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UAE embassy concludes youth skill development program

Detailed News On Page-04

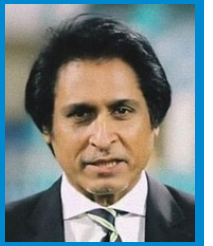
We will not accept electoral reforms: Fazl

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Ramiz Raja seeks business community help

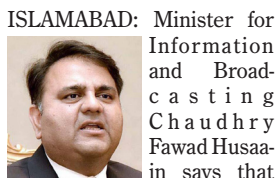
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Briefs

Fake news is a serious issue: Fawad

SAIFULLAH



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Chaudhry Fawad Husain says that fake news is a serious matter and legislation against fake news is being done all over the world. Talking informally to media outside Parliament House in Islamabad, he said that legislation in this connection would be done with the consultation of all the stakeholders. He said a draft of the Pakistan Media Development Authority has been prepared which would be presented in Joint Action Committee. The Committee comprised representatives of Pakistan Broadcasters Association, All Pakistan Newspapers Society for consultation and building consensus.

Pandora Papers: EU must do more



HELSINKI: The European Union must do more to combat tax evasion and aggressive tax planning, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Monday in the wake of revelations in the "Pandora Papers". Speaking during a visit to Helsinki, von der Leyen condemned the practices brought to light in the huge data leak, which detailed how 35 current and former world leaders have used offshore tax havens to stash assets worth hundreds of millions of dollars. "Tax evasion and aggressive tax planning is completely unacceptable," von der Leyen said. — APP

PM Imran made fake promises

BUREAU REPORT



LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Mariyum Aurangzeb on Monday has lashed out at Prime Minister Imran Khan and said that he had made fake promises to the nation. In a statement, the PML-N leader said that the premier should have presented the resignations of the ministers mentioned in the Pandora Papers during today's speech.

Special cell to probe Pandora revelations

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and other bodies have been tasked to probe the matter

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has formed a special, high-level cell to probe the Pandora Papers exposé, Minister for Information Fawad Chaudhry said Monday, hours after the two-year investigation came to light. A huge tranche of leaked data on offshore companies — larger in size and scope than the Panama Papers — hit the global headlines Sunday night, laying bare the financial secrets of the global rich and powerful. The investigation revealed that the prime minister's cabinet members, financiers, retired generals, media owners, and businessmen have offshore companies. "The prime minister has set up a high-level cell under the Prime Minister's Inspection Commission to investigate the Pandora leaks, which will present the facts before the nation," the information minister said. The development comes after PM Imran Khan held a meeting to discuss the leaks and the overall country's political situation, with senior PTI leaders and federal ministers in attendance, sources said. An initial report related to the matter was presented to the premier after which the participants of the meeting briefed him on the actions that are being considered against the Pakistanis named in the Pandora Papers leak, sources said. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and other bodies have been tasked to probe the matter, sources said, with the prime minister instructing to present the facts of the investigation before the nation. The names of more than 700 Pakistanis have been discovered in the data and

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Opp. wants ministers sacked

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Opposition leaders slammed Prime Minister Imran Khan and demanded his resignation following the revelations made in the Pandora Papers. The Pandora leaks have "opened a new Pandora's box" against Prime Minister Imran Khan, said PML-N leader Ahsan Iqbal. "That leader who used to present himself as sadiq (honest) and ameen (trustworthy), has two more offshore companies," PML-N's secretary-general was quoted as saying. He was speaking to the media in Narawal. The PML-N stalwart said that even before the Pandora Papers were released, government spokespersons had started defending PM Imran Khan. The premier, he said, is "misleading" people by blaming the COVID-19 pandemic for inflation in Pakistan. "Inflation persists due to the government's poor economic policies," the publication reported him as saying. Iqbal asked the government to make public details from the Toshakana pertaining to the gifts received from foreign dignitaries. "This corrupt, incompetent, unworthy government has no

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Taliban announce forces destroy cell of IS militants

Zabihullah Mujahid says fighters carried out operation in the north of Kabul

AGENCIES

KABUL: The Taliban said on Monday they had destroyed a cell of the militant Islamic State (IS) group in the Afghan capital, hours after a suspected IS attack on a mosque killed five people. The Taliban overran Kabul seven weeks ago and have set up an interim Afghan government, but still face attacks from the regional branch of IS. The Taliban's chief spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said fighters carried out the operation in the north of Kabul on Sunday evening. "As a result of the operation, which was very decisive and successful, the IS centre was completely destroyed and all the IS members in it were killed," Mu-



jahid said on Twitter. Witnesses and AFP journalists heard blasts and gunfire in the capital at the time of the raid, and images posted to social media showed a large explosion and a fire at the scene. Kabul resident and government employee Abdul Rahman told AFP that a "large number" of Taliban special forces attacked at least three houses in his neighbourhood. "The fighting continued for

several hours," he said, adding the sound of weapons kept him awake all night. "They said they were after Daesh (IS) fighters in the area," Rahman said. "I don't know how many were killed or arrested but the fighting was intense." The operation took place within hours of a deadly attack targeting a prayer ceremony at the Eid Gah mosque in memory of Taliban spokesman Mujahid's mother, who died last week. A government cultural commission official, who asked not to be named, told AFP that five people died and 11 were wounded, adding the casualties included both civilians and Taliban members. "We have also arrested three people in connection with the blast," he said.

PAKISTAN, ARGENTINA FRIENDSHIP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Ambassador of Argentina to Pakistan, Leopoldo Francisco Sahores and others inaugurating tree plantation at the Argentina Park, in connection with the 70th anniversary of Pakistan-Argentina diplomatic relations. — DNA

FM desires enhanced ties with Argentina

Says PM billion tree move lauded by world leaders

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has expressed the desire to further strengthen bilateral relations with Argentina in different fields. Addressing an event in connection with tree plantation at Argentina Park, in Islamabad on Monday, he said there is a great potential to bolster bilateral trade and attract investment. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said we need to reactivate our Joint Business Council besides enhancing our parliamentary exchanges to further strengthen the bilateral relationship. As regards Climate Change, the Foreign Minister said Prime Minister Imran Khan is leading from the front to deal with this challenge through tree plantation campaigns. He said his efforts have also been recognized by the world leaders.

Biden calls Republicans 'reckless and dangerous'

WASHINGTON: President Joe Biden went on the offensive Monday with a speech attacking Republicans over a looming threat of US debt default, while pressuring his Democratic Party to enact his stalled multi-trillion-dollar domestic spending agenda. Back from a rare weekend relaxing at

Continued on Page 06

Fazl: Will not accept electoral reforms

"The government that came to power through rigging elections is now talking about electoral reforms," says the PDM Chief

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman Monday said that his party will not accept the government's decision to introduce electoral reforms. "We will not accept electoral reforms handed over to us by thieves," Fazl said while addressing a press conference in Peshawar. He added that electronic voting machines (EVMs)

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Speaker NA to negotiate with the opposition

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has handed over the task of negotiating with the Opposition regarding electoral reforms to Speaker of the National Assembly Asad Qaiser, media reported. Sources told media the premier has issued directives to complete the electoral reform process as soon as possible and that the government wants to finalise the reforms through consultation. The sources added that PM Khan has tasked the speaker's office to hold talks with the Opposition on the issue of amending the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) rules.

Israel accuses Iran of Cyprus attack plot

"This was a terrorist incident directed by Iran against Israeli businesspeople living in Cyprus," Matan Sidi, spokesman for Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, said

NEWS DESK

JERUSALEM/NICOSIA: Israel accused Iran on Monday of orchestrating an attempted attack against Israelis in Cyprus after police on the Mediterranean island said an armed individual had been arrested. "This was a terrorist incident directed by Iran

against Israeli businesspeople living in Cyprus," Matan Sidi, spokesman for Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, said in a statement. There was no immediate comment from the Iranian Embassy in Nicosia. Earlier on Monday, Cypriot police chief Stelios Papa-theodorou told reporters:

Continued on Page 06

China flies 56 aircraft near Taiwan

MONITORING DESK

TAIPEI: China has flown 56 fighter planes towards Taiwan in the largest show of force on record, continuing three days of sustained military harassment against the self-governed island. The first sortie on Monday of 52 planes included 34 J-16 fighter jets and 12 H-6 bombers, among other aircraft, according to Taiwan's Ministry of National Defence. Later, four more Chinese J-16s flew towards the southwestern part of Taiwan's air defence identification zone a buffer outside a country's airspace. The Taiwanese Air Force scrambled its fighter planes and monitored the movement of the Chinese warplanes on its Air Defence System, the Ministry said.

Soldier martyred

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: A Pakistan Army soldier on Monday after terrorists targeted security forces' post in Ghariuom, North Waziristan, according to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). "During the exchange of fire Sepoy Muhammad Amir Iqbal, age 30 years embraced shahadat," stated a press release issued by the ISPR. The statement added that the troops responded promptly. The military's media wing maintained that an operation to clear the area of any terrorists was in progress. On October 2, as many as four soldiers of Frontier Corps (FC) and a Levies sub-inspector embraced martyrdom while thwarting a terrorists' targeted attack on security forces' vehicle in Spinwam area of North Waziristan.

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PM launches Kamyab Pakistan Programme

The prime minister termed the KPP a landmark initiative and said that it will bring improvement in the living standards of the common man

ABID RAZA/DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Monday launched ambitious Kamyab Pakistan Programme (KPP) worth Rs1400 billion in Islamabad to facilitate the vulnerable segments of the society. Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Kamyab Pakistan Programme in the federal capital, PM Imran Khan said that the project should have been launched 74 years ago. The prime minister termed the KPP a landmark initiative and said that it will bring improvement in the living standards of the common man. "Our system is made to facilitate the elite class," the prime minister said, adding that the state of Madina was a role model for him. Lashing out at the previous governments, the prime minister said the flawed policies of the past left far behind our marginal-

ized segments of the society. "Inequality is the basis of the downfall of any society," PM Imran added. He maintained that no government worked on the uniform syllabus in the country. Referring to China's progress, the prime minister said that Beijing

took measures to facilitate the vulnerable segments of the society and became a developed country within 35 years. PM Imran, while talking about petrol prices, said, "In Pakistan, prices of petroleum products are less as compared to other countries of the region."

"We have also tried to absorb the maximum pressure of international increase in the prices of commodities. There has been 100% increase in the prices of petroleum products over the last few months but we only increased their prices by 22%," said the prime minister.



Ongoing work in Lodhran should be expedited

Irshad Ahmad visited Govt Girls High School and Govt Boys Higher Secondary School Makhdoom Aali, at this time he checked out the process of corona vaccination

SAQIB MUSHTAQ

LODHAN: Lodhran Kehrora Pakka Mailsi Road costing 2.4980 billion rupee should be completed on time, while transparency should be maintained in the construction of phase two's 20 kilometer one way road." Said by Commissioner Multan Division Dr. Irshad Ahmad. He expressed these remarks during his surprise visit to District Lodhran while monitoring the ongoing construction projects. Commissioner said that purpose of his visit to Lodhran is to ensure the provision of relief to the people of Lodhran, he urged to ensure the use of quality material in Phase two of 20km

one way road. He also accessed the pace and quality of developmental projects. At this time Commissioner Imran Qureshi briefed Commissioner Multan Division in detail about the Kehrora Pakka Mailsi Vehari Road. Earlier Commissioner Dr. Irshad Ahmad also visited Government Girls High School Lodhran and Government Boys Higher Secondary School Makhdoom Aali, at this time he checked out the process of corona vaccination in school students, he urged the students to respect the elders and work hard for their dream. He said that Education is the way towards better future. Commissioner also visited computer lab, Science Lab

and Classrooms checking the tidiness. Later Commissioner visited Rural Center for revenue and inquired the visitors about their revenue related complaints, he said that CM Punjab is taking revolutionary steps towards the provision of all kinds of facilities to the people's doorstep. He added that Government of Punjab is eliminating the problems in each sector step by step. He said that public friendly steps are being taken to eliminate red tape culture. Commissioner said that in Revenue Department thorough system of monitoring is developed through modern reforms, he added that satisfactory results are coming out with the estab-

lishment of rural revenue centers. He said that Buzdar Government's these steps have provided revenue services at people's doorsteps. Commissioner also participated in Central Revenue Public facilitation courthouse held in Revenue center Lodhran. He reviewed the administrative and other matters of the courthouse. Commissioner Multan Division heard the public complaints regarding revenue services. He said while talking to the media that on directions of Buzdar Government process of attaining ownership deep and inheritance deed has been made very simple, he added that with the establishment of Public Facilitation Revenue courthouse all revenue related services are being provided under one roof. He added that several counters have been set up for different matters in Public Facilitation Revenue Courthouse. Commissioner urged the staff to facilitate the people with the spirit of public welfare and service. In the courthouse people presented their revenue related issues on which commissioner issued orders to address the complaints promptly. Commissioner reminded people that their issues will be resolved.



District admin checks vaccination certificates

PESHAWAR: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Malakand, the Additional Assistant Commissioner (AAC), Dargai Monday carried out checking of the Corona vaccination certificates in public transport and also inspected the implementation of Corona SOPs. He also inspected the status of the implementation of Corona SOPs in the shopping malls, markets and shops of Dargai Bazaar to ensure the implementation of Corona preventive SOPs, Corona vaccination and adoption of preventive measures. During checking, the AAC fined shopkeepers and buyers in business centres over lacking vaccination certificates and also sealed shops. — APP

234 more dengue cases reported in 24 hours

LAHORE: Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (PP&SHD) Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch Monday said that 234 new dengue patients were reported across Punjab during the last 24 hours. Talking to media here, he said that 153 dengue patients were reported from Lahore, 52 from Rawalpindi, five each from Attock and Multan, three each from Gujranwala and Muzaffargarh, two each from Sheikhupura, Sargodha and Nankana whereas respectively, a patient was reported each from Kasur, Sialkot, Dera Ghazi Khan, Jhang, Mianwali, Pakpattan and Layyah. During the current year, he said so far 2,423 confirmed cases of dengue had been reported from all the hospitals of Punjab, and out of all confirmed patients, 1,887 patients had been reported from Lahore. At present a total of 341 patients were admitted across Punjab, out of which, 182 patients were admitted in Lahore's hospitals. The secretary mentioned that during the last 24 hours, 284,061 indoor and 66,476 outdoor locations were checked across Punjab, while larvae were destroyed from 1,989 locations. — APP

DC expresses concern over delaying tactics in PCP

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Ali Shehzad expressed concern over the delaying tactics for public grievances on the Pakistan Citizen Portal and directed some departments for improving the performance graph and said that in the future the department's showed below 45% satisfactory level would given show-cause notice. He was presiding over a review meeting on the progress

of resolution of public grievances received on the Pakistan Citizen Portal against different departments. The Deputy Commissioner directed the district heads that applicant should be satisfied with the speedy resolution of the grievances. He clarified that in order to increase the level satisfactorily, if fake and fictitious entries were reported, the concerned department would be not only responsible but also accountable. He ordered an audit of some departments regarding solution percentage.

He said that the Chief Minister and Performance Management Portal including Pakistan Citizen Portal were being closely monitored so they should show responsibility keeping their eyes open therefore, all the departments should be aware of their responsibilities and avoid negligence. The meeting was informed that so far 54876 public complaints have been disposed of while expeditious steps are being taken to resolve the pending 1998 cases including 1004 new applications.

KP varsities to be run on professional basis: Bangash

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Shah Farman and Chief Minister's aide on Higher Education Kamran Bangash, Monday agreed to run the administrations of all public sector universities purely on specialized and professional basis. In a meeting with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor at Governor House, Kamran Bangash briefed about the measures taken by the provincial government for the promotion of higher education.

KP Governor appreciated the performance of all the public sector varsities and said that it was a matter of pride that five public sector KP universities including Peshawar, Mardan, Hari Pur and Malakand have been included in international ranking. The Governor said that for the first time all the 30 universities of KP presented and got approved the budget in time which was a reflection of the financial discipline in the varsities. — APP



FAISALABAD: Minister of State for Information Farrukh Habib addressing during Annual General Meeting of All Pakistan Bed Sheets & Upholstery Manufacturers Associations. — DNA

Scientific agri strategies need of hour: Experts

Prof. Dr. Fateh Muhammad Marri said that poverty alleviation was directly linked to agriculture sector. He said if the agriculture sector contribution to GDP grows by 6 percent every year, it would reduce poverty by 50 percent

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Despite being an agricultural country, imports of essential items have crossed Rs 10 billion while production of major crops are facing stagnation for the last two decades. For which, the agricultural scientists, and experts will have to formulate strategies. These views were expressed by experts while addressing the participants of a workshop on Agriculture Sector: SWOT Analysis organized by the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF). The workshop was chaired by Vice Chancellor Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam Prof Dr Fateh Muhammad Marri, while UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan, Agricultural University Multan Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Asif Ali, Islamia University Bahawalpur Vice Chancellor Prof.

Dr. Athar Mehboob, Cholistan Veterinary University Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sajjad, DG Extension Punjab Anjum Ali Buttar and UVAS Lahore Vice Chancellor Dr Nasim Ahmad also addressed the gathering. Prof. Dr. Fateh Muhammad Marri said that poverty alleviation was directly linked to agriculture sector. He said if the agriculture sector contribution to GDP grows by 6 percent every year, it would reduce poverty by 50 percent. He said that loans to small farmers, and ensuring agricultural inputs to the small farmers will help combat low productivity. He said that it was imperative to persuade the private sector to invest in agriculture. He urged the extension workers to go to the villages and make every effort for the farmers to get aware of the agricultural recommendations and technologies. He said that more than half

of the population of Pakistan is suffering from malnutrition Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that agriculture was facing challenges like low productivity, climate change, post-harvest losses, rural development, water scarcity, and uncertified seeds etc. He said that increase in productivity and value addition were essential to make agriculture attractive and profitable. He said that more than 40 percent of crops are wasted in the post-harvest process. He said that Pakistan is one of the countries which were suffering water scarcity challenges. A campaign should be launched to ensure the rational usage of water. He said that chemically contaminated water of the industry was polluting the groundwater. He said a house plan in Australia does not approve unless it was fitted with a rainwater storage tank. "Despite huge potential, we have

limited agriculture to only five crops. However, in order to make agriculture profitable, high value crops should be promoted. He was of the view that climate changes had started playing havoc with the agriculture sector, resulting in low productivity and breaking out of new diseases for which new varieties would have to be introduced. He said that Okara was having good production of potato. Same model of other crops can be formulated in other districts. Prof. Dr. Asif Ali said that the goal of poverty alleviation could not be achieved without ensuring rural development. He said that provision of best seeds to the farmers would not only increase the productivity of the country but also make the farmers economically prosperous. He said that India is far ahead in the production of cheese and it is used as an every-

day food but we are still lagging behind in the preparation of cheese. He said that efforts should be made to curb the irrational use of water. He said that there is a big difference between the agricultural productivity of the progressive and traditional farmer for which the journey of development can be ensured by equipping the traditional farmer with modern trends. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Sajjad Khan said that we have to work to increase the productivity of livestock instead of the number of animals so that the economic condition of the farmer can be improved. He said that the majority of the population of Pakistan is engaged in agriculture. He emphasized on value addition in agriculture. Dr. Anjum Bhutter said that the Punjab government was using all its resources to solve the problems of the farmers for agricultural development.

Plan to develop PIBTS

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, in a meeting held at Specialized Health and Medical Education Department here on Monday vowed to develop Punjab Institute of Blood Transfusion Services (PIBTS). Present on the occasion were Special Secretary SH&ME Department Ajmal Bhatti, Prof Javed Chaudhry and officials of the Punjab Institute of Blood Transfusion Services. The Health Minister reviewed the performance of the Institute and measures for improvement. The Health Minister said the Institute of Blood Transfusion Services would be completely revamped and developed on modern lines. He added the idea behind this revamping was to improve the quality of services rendered by the Institute. New staff had been hired at vacant positions for enhanced performance and training of new staff would be organized very soon. He said that in the next phase, the capacity of regional blood centers would be scaled up, adding that Regional Centers had been set up in Lahore, Multan, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur. All Teaching Hospitals of Punjab have blood separation facility available, she said. She said, currently Blood Banks were operational in 27 DHQs and 134 THQs. "We need to strengthen coordination between Primary and Secondary healthcare Department and the Specialized Healthcare & Medical Education Department to boost the capacity of blood banks" she said and added that the objective of these measures were to ensure safe blood transfusion system in the province. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed meeting with Chairman Wafaqul Madarras Mufti Taqi Usmani. — DNA

CM Punjab inaugurates fleet of 64 new buses

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Sardar Usman Buzdar on Monday inaugurated a fleet of 64 new environment-friendly buses for Lahore metro bus service. While addressing the inaugurating ceremony held at metro bus depot Ferozepur Road here, the CM said the present government was striving hard to resolve the problems of Lahories on priority basis, adding that underpasses and overhead bridges were being constructed to overcome the traffic problems, besides improving the transport system. He said the Lahore Mass Transit Authority would provide best traveling facility to 125,000 passengers daily. Usman Buzdar said the PTIL government had saved resources worth more than Rs 2 billion in contract with VEDA, adding that the earlier deal was signed with a foreign company, while the current contract had been signed with a Pakistani company to save foreign reserves, besides encouraging local businesses. He said the incumbent government had completed and made the orange line metro train project operational in the best national interest. The CM disclosed that electric buses project would be started in Lahore to overcome the environmental pollution and new environment friendly buses would also be launched in major cities of the province. — APP

FDA seeks new posts of different cadres

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

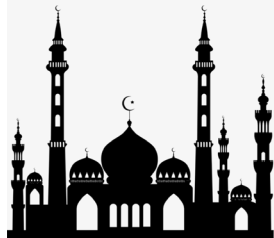
FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Development Authority has sent the request to Punjab government for seeking approval of 104 new posts of different cadres for Traffic Engineering and Planning Agency (TEPA) while business model is being envisaged to run financial matter of TEPA in order to make the traffic management system of Faisalabad city on scientific lines through proper road engineering and planning. This was revealed during a meeting of TEPA held here on Saturday with Vice Chairperson Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar for initiating steps and extending cooperation for TEPA activation. She asked the concerned departments representatives to share a plan within a week relating to required TEPA measures for coordinated planning. She vowed that exemplary traffic management system would be provided in Faisalabad city under the arrangements of TEPA and cooperation of citizens was vital to follow the traffic rules as a civilized nation. FDA Director General Dr Faisal Azim informed the meeting that Faisalabad Development Authority had already written to the Punjab Government for approval



for city traffic management on advanced requirements with new passion. She thanked Chief Minister Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar for initiating steps and extending cooperation for TEPA activation. She asked the concerned departments representatives to share a plan within a week relating to required TEPA measures for coordinated planning. She vowed that exemplary traffic management system would be provided in Faisalabad city under the arrangements of TEPA and cooperation of citizens was vital to follow the traffic rules as a civilized nation. FDA Director General Dr Faisal Azim informed the meeting that Faisalabad Development Authority had already written to the Punjab Government for approval

of 104 posts for TEPA as sanctioning of new expenditures (SNE) for durable functioning of TEPA redressing the longstanding issues of traffic management in the city while funds would be generated by FDA by introducing Business Model. He started that technical cooperation would also be sought from Lahore Development Authority TEPA to streamline the roads engineering and planning. He expressed his pleasure over nomination of MPA Firdous Rai as Vice Chairperson FDA and said that now TEPA activities would be floated under her leadership. He stressed upon initiating wide awareness campaign to create road use sense and adherence of traffic rules. The participants of meeting assured their full cooperation for running the TEPA more effectively.

SERVICES



Namaz Timings	
Fajr.....	04:42 am
Zohr.....	11:57 pm
Asr.....	04:07 pm
Maghrib.....	05:48 pm
Isha.....	07:11 pm



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



Airlines	
Turkish Airlines.....	8494949



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



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G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8.....	9266316
Wapda Islamabad.....	9217579
Wapda Rawalpindi	111-309-309

Islamabad Metropolitan	
Corporation.....	9209224
Potohar Town.....	9209224
Rawal Town.....	5773343

Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi.....	0331-5022125

PRCS, TRC send humanitarian aid package to Afghanistan

Abrar ul Haq says the supply of food package is an expression of solidarity with the vulnerable people of Afghanistan amid these challenging times

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) in collaboration with Turkish Red Crescent Society (TRC) on Saturday has sent a consignment of food package for 16,000 people in Afghanistan. The aid was handed over jointly by PRCS and TRC officials to the representatives of Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) during a simple ceremony at the Torkham border crossing point. PRCS, TRC officials, representatives of ARCS and volunteers attended the ceremony. The humanitarian aid was delivered to Afghanistan under the joint project of Pakistan and Turkey. 33 tons of food supplies contain food package with consumable items including red bean, pasta, sugar, rice, cooking oil and chickpeas etc for distribution among the affected Afghan population. In his message on the occasion, Chairman PRCS Abrar ul Haq said that PRCS is serving the suffering humanity to the best of its capability and without any discrim-



ination. He said Pakistan and Turkey have always stood side by side with people in distress. He also paid rich tributes to the TRC for their magnanimous support and long-term partnership with the PRCS in humanitarian interventions in the last decades. “The TRC has always fulfilled its commitment to support PRCS as a reliable partner in case of any disaster or emergency,” he said. Abrar ul Haq said that people of Afghanistan are facing immense challenges due to the crisis and Covid-19. “In Afghanistan conflict, extreme drought, pandemic have adversely affected the people, with thousands displaced by the recent conflict, and millions more suffering high levels of acute food shortages”, he said adding that this humanitarian assistance is the expression of solidarity with the vulnerable people of Afghanistan amid these challenging times. “The quantity of food packs being distributed may not be that huge, but what matters is the demonstration of close relations and brotherhood between the people of Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan”, he concluded.

5 day Electronic Media workshop starts



KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Politicians and Journalists are closely related, this was said by Member of National Assembly from Pakistan People's Party and Senior Parliamentarian Shazia Marri while addressing the opening ceremony of five-day electronic media workshop on

"Freedom of Expression: Independent Journalism in Digital Era" arranged by Women Media Center, Pakistan in collaboration with National Endowment for Democracy at Islamabad Hotel, Islamabad. Shazi Marri stated that Benazir Bhutto, the martyred chairperson of Pakistan Peoples Party, was the biggest advocate of

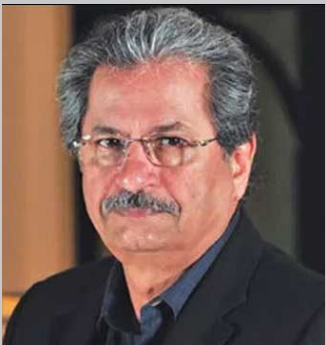
media as she always supported freedom of press. “Journalists and politicians have made great sacrifices for democracy and freedom.” She also said that the criticism from Media is for our own betterment so that we politicians can do better for the people. The veteran politician asserted that there is a dire need of more women to join

media industry as things are not considered from a women's perspective. Marri also said that in the present times, efforts are being made to suppress freedom of media, adding that, It is in our hands to come forward in this struggle and not to sit down disappointed as more people with vision are needed. She further said that, study, research and verification is very important for a good journalists Chief Executive Officer of Women's Media Center, Fauzia Shaheen while addressing the participants said that criticism from journalist is a way to solve the ongoing problem. While applauding the friendly approach of PPP towards media, Miss Fauzia stated that PPP is widely known for taking criticism from media in a positive manner. She also urges the participants to read and understand the Constitution of Pakistan for better understanding of their rights.

UNICEF delegation meets Shafqat

The minister also apprised the delegation about development and launching of Single National Curriculum and teachers training program

ISLAMABAD: A high level delegation of UNICEF led by its Deputy Executive Director, Omer Abidi here on Monday met with the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mahmood. UNICEF is working with the ministry of Education and Professional Training in many projects including Education can not wait, Digital divide, technology assistance for blended learning, Teachers Professional Development and out of school children etc. While apprising the efforts of the ministry to continue education during the pandemic, the minister said, we had brought all the federating units, whether under PTI government or under the other parties rule, on the same page to formulate unanimous education policy which was the major achievement of us. Shafqat Mahmood said, the number of out of school children had significantly increased and learning losses also enhanced owing to the pandemic, adding “We are focussing on these two issues with the help of technology”. The minister also apprised the delegation about development and launching of Single National Curriculum and teachers training program. – APP



1072 persons get provisional plots in G-14

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) has provisionally handed over as many as 1,072 plots of different categories to the allottees of sub-sectors G-14/2 and 3. The FGEHA has allotted around 387 plots in G-14/2 and 685 plots in G-14/3 of different categories, official sources in the Ministry of Housing and Works told APP on Monday. The officer said, over 78 allottees has taken final possession letter and 17 allottees has applied for issuance of No Objection Certificate (NoC) for the approval of building plans. The sources said, more than 29 allottees has started construction of houses in sub-sectors G-14/2 and G-14/3. The Housing Scheme Phase-IV of the FGEHA was launched in 2004 in sub-sectors G-14/1, 2 and 3 Islamabad. About 4,820 kanals of land was acquired through land acquisition collection under the Land Acquisition Act, 1894 in March, 2004, they added. They said the consent award for sub-sectors G-14/1, 2 and 3 was announced in 2005 at the rate of Rs590,000 per kanal for total land 4,820 kanals and the infrastructure development work was taken up by the authority. The sources said, the development of sub-sector G-14/4 had been completed, while 90 percent rehabilitation work had been completed and infrastructure development work of sub-sectors G-14/2, 3 was in progress.

SNGPL warns against illegal gas compressors

RAWALPINDI: The residents have been asked to use gas judiciously for their kitchen needs and avoid using compressor, so that uninterrupted supply of gas could be ensured to domestic consumers during the upcoming winter season. Chief Media Officer Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Company Limited (SNGPL) Shahid Akram while talking to APP said that using compressor for increasing the gas pressure was not only an illegal act but a serious threat to precious human lives and public property. He asked the residents to use effective home appliances to save energy especially water geysers and room heaters should be used properly and in accordance with the requirement. Shahid said that the locally manufactured heaters and geysers were only 30 to 32 percent efficient, while the efficiency of these gadgets in the Western countries was up to 88 percent. He said the major factor for loss of energy was poor designing and sub-standard material being used in manufacturing the main parts governing efficiency of geysers burners, gas retainers and insulation medium of a water tank. “This loss of energy can be avoided by producing energy efficient geysers following international prescribed standards and procedures,” he added. – APP

Gold prices decline by Rs 300

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold decreased by Rs 300 per tola and was traded at Rs 114,200 on Monday against its sale at Rs 114,500 in the local market the previous day, Karachi Saraafa and Jewellers Group reported. The price of 10 gram 24 karat also decreased by Rs 257 and was sold at Rs 97,908 against its sale at Rs 98,165 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat decreased to Rs 89,750 from Rs 89,985. The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs 1400 and Rs 1200.27. The price of gold in international market decreased by US\$13 and was traded at US\$1748 against its sale at US\$1761.

Painting exhibition by Farhana Ali arranged at PAC

Chairman Pakistan Green Task Force Dr. Jamal Nasir was the chief guest at the inaugural function of the exhibition. More than 50 art pieces have been displayed in the exhibition

SHUJAAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: An exhibition of art work by artist Farhana Ali was organized under the auspices of Punjab Arts Council here on Monday. Chairman Pakistan Green Task Force Dr. Jamal Nasir was the chief guest at the inaugural function of the exhibition. More than 50 art pieces have been displayed in the exhibition. Addressing at the inaugural ceremony, Dr Jamal Nasir said that our young generation is very creative and these works of art are closer to reality. He said that through cultural activities in the country an atmosphere of peace, tolerance and brotherhood can be fostered



and young generation can be attracted towards positive activities. Dr. Jamal Nasir further said that the Arts Council has always taken steps for the betterment of the young generation which is commendable. Addressing the function, Naheed Manzoor said that Punjab Arts Council has been at the forefront of promoting cultural activities for the last five decades. Naheed Manzoor congratulated Farhana Ali for creating unique works of art. Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed said that encouragement is the greatest achievement of an artist. He said that positive critical thinking enhances the work of the artist. The exhibition will continue for general public till one week.

Briefs

NCOC, AC
Muree visits
tourists
places

ISLAMABAD: NCOC team and Tehsil administration Muree on late Sunday visited shopping malls, shops, restaurants, hotels, in the Muree city to ensure strict enforcement of obligatory vaccination regime. The Tehsil administration team along with police inspected vaccination status of staff and people visiting shopping malls, markets. The vaccination status of the tourists and general public in the city was also checked. The Assistant Commissioner Muree sealed several shops, restaurants and imposed fines on violators, and unvaccinated individuals. The team also detained owners of shops, restaurants and hotels for facilitating unvaccinated people. The team also vaccinated single dose Cansino vaccine to non vaccinated people and tourists on the spot and strictly advised the masses to complete their vaccination. – APP

NPO to hold
webinar on
'Performance
Management

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) would organize an on-line session on 'Performance Management (PM) to Ensure Business Success Level-1' on Thursday, October 14. Performance Management a corporate management tool that helps managers to monitor and evaluate employees work, according to the NPO document. Performance management's goal is to create an environment where people can perform to the best of their abilities and produce the highest-quality work most efficiently and effectively. The objective of the session was to boost organizational growth and productivity, improve operational efficiencies, ensure capacity building, enhance personnel branding, increase quality and saves time, to equip participants with PM tool and techniques and to develop a pool of professionals, it added. This training would provide information about what is world class factory management, how to move towards WC, how to grow business, identifying and handling deadly waste in industry, plant performance, policy development, manufacturing process, profit maximization, smart manufacturing and augmented reality, performance improvements through benchmarking and KPIs. – APP

OGDCL
carries out
3D surveys

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has carried out 2,539 L-KM 2D and 600Sq. KM 3D seismic surveys in its various operational areas during the fiscal year 2020-21 aimed at expediting hydrocarbon exploration activities and making the country self-reliant in the energy sector. "Moreover, around 5,365 Line Kilometer (L-KM) of 2D and 2,946 Square Kilometer (Sq. KM) of 3D seismic data has also processed/reprocessed using in-house resources," according to the company's annual financial report available with APP. The company said its acquired seismic data represented 79 percent and 69 percent of total 2D and 3D seismic data acquisition in the country respectively. Besides, the OGDCL carried out 432 Line KM of geological field work in Orakzai, Tirah and Khuzdar North blocks. In 2019-20, the company conducted 3,407 L-KM 2D and 1,324 Sq. KM 3D seismic surveys. During the year under review, the OGDCL also injected 12 new wells, producing 584,808 barrels (BBL) crude oil and 12,092 million cubic feet (MMCF) gas, in its production gathering system. "The injected wells include Mela-7, Pasakhi-11, Pasakhi Deep-6, Pasakhi West Deep-2, Saand-i & amp; 2, TAY South West-1, Umair-1, Mangrio-1, Togh Bala-1, Nashpa-10 and Qadirpur-62 which cumulatively yielded gross crude oil and gas production of 584,808 barrels and 12,092 MMcf respectively," it said. – APP

UAE embassy concludes skill development program for youth

Ambassador Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi says: "UAE cherishes its friendly economic and cultural relations with Pakistan"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: UAE Embassy concluded six-week professional and skill development program for Pakistani youth. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) Embassy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan concluded 'Brightening the Future' – a six week professional and skill development program for Pakistani youth in a graceful ceremony held at the Embassy in Islamabad. UAE Ambassador H.E. Hamad Obaid Al-Zaabi presided over the ceremony attended by senior leadership from Pakistan's corporate sector and graduates of the 'Brightening the Future' internship program. Reflecting UAE's long-term commitment to the wellbeing of brotherly country Pakistan, the initiative focused on preparing Pakistani youth for fulfilling professional careers ahead in their lives. The youth were selected from leading universities through a highly competitive selection process and placed at leading corporate organizations, PTCL, Ufone and Bank Alfalah to train, up-skill, and motivate them for personal and professional growth and pursuance of successful careers. The trainee youth received effective mentoring from senior executives and seasoned experts as well as gained firsthand experience by working alongside



corporate teams of the respective organizations. PTCL and Ufone organized several training sessions for the youth with their senior management to enhance their skills and arranged visits to PTCL Exchange, PTCL Data Center and Ufone Mobile Switching Center to apprise them regarding their operations and services. The companies also organized a range

of social and team-building activities to promote learning and skill enhancement. Hiking up the picturesque Margalla Hills in Islamabad remained a stand-out event for the youth which helped them forge lots of fond memories of their time together. On the other hand, Bank Alfalah trained the youth on digital and financial literacy and exposed them to the inner workings of the banking and finance sec-

tor in the country. Speaking at the closing event, Ambassador Hamad Obaid Al Zaabi said: "UAE cherishes its friendly economic and cultural relations with Pakistan. 'Brightening the Future' internship program reflects our commitment to a brighter future of Pakistan, which we are realizing by enabling the youth of this beautiful country. I am thankful to PTCL, Ufone and Bank Alfalah for making this a reality." Group Chief Human Resource Officer (GCHRO), PTCL Group, Syed Mazhar Hussain said: "We are grateful to His Excellency Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Al-Zaabi and his team for organizing this rewarding experience for the Pakistani youth. I believe, it was an exciting opportunity for the youth to test themselves against the professional requirements of the job market and work on boosting their personal and professional skills. I wish everyone good luck for their future endeavors." Bank Alfalah's Business Head Retail – North, Sarmed Ijaz Awan said: "Brightening the future' is an excellent initiative to help pump fresh blood into Pakistan's public and corporate sectors. We are thankful to the honorable Ambassador of UAE and his team for the opportunity to work with the promising young talent, which I hope will make a meaningful difference for this country."

Five-day Gandhara
Festival to start
today at Taxila

ISLAMABAD: Center for Culture and Development (CCD) would organize a five-day 'Gandhara Festival' featuring exhibitions, panel discussion, and storytelling sessions from October 5 at Taxila Museum. Director CCD Izzah Khan told APP that the festival aimed to integrate tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Gandhara Civilization in local context; to highlight the respect for heritage and cultural diversity and promote cultural pluralism through the exhibition, panel discussions, sites visits, and showcasing of local crafts for Sustainable Tourism in Punjab. "We also expecting to re-

ceive diversified audience from the local community, educational institutions, government departments, diplomatic missions, scholars, researchers, and artists among others", she said. She said that there should be maximum participation of youth from the local community who needs to be sensitized about their culture and heritage so that students and the local community can feel a connection with their roots. "On behalf of UNESCO, CCD is organizing a festival at Taxila Museum focused on exploring the Gandhara Civilization in the context of Buddhist and Jain history in Pakistan", she added. – APP



RAWALPINDI: President Pakistan Green Task Force along with Dr. Jamal Nasir, Naheed Manzoor and Waqar Ahmed inaugurating an exhibition of works of artist Farhana Ali at Punjab Arts Council. – DNA

Kamyab Pakistan Programme
to uplift low income segment

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin said on Monday that Kamyab Pakistan Programme (KPP) would bring about revolution in low income segment of society by helping the poor earn respectable livelihood and stand on their own feet. Addressing the launching ceremony of Kamyab Pakistan Programme, the minister said that Rs1400 billion would be provided to 3.7 million households during the next 5 years adding that the target would be taken

up to 6 million households in future. He said welfare of the poor was the priority of the incumbent government and that was why the government had introduced 'bottom up approach' to lift them out of poverty. He said that this was the first government to introduce the 'bottom up approach' to overcome income disparity, adding that even this approach was being utilized by United States to bridge widening incomes gaps. He said that promises were

made during the last 72 years for uplifting the poor, however these were never fulfilled adding that the credit goes to the incumbent government to introduce this strategy to make lives of common people better and make Pakistan a welfare state. The minister said that under Kamyab Kissan Programme, the government would provide interest-free loans of Rs150,000 to farmers for each crop and 300,000 for two crops whereas they would be given Rs200,000 loans for agri-

culture mechanization. He said that under Kamyab Karobar Programme, the government would also provide Rs500,000 interest-free loans to each household for three years for establishing business to earn respectable livelihood. He said that the loans would be provided through various microfinance banks and Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), which he said have experience of working at micro level, providing small loans for last 40 years and have 99 percent recovery rate. – APP

Residents asked to
avoid using illegal
gas compressors

RAWALPINDI: The residents have been asked to use gas judiciously for their kitchen needs and avoid using compressor, so that uninterrupted supply of gas could be ensured to domestic consumers during the upcoming winter season. Chief Media Officer Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Company Limited (SNGPL) Shahid Akram while talking to APP said that using compressor for increasing the gas pressure was not only an illegal act but a serious threat to precious human lives and public property. He asked the residents to use effective home appliances to save energy especially water geysers and room heaters should be used properly and in accordance with the requirement. Shahid said that the locally manufactured heaters and geysers were only 30 to 32 percent efficient, while the efficiency of these gadgets in the Western countries was up to 88 percent. He said the major factor for loss of energy was poor designing and sub-standard material being used in manufacturing the main parts governing efficiency of geysers burners, gas retainers and insulation medium of a water tank. "This loss of energy can be avoided by producing energy efficient geysers following international prescribed standards and procedures," he added. Meanwhile, Punjab Minister for Literacy and Informal Basic Education Raja Rashid Hafeez has said that strict action would be taken against those involved in using illegal gas compressors. He said that the provision of non-stop gas supply to the residents was the top priority of the government and was using all available resources to provide continuous supply to the residents during the upcoming winter. – APP

PIA resumes flight
operation to Kuwait

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) on Monday announced resuming its flight operation to Kuwait after the Gulf state lifted the self-imposed ban on the national flag-carrier and pilots. "The national flag-carrier is resuming the flight operation to Kuwait with two

flights a week," a news release said. PIA Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Arshad Malik has thanked the Minister for Aviation, Secretary Aviation and Aviation Division's management for playing a vibrant role in resumption of the flights operation. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rashid addressing a press conference on Monday. – DNA

IRSA releases
161554
cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) Monday released 161554 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 155859 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbella Dam was 1511.66 feet, which was 119.66 feet higher than its dead level 1392.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 87700 and 85000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1186.00 feet, which was 136.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1050.00 feet. – APP

Appropriate action urged to reduce climate crisis

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP), Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Webinar titled "Strategies for Mitigating Impacts of Climate Crisis," on August 12, 2021. Mr Ali Tauqueer Sheikh, Climate Change and water expert was the keynote speaker on the occasion. Other speakers for the webinar included Mr Ashfaq Mehmood, former Federal Secretary, Water and Power, Government of Pakistan; Dr Gulfaraz Ahmad, former Federal Secretary, Petroleum and Natural Resources, Government of Pakistan; Dr Arjumand Nizami, Country Director, Helvetas, Pakistan and Ambassador Shafqat Kakakhel, Chairperson BoG, Sustainable Develop-

ment Policy Institute (SDPI). The Talk was moderated by Mr Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC & CSP at the ISSI. Malik Qasim Mustafa in his introductory remarks said that countries like Pakistan are among the top 10 countries, which are suffering from the Climate Change phenomenon. According to the latest IPCC report, "Climate change is widespread, rapid and intensifying." The Climate Change threat is real now and Pakistan needs to work and develop strategies to reduce and mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. Earlier in his welcome remarks, Amba-

sador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhry, Director General ISSI, said that there is a need to raise awareness among the country's policymakers that Climate Change is an existential threat and needs appropriate action to deal with the vulnerabilities arising out of it. He identified three main issues in this regard. Firstly, this is a serious crisis, secondly, area of vulnerabilities and strength need to be defined, and thirdly, a plan must be put in place and implement it. Mr Ali Tauqueer Sheikh thanked the Institute for inviting him to the occasion. He began by saying that this very event co-

incides with two important developments: One is the release of 6th IPCC Report and the other Pakistan is in the process of completing its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC). This will speak volumes about Pakistan's contribution to global efforts on climate change. Sharing key highlights of the report, he said that the world has passed beyond the linear changes of Climate Change, and moving towards abrupt system changes. The report is extremely credible since it has been compiled by the scientists all over the world. The frightening part is, as the report says, is the time to avert the climate crisis is passed now the world is left with only one option which is to make drastic changes in order to lessen the impact of the crisis.

71st Urs
celebrations
of Klu Baba
starts

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The celebrations of the 71st anniversary of the renowned Sufi saint of the Indian subcontinent, Muhammad Rustam alias Hazret Klu Baba, have begun. The celebrations are being supervised by Raja Sarfraz Akram, son of Raja Muhammad Akram Shaheed. The three-day Urs celebrations are attended by visitors from across the country whose accommodation and meals have been completed. Apart from the famous Naat poet Taslim Ahmed Sabri, well-known Naat reciters and reciters from across the country will add to the festivities. Darwish Klu Baba migrated from Rajouri Tehsil of Occupied Kashmir to Pakistan at the time of establishment of Pakistan. His special disciple Hazrat Pir Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah also accompanied him on this journey. Baba Ji Muhammad Rustam who is known as Klu Baba Sarkar died in 1950 while his caliph Syed Muhammad Anwar Shah died in 1972. On the orders of Shah Sahib, his beloved disciple Raja Muhammad Akram took charge of the service not only of Mansar Sharif but also of Darbar Bari Imam. After the martyrdom of Raja Muhammad Akram, Raja Sarfraz Akram is continuing this service.

CDA launches
operation in
Margalla Hills

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the directions of the management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA), the Enforcement Department on Monday carried out anti-encroachments operation in the Chontra area of Islamabad to maintain the beauty and natural environment of Margalla Hills. The operation was carried out by CDA with the help of Islamabad Police during which several illegal buildings, houses and illegal structures were demolished. According to details, the Enforcement Department demolished 40 illegal rooms, 12 kitchens, 15 bathrooms, 24 walls, 10 doors, 12 DPCs and nine water tanks with the help of heavy machinery. The Margalla Hills are a source of natural beauty in the Federal Capital, so in order to maintain the natural beauty of the Margalla Hills, the CDA is taking steps to improve the natural environment while also cracking down on illegal constructions and encroachments.

Cotton review
committee to
meet today

ISLAMABAD: Cotton Crop Review Committee would meet on Tuesday (tomorrow) to review cotton prices, besides discussing means to ensure fair prices to local farmers for their products during the crop season 2021-22. Besides, the meeting would also take stock of weekly prices trend of cotton crop in local and international markets, said Cotton Commissioner in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research Dr Khalid Abdullah. Talking to APP here on Monday, he said that the government has approved cotton intervention price at Rs 5,000 per 40kg for cotton crop 2021-22 to encourage local farmers to revive the shrinking cotton crop, adding that a Cotton Price Review Committee was constituted and tasked for monitoring cotton price in the country. So far cotton crop output was encouraging, which was mainly attributed with increasing rate of return in international markets, he said adding that favorable weather conditions and less pest attacks on the crop was among the other reasons of healthy production during the period under review. Dr Abdullah said that incentives announced by the government like provision of subsidy on agriculture inputs including fertilizers, pesticides and availability of quality seed also helped in reviving local cotton crop, adding that local farmers were also provided training on best crop management practices. – APP

Afghan-Tajik tensions

TENSIONS between the new government in Afghanistan and Tajikistan have been persistent lately. Reports have emerged that Tajik forces held parades in regions bordering Afghanistan earlier in the week in a show of power and that the Taliban also sent thousands of its fighters to the border with Tajikistan. This is a concerning development and such impulsive shows of might should be refrained from as they only imperil stability in the region. There is a need for both sides to adopt a more conciliatory tone and discuss concerns through talks. Since the Taliban's takeover of Afghanistan, Tajikistan has not shied away from expressing strong opinions on the composition of the new Afghanistan government and instances of human rights violations. Concerns regarding the inclusivity of the government are understandable given that ethnic Tajiks make up the second biggest ethnicity in Afghanistan—27 percent. At the same time, the Taliban have made clear that they view Dushanbe's criticism of them and the composition of their government as meddling in Afghanistan's internal affairs. Perhaps some of the issue also lies with the tone and tenor in which these concerns are being communicated to the Taliban. Nevertheless, the Taliban must also understand countries around the world have raised concerns about the inclusivity of the government setup and it is not just Tajikistan. Therefore engaging constructively on this issue is going to be key in terms of improving relations with the international community and gradually gaining legitimacy. Meanwhile, PM Imran Khan has been dealing tactfully with such sensitive issues and engaging with multiple partners to defuse tensions. His telephone call to President Emomali Rahmon to bring down the hostilities is what was needed at that point in time. There are understandably multiple concerns in the realm of security, rights, and a humanitarian crisis when it comes to the new government in Afghanistan. However, addressing these issues will be a medium to long-term process which will require patience and sustained engagement. Countries such as the US must understand that isolating or abandoning a country completely is only going to make matters worse for the Afghan populatoins and the region at large. The new government is a reality and now the task is to restore some semblance of stability to Afghanistan so that a crisis can be averted.

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Will Trump run again... and win?

Marwan Bishara

“Real power is, I don’t even want to use the word ‘fear,’” Trump says, and he adds, “I bring rage out, I do bring rage out, I always have.” But Woodward is so focused on demonising Trump that he fails to see or highlight the cynicism of his influential detractors. He goes to a great length exposing the former president but says little about Washington’s elites that enabled him

THE fear and rage that gripped the US capital under the presidency of Donald Trump have left the country in peril, its democracy ill, and its immunity weak. Trump may have been excised from office in November but Trumpism has not been eradicated. After months of post-elections recovery, it is back with a vengeance, slowly metastasising throughout the country’s body and soul. Less than a year after winning “the battle for the soul of America”, President Joe Biden is slipping in the polls while his predecessor’s numbers are, well, rising. In fact, according to a recent poll, Trump is already ahead of Biden, albeit by a small margin of 48 to 46 points. These numbers may flip again in favour of the Democrats if they are able to pass the New Deal-like infrastructure and reconciliation bills in Congress before the end of the year, which will inject trillions of dollars into the US economy. But even the effect of such legislation may prove transitory, depending on a number of economic and political factors, and on the Republican opposition to the socialist “nanny-state” policies on the federal and state level. Meanwhile, 14 Republican-controlled states under Trumpian influence passed 24 new laws that assert their control over the running of elections and make it easier to overturn elections results. Trump continues to reject the last election results and is yet to officially declare his candidacy, but everything he says or does is

campaigning. He is holding rallies across the country and on October 9, he will hold one in the state of Iowa, where all presidential bids start.

Back in July, journalist Michael Wolff, who wrote three damning books about Trump, concluded after a bizarre and unexpected dinner invitation by the former president, that his run in 2024 is a certainty. But for now, the brand mogul cherishes stoking the media speculations and public anticipation, which helps heal his bruised ego and keeps the donation money flowing. His Political Action Committees, PACs, have raked in more than \$82m during the first half of this year. But what will he run on? What will be his message, his mantra? My guess is that he will start by doubling down on his “rigged election” false claim, and will ask his followers to “Reverse the Steal” in order to “Make American Honest Again”. He has got to go with the big lie all the way to the polls – or not go at all. Anything less outrageous, less audacious, less offensive will not work. Besides, he clearly cannot help it, anyway. The man, whom US media has called the “liar in chief” who “steals credit [...] invents history and spins conspiracy theories”, will do what it takes to win. So snug, he will portend to teach America a lesson in honesty and truth – his alternative truth. Trump’s penchant for deception is well illustrated in author Bob Woodward’s trilogy, Fear, Rage, and Peril, the last co-written with fellow journalist Robert Costa. In the three books published over the past three years, the Washington Post newspaper veteran journalist goes to a great length to show how even Trump’s closest advisors and allies think he is “a (expletive) liar”. Trump’s own personal lawyer, John Dowd thought he is such a pathological liar that he cannot even be trusted to testify to former Special Counsel Robert Mueller during his investigation into Russian meddling in the US elections without perjuring himself.

But it is not only lying; politicians are known to lie. The man portrayed rather convincingly in the trilogy, is incredibly devious, utterly incompetent, and terribly dangerous. Woodward interviewed hundreds of people associated with the Trump administration, leading members of his cabinet and his party, as well as leaders of Congress and the military. According to him, many of them thought Trump is, simply put, unfit to be president of the United States. They called him crazy, paranoid, suffering from a narcissistic personality disorder. His close ally and Attorney General, William Barr rebuked him, saying suburban voters “think you are a f***ing a**hole”. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the military, General Mark Milley, thought Trump was so erratic and dangerous during his last months in office, that he may take decisions that could lead, albeit unintentionally, to confrontations with the likes of China or Iran with the potential use of nuclear weapons.

Trump directs his venom against friends and foes alike. Over the past few years, he has never hesitated to humiliate Republican leaders, even war heroes, regardless of political repercussions. Even today, as he plans a rerun for the White House, Trump continues to degrade influential party leaders including his own former Vice President Mike Pence, and the Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell.

All of this begs the question: if Trump is so offensive, so incompetent and so dangerous to the country, why does he continue to maintain such a strong grip over the Republican party even after leaving office? And, why are Republicans running for Congress in 2022 either seeking