished third-wicket stand. Aamer and Umar Khan took a wicket apiece for South-



ern Punjab. This was Balochistan's second victory in the tournament. Earlier, Balochistan won the toss and opted to bowl. Southern Punjab lost their first three wickets with only 28 runs on the board. Sohail Maqsood who handed over the captaincy reins to Aamer top-scored for his side with 54 off 34 balls (six fours, two sixes). Sohail added 71 runs for the fourth-wicket with Hassan Khan. This was Hassan's second successive fifty plus score in the tournament. Hassan who scored 28 off 22 (three sixes) fell to

Umaid Asif who dismissed Sohail in the same over. Southern Punjab lost their third wicket for the addition of a mere four runs as Azam Khan (2) was dismissed lbw by Haris Sohail. Aamer scored a quickfire 25 off 12 balls while Khushdil Shah contributed 25 off 22 while tail-enders Umar (12) and Naseem Shah (11) not out helped Southern Punjab reach 174 for nine. Junaid Khan took three wickets for 29 runs while Umaid who also took two catches in the field including a splendid diving effort to dismiss Aamer, took three for 30 runs.

Briefs

Turk Islamist politician Oguzhan dies

I wish God's mercy on our dear brother, Tayyip Erdogan tweeted

DNA

ANKARA: The high advisory board head of the Felicity (Saadet) Party, Oguzhan Asiltürk, passed away at age 86 on Oct. 1 after being hospitalized for dyspnea due to pneumonia. He had been receiving treatment in Ankara since Sept. 13.

"I wish God's mercy on our dear brother, Oguzhan Asiltürk, one of the important names of our political history, chairman of the National Vision Foundation and Saadet Party High Advisory Board, whose death we heard of today," President Recep Tayyip Erdogan tweeted.

"I wish God's patience and grace to the honorable family of my brother Oguzhan, and to the civil society and political community in Turkey and abroad. Thank you to our nation," he added.

"Our high advisory board head, companion and man with a cause, Oguzhan Asiltürk, has passed away. My condolences to our people and community," Felicity Party leader Temel Karamollaoglu tweeted.

Baku, Prague eye co-op in liberated lands

DNA

BAKU: Economy Minister Mikayil Jabbarov has said that Czech companies have the potential to participate in smart city and smart village projects in Azerbaijan. He made the remarks at a meeting with a delegation led by Czech Foreign Minister Jakub Kulhanek on October 1.

During the meeting, the minister noted that Azerbaijan attaches great importance to relations with the Czech Republic, mutual visits, and the development of cooperation between the countries.

He stated that the commission on economic, scientific, technical, and cultural cooperation established between the Azerbaijani and Czech governments is one of the drivers of strengthening relations.

"The Baku office of Czech-Trade continues to develop trade and economic relations between our countries. In addition, we have great opportunities for expanding cooperation in the areas of trade, industry, transport and transit and tourism," Jabbarov said.

Merkel assures Libya of continued support

BERLIN: Chancellor Angela Merkel on Friday assured the top Libyan leader that Germany's new government will continue efforts for Libya's political reconciliation and economic development. Speaking at a joint news conference with visiting chairman of the Presidential Council of Libya, Mohamed al-Menfi, Merkel said that Libya will continue to be among Berlin's main foreign policy priorities, after the formation of a new German coalition government.

"In the next couple of weeks and months, we will see a transition process here from one government to the next. But I can assure you that Libya will continue to be among the main priorities of Germany," Merkel said.

"There will be a continuity in this respect. We would like to continue our cooperation with you," she added. Merkel underlined that a political solution to the conflict in Libya was of significant importance, not only for the country but also for the whole African continent. She reiterated her demand for the withdrawal of foreign troops and mercenaries from Libya and said that it was important to ensure that parliamentary and presidential elections are held on Dec. 24. - APP

Uzbek President discusses new co-op program with WB

The provision of concessional loans in the amount of US\$540 million was approved for the implementation of projects for the development of medium-sized cities, the modernization of the electricity sector, and the improvement of tax administration

AGENCIES

TASHKENT: President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev received a World Bank delegation led by Vice President Anna Bjerde, who is in our country as part of the Tashkent Economic Forum program.

At the meeting, issues of implementation of priority projects of strategic partnership of Uzbekistan with this leading international financial institution were discussed. The practical results of interaction over the period after the visit of the Bank's delegation to our country in May this year were noted with satisfaction.

In particular, a joint "road map" was adopted and is currently being successfully implemented, working groups have been formed in the main areas of cooperation. The provision of concessional loans in the amount of US\$540 million was approved for the implementation of projects for the development of medium-sized cities,



the modernization of the electricity sector, and the improvement of tax administration. In total, the current portfolio includes 26 projects with US\$4.8 billion in World Bank financing. The results of joint work on the preparation of methodological foundations for combating poverty,

support for investment projects of the private sector, promotion of the reform of state enterprises and the development of solar energy in Uzbekistan were also considered. The effectiveness of the "Country Platform" of cooperation with international financial institutions,

launched at the initiative of the World Bank, was noted. Vice-President Anna Bjerde highly appreciated the progress of reforms in New Uzbekistan, which, according to her, have become irreversible. The readiness of the World Bank to expand support for reforms

aimed at improving the level and quality of life of the population in the country was emphasized.

During the conversation, an agreement was reached on the preparation and adoption of a new five-year Country Cooperation Program.

The priorities identified are such strategic directions as poverty reduction, support for education and the social sphere, digitalization and the transition to a "green economy", continued transformation of state-owned enterprises, accelerated industrialization and modernization of infrastructure in the regions, intensive development of agriculture, including through widespread implementation innovation and advanced drip irrigation technology.

The initiative of the World Bank representatives to form a new multilateral Platform for Dialogue of Women Entrepreneurs in the region was supported.

A schedule of upcoming events and contacts was considered, and priority steps were agreed to accelerate joint projects.

Oxford Pakistan Programme launched at PHC London

DNA

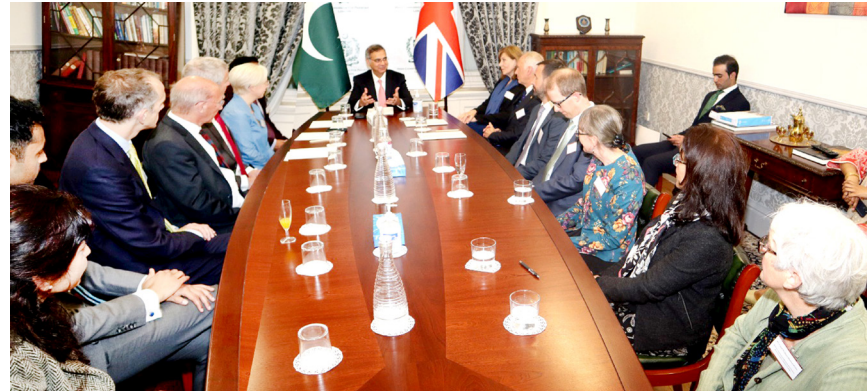
LONDON: Pakistan High Commission in London hosted the launch of the "Oxford Pakistan Programme." The initiative, spearheaded by Pakistani students, academics and alumni of Oxford University establishes a framework for support, scholarships

and facilitation for students from Pakistan for academic and research pursuits in the world renowned University. In addition to promoting Pakistan-centric research, the Programme will also sponsor a lecture series on eastern philosophy. The event was attended by a large number of Oxonians, senior Oxford academicians, scholars, and writers

including Malala Yousafzai; former editor of The Guardian, Alan Rusbridger; President of Wolfson College, Sir Tim Hitchens; Principal of Lady Margaret Hall, Prof. Christine Gerrard; and Principal of Linacre College, Prof Nick Brown; and renowned author Victoria Schofield. Professor Adeel Malik, the academic lead for the Pro-

gramme, and two Oxford alumni and founders of the initiative, Haroon Zaman and Talha Pirzada gave an overview of the Programme, its aims and objectives, and the ways and means proposed for achieving these. Warmly welcoming the strong contingent of Oxford academics and students, High Commissioner of Pakistan to the UK, Moazzam Ahmad Khan said that Pakistan had abiding linkages with Oxford and counted among its luminaries many eminent personalities including leadership.

He termed the Oxford Pakistan Programme a timely initiative that would help address the critical challenges of lack of resources and guidance faced by many bright Pakistanis aspiring to secure admission in the prestigious University. It would, he said, help cement academic relationships and foster understanding through in-depth research. Articulating his expectations from the Programme, he said that he wished to see it achieve its objective by allowing an increasing number of Pakistani students to break down barriers, exceed expectations and realise their potential. On behalf of the High Commission, he assured the Programme of all possible support.



Pakistani singer Saira Peter promotes Sufism at Turkey

DNA

ANKARA: After soprano's heart-capturing performance at Mystic Music Festival in Konya, Turkey, Pakistan first Sufi Opera singer Saira Peter was invited to Ankara for an enthusiastic reception organised by Embassy of Pakistan. Ambassador of Pakistan to Turkey Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi highly commended Opera singer for taking the Sufi message worldwide, said a press release.

Ambassador Qazi remarked how proud Pakistan is of Saira Peter's efforts to lift Sufi values across the western world,

through their own language and cultural idiom. The other officers present also praised her, acknowledging how her ability to sing in seventeen languages takes Sufi values even further. As Pakistan's first operatic voice and the world's first Sufi

opera singer, Ms. Peter had been invited by the Turkish government's Department of Culture to perform at the 18th annual Mystic Music Festival, Konya, which commemorates the birthday of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi. She also gave a live perfor-

mance of Maulana Jallaludin Rumi's Qawwali, which she had specially composed for the festival, leaving her listeners spellbound. Following this, Ms. Peter and team also called on US Deputy Officer of Cultural Affairs Victoria O'Connell, who also appreciated Saira Peter and her American-British husband Stephen Smith's endeavours. Later on Smith, who is also her music director and accompanies Ms Peter on harmonium and piano, described how they travel to US universities giving workshops and demonstrations of Sufi music, Pakistani-western fusion and lectures on Sufi values.



PUBC expresses concerns over moving anti Pak bill in US senate

DNA

LAHORE: Pak-US Business Council (PUBC) Friday expressing grave concern over moving anti-Pakistan bill in US said Pakistan was US coalition partner against war on terror in Afghanistan and suffered colossal irreparable economic losses besides large scale human sacrifices in memory. Chairman PUBC Iftikhar Ali Malik while talking to a delegation of traders led by Mian Aftab Zia said US in stead of offering free market access to Pak products to help stabilise its bleak economy has moved bill contrary to facts.

He said it's on record that whole of the world including US and west several times widely acknowledged the un-

precedented contribution and key role of valiant Pakistan armed forces and brave civilians for quelling the menace of terrorism with iron hand not only in Afghanistan but also in the region. He said that Pakistan is only country in the world which housed the huge influx of 4.5 million Afghan refugees.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said the rise of violent extremism and increase in terrorism in Pakistan not only caused serious damage to Pakistan's economy but has also been responsible for wide spread human suffering due to indiscriminate attacks against civilian population. He said this odd situation badly disrupted Pakistan's normal economic and trading activities which not only resulted in higher cost of doing business but also created disrupt-

tions in the production cycles resulting in significant delays in meeting export orders around the globe.

He said as a result Pakistani products have gradually lost market share to their competitors. He said consequently economic growth could not be picked up as planned. Investment flow and negative trends of outsourcing of capital in Pakistan has further added to the woes of dwindling performance of the export oriented industry. Iftikhar Ali Malik urged US take back bill from senate that directly targeted Pakistan which has been tabled on misconception by outrightly ignoring its historic sacrifices.

He said entire business community stands United with government and Pak armed forces against any external and internal threats.

Bodies of 150 Azerbaijanis found so far

DNA

BAKU: Prosecutor-General Kamran Aliyev has said that the bodies of about 150 Azerbaijanis, who went missing during the 44-day war in late 2020, have been found up to date.

"After the end of the Second Karabakh War, the bodies of about 150 missing citizens were found. The bodies were found on the liberated territories. The opposite side also handed over the bodies to us. Work in this direction continues," Aliyev said.

Aliyev added that the Prosecutor General's office, in cooperation with other government agencies, is continuing a search for citizens who went missing during the First Karabakh War.

The prosecutor-general added that the body of a serviceman, who has gone missing since the 44-day war, was also found.

"In recent days, the remains of another dead serviceman were found on the territories where the hostilities were taking place. At present, his identity is being established by the DNA test," Aliyev said.

He added that there were seven servicemen, who went missing in the Second Karabakh War (2020) and 4,000 servicemen in the First Karabakh War (1988-1994).

The Karabakh peace deal signed by the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian leaders in November 2020, stipulates the exchange of prisoners and bodies of soldiers following the 44-day war.

Nine die in Romanian hospital fire

AGENCIES

BUCHAREST: A fire in a Romanian hospital on Friday has left nine coronavirus patients dead, rescue services said, in the latest blaze in the EU member known for its dilapidated infrastructure.

Flames engulfed the intensive care unit at a hospital in Constanta on the shore of the Black Sea with nine people confirmed dead, rescue services said in a statement. Some 100 people had to be evacuated, services spokesman Razvan Parconie told AFP.

The cause of the fire is not yet known, Health Minister Attila Cseke said, adding that an investigation had been opened. Gathered in front of the hospital, victims' relatives accused the authorities of "incompetence".

"History is repeating itself. Nothing has been done to improve conditions in hospitals," a woman, who said her mother was killed in the fire, told local television stations. Hospital director Stela Halichidis insisted several shortcomings found during January inspections of electrical and heating installations had been corrected.

The tragedy comes at a time as a surge in daily infections is hitting an all-time record with 12,000 new cases within 24 hours, and the country is in dire need of intensive care beds.

Silviu Cosa, the head of the prefecture where the hospital is located, said 10 Covid-19 patients were being treated in the hospital's ICU unit when the fire broke out. Experts estimate less than a third of Romania's 670 hospitals meet fire standards.

Earlier this year, in January, five patients died in a fire at a Bucharest hospital, two months after another blaze killed 15 patients at a hospital in Piatra Neamt in the north east.

In April, three Covid-19 patients also died in a mobile intensive care unit in Bucharest after a malfunction in the oxygen supply system.

After these incidents, authorities announced safety checks in the country's intensive care units.

CONDOLENCE

ALL PAKISTAN NEWSPAPERS SOCIETY

expresses profound grief over the sad demise of

Begum Mehmooda Khalil,

Wife of

Mir Khalil ur Rahman

and mother of

Mir Shakil ur Rahman

May Allah the Almighty rest her soul in

eternal peace and grant courage

to the family to bear this loss.



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Briefs

Four truckloads aid reach Afghanistan

SHAHEEN HANIF

ISLAMABAD: Four trucks carrying 70 tons of humanitarian aid was handed over to Afghanistan on Friday as Pakistan continues to support Afghan people to avert any humanitarian catastrophe.

The trucks carrying flour, sugar, rice, oil and pulses were handed over by Pak-Afghan Cooperation Forum via Ghulam Khan border. Ameer of Khost was present to receive the aid from Assistant Commissioner of Miranshah.

Besides its own ongoing efforts, Pakistan has also been urging the international community to extend humanitarian aid to Afghanistan for socioeconomic development of the war-torn country.

In their multiple interactions with world leaders, both Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi asked the world community not to repeat the mistake of abandoning Afghanistan as it would lead to negative consequences of rise in terror incidents and spillover negative effects on neighboring countries.

Govt evolves strategy to facilitate SMEs

FAISALABAD: Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said on Friday that the government has evolved a comprehensive strategy to facilitate the business community, especially small and medium traders in the country.

He was addressing a function organized by the Faisalabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry at a local hotel here. Chairman Standing Committee on Finance Faizullah Kamoka, Provincial Minister for Colonies and Culture Mian Khayal Kastro, Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution Ch Zaheer Uddin, MNA Khurram Shahzad and a large number of traders were present.

The minister said that the tax paying culture plays a key role to run the country as taxes were the major source of revenue hence we should collectively work for elimination of the negative approach of not paying tax. He said that the trader community could play an important role to steer the country out of foreign debts. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Farrukh Habib said that loans of Rs 445 billion were being provided at the rate of 6 percent interest to the SMEs sector adding that the government would provide guarantee up to 40 percent on return of loans. - APP

Indian troops martyr 14 Kashmiris in September

ISLAMABAD: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian troops in their unabated acts of state terrorism martyred fourteen Kashmiris during the last month of September.

According to the data issued by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, today, of those killed five Kashmiris were martyred in fake encounters. During the month, thirty two youth were critically injured due to use of brute force and firing of pellets and teargas shells by Indian police and paramilitary personnel on peaceful demonstrators in the territory. As many as 125 civilians, mostly youth, activists and students, were arrested and several of them were booked under black laws, Public Safety Act and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The troops also misbehaved with a woman and destroyed and damaged a house during the period. - DNA

Chinese investors keen to invest in Pak agri sector

With respect to Gwadar Port, Ambassador Nong Rong says it is the pilot project of the CPEC and what he called it is the jewel in the crown of the CPEC

ISLAMABAD: The Chinese investors have planned to invest in various agriculture and dairy sectors of Pakistan under the platform of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). "Chinese enterprises plan to invest and cooperate with Pakistan in pepper planting, buffalo milk industry development, food processing and agricultural machinery, Chinese ambassador to Pakistan Nong Rong said in his recent interview given to a section of media.

He said at present the agriculture and industry were the areas that were under the main focus of the Pakistan government. The Pakistan government, he said was very much concerned in these two areas. He said these sectors were also the most promising areas for China-Pakistan cooperation. He said rapid progress in agricultural coop-

eration had been made, mainly in three aspects including strengthening mechanisms. Last year, an agricultural working group under the framework of the CPEC joint Commission was set up. The first task of the working group was to help Pakistan fight against locust plague, which achieved remarkable results, he added. Further he said the process of exporting agricultural products to China had also been accelerated. The inspection and quarantine procedures of Pakistani agricultural products exported to China, including Onions, potatoes, cherries and dairy products, have been stepped up. This year, a protocol on onion export to China will be signed, he informed. Pakistan has also established a foot-and-mouth disease free zone.

The third aspect, he said to promote investment. This year, with efforts made

by our Embassy, China and Pakistan established an information platform on agricultural and industrial cooperation to promote all-round exchanges and cooperation among government, industry, academia and research institutes, he added.

With respect to Gwadar Port, the envoy said it was the pilot project of the CPEC and what he called it was the jewel in the crown of the CPEC.

Since 2013, both China and Pakistan have worked hand in hand on port operations, free zone development, and transportation infrastructure, and completed a series of social and livelihood projects. The achievements made today can be recognized as the "Speed of Gwadar".

The 10th meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) expressed satisfaction on

the progress of Gwadar Port and Free Zone, and made plans for the next step in the construction of Gwadar Port, he said adding that the current development situation of Gwadar Port was very gratifying.

The port is getting busier and transit trade to Afghanistan is running smoothly. The government is actively considering arranging more cargo to arrive in and be processed through the Gwadar Port. The port operator COPHC is cooperating with China's Ningbo Zhoushan Port Group to improve the port operations, he added. He said all investment promotion work in the starting zone of the Free Zone had been completed. More than 40 companies have invested and registered, and some of them have completed plant construction and started trial production. - APP

Stable Afghanistan inevitable for peace: Dr Mooed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on National Security Dr Mooed Yusuf on Friday said that a stable Afghanistan is inevitable for peace in the region. In an interview with Russian media outlet o Friday, he said that Pakistan is in talks for peace and stability in the region and Pakistan is not speaking on behalf of the Afghan Taliban. The adviser said Afghanistan has been at war for the last four decades adding that Pa-

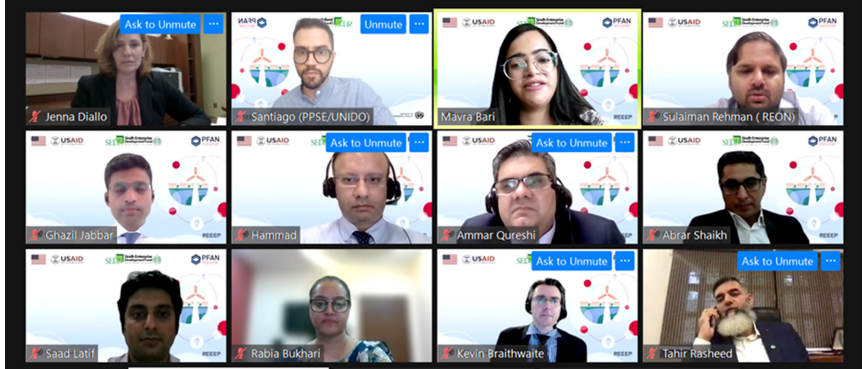
kistan wants to see a stable and peaceful Afghanistan. Dr Mooed went on to say that Pakistan has hosted more than 5 million refugees in the past. He said Pakistan has always maintained that there should be a political solution to the Afghan problem.

"India used fake news to further its false statement on Panjshir Valley," he said and added New Delhi has always played a role of spoiler in the region. He said, "Russia, Pakistan and China can play positive and active role in the Afghanistan."



ISLAMABAD: Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi exchanging views with High Commissioner of Ghana to Pakistan, Eric Owusu Boateng. - DNA

Pak, US promote private investment in clean energy



STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The U.S. government, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), joined with the Pakistani government to launch the Pakistan Private Sector Energy (PPSE) initiative to promote private sector investment in clean energy in Sindh province. The virtual launch event brought together national and provincial government stakeholders, business leaders and investors, USAID representatives, and other technical experts to unveil the new effort and highlight opportunities for energy companies to strengthen their operations, promote Pakistan's green transition, and expand economic growth.

To encourage more private investment in the energy

sector, particularly investment in low-cost renewables, USAID provided \$8 million to launch PPSE. Sindh's vast clean energy potential and vibrant private sector make it a priority for the PPSE project, which will also support small- and medium-scale clean energy companies. Energy sector start-ups can also apply for advanced entrepreneurship training and business coaching through the Small and Medium Enterprise Accelerator Services offered by the Private Financing Advisory Network. "The U.S. government is a long-term partner with the Government of Pakistan to strengthen Pakistan's energy sector and make it more competitive by using sustainable energy sources," said USAID Acting Mission Director Michael Nehrbass. "This project will energize the private sector to finance more clean

energy projects in Sindh and help Pakistan achieve its energy and climate goals."

Noting Pakistan's vulnerability to climate change during the event, Sindh Secretary for Energy Mr. Abu Bakar Madani said, "Projects like PPSE and partners like USAID are bringing the public and private sector together to innovate and strengthen our energy sector." Since 2010, the U.S. government has supported the generation, transmission, and distribution of more than 4,000 megawatts of clean energy in Pakistan, amounting to over 10 percent of Pakistan's current electric generation capacity. These investments have benefited more than 47 million Pakistanis, reduced costs for energy distribution companies by more than \$400 million and facilitated \$2.6 billion in private investment.

India slaps UK with must quarantine

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: UK nationals visiting India this month will have to undergo mandatory quarantine even if they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19 in retaliation for UK curbs on Indian citizens, a senior government source in New Delhi said on Friday. The new rules, which take effect from Monday, follow the UK decision to require Indians vaccinated with AstraZeneca's Covishield to quarantine.

India mainly relies on the Covishield vaccine, developed by AstraZeneca and manufactured in India by Pune-based Serum Institute, which is not recognised by Britain under new rules, despite being identical to the doses given to millions of Britons.

AstraZeneca is one of the key providers to Britain's vaccination programme, along with US peers Moderna and Pfizer.

"India has decided to impose reciprocity on UK nationals arriving in India from the UK," the source said, declining to be identified in line with government policy. Government sources in New Delhi had last month warned of retaliation after Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar said he had urged for an early resolution after a meeting with his British counterpart at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Arabs call for boycott of Indian products

DNA

NEW DELHI: A new hashtag calling for the boycott of Indian products was trending on twitter in various Arab countries in the wake of growing attacks on Muslims in India, particularly recent police action against landless Muslims in Assam. A hashtag that roughly translates to #BoycottIndianProducts trended after Indian authorities violently attacked and evicted thousands of Muslims in Assam. In the violent crackdown, which started on 20 September, in the Darrang district of Assam, at least two people including Moinul Haque have been killed.

During the forced evictions of Muslims, so far, more than 800 families have been forced out of their homes by the authorities claiming that they were illegally constructed. Several users shared the video clip, in which Moinul Haque was sitting being killed by policemen and his body being stomped on by a cameraman. They also highlighted atrocities being committed by Hindutva terrorists against Muslims in India. Scores of Arab influencers uploaded their videos urging people to join the social media campaign launched over violence against Muslims in India.

One more hashtag 'India Kills Muslims' was also trending at the same time. This was also mainstreamed by several Arab leaders, intellectuals and influencers. Muslims in India have been under threat as the government-led by Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party has enacted many draconian laws and using them to suppress the minority community. The Muslims of Arab are demanding the boycott of Hindu countries to target India over the matter. Former Director General of Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), A. Altwayiri, said that Narendra Modi's Hindu Government was abusing and persecuting Muslims within the framework of a systematic policy, and in light of international silence and Islamic inaction.

Another twitter user with over twenty thousand followers on the platform said that Islamic countries should not sign agreements with India until the 'killing of Muslims' is stopped. Abdul Rahman Al-Nassar said, "There are more than 3million Hindus in the Gulf, they bring tens of billions of dollars to India, and we treat them with respect, so why are our brothers in India being killed just because they are Muslims?"

IHC rejects PML-N's petition

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday rejected the petition filed by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) against the presidential ordinance making it binding on members of the parliament to take oath within 60 days of their election. Chief Justice (CJ) Athar Minallah heard the petition. PML-N yesterday (Thursday) filed a petition in the Islamabad High Court (IHC) against the presidential ordinance.

The petition read that PML-N was the largest opposition party in both Houses of the parliament namely National Assembly (NA) and Senate, with 82 MNAs and 16 senators, respectively. It further said that the next general elections are to be held in 2023 while those for Senate in 2024.

It was alleged in the petition that the ordinance, which was promulgated within one month of the adjournment of the NA session, was issued with a mala fide intent since its aim was to target the PML-N. "Therefore, it is prayed to the court to declare the ordinance null and void," the petition concluded.

Customs seizes foreign goods worth Rs50m

DNA

QUETTA: Conducting operations in different areas, Collectorate of Customs, Balochistan on Friday foiled the smuggling bids inside country and seized foreign goods worth of 50 million rupees.

According to the spokesperson of the customs department, the officials conducted operations in Nok Kundi, Nushki and Manikhawa areas and foiled the smuggling attempt and seized foreign goods worth Rs 50 million. The customs spokesman informed that the seized foreign goods were included cloth, tea leaves, crockery and cosmetics. While two pick-up vehicles, a truck frame and tires were seized from a Mazda truck hidden under the guise of apples in Manikhawa. He further mentioned that the recovered foreign goods were being smuggled inside the country.

Govt gradually reducing taxes on POL products

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate Dr Shahzad Waheed said the government was gradually reducing levy and sales tax on petroleum (POL) products to provide relief to the common man.

Responding to a Point of Public Importance raised by Senator Mian Raza Rabbani in the Senate, he said the government had increased the prices of petroleum products in extreme compulsion due to the upward trend in the international market.

He said the whole world, even oil producing countries, were facing the problem of increased prices of crude oil, being sold at around \$ 80 per barrel in the world market. "The government always made utmost effort to pass on the minimum impact of the increased oil prices to the common man by bearing maximum impact itself, while rejecting the advice of substantial increase by OGRA," he said. Dr Shahzad advised the opposition members to avoid playing with the galleries and undue criticism of the government for political point scoring. "Please stop spreading despondency, portraying gloomy pictures and doing exploitation," he said, expressing confidence that the country would move forward under the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He was of the view that the opposition should show some seriousness towards the legislative business of and actively participate in the House proceeding instead of staging protest and raising slogans. - DNA

US Senator asks to stop defaming Pakistan

DNA

WASHINGTON: US Democrat Senator Christopher Van Hollen on Friday has asked to stop pointing fingers at Pakistan as the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan as a result of former president Donald Trump's withdrawal agreement. According to details, US Democrat Senator Christopher Van Hollen sharply criticized the controversial Afghan bill and said that fingers should not be pointed at Pakistan, former president Trump agreed to a flawed withdrawal agreement with Taliban that helped them to come into power in Afghanistan.

Senator Hollen further said Republican senators should hold Trump accountable for evacuation, be aware of Pakistani community's concerns over controversial Afghan bill, Democrat Senator Hollen added.

The Democratic senator added that the US Senate would not pass an herbal law, adding that Pakistan had helped the US in ensuring Afghan talks and safe evacuation after the Taliban take over. On the other hand, Senator Hollen spoke to Pakistani-born Democrat leader Tahir Javed in an online meeting. Tahir Javed said that the controversial bill of Republican senators was not brought in consultation with Democrats.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Netherlands Wouter Plomp, Deputy Head of Mission in a group photo with the trade office officials of Karachi and Islamabad. - DNA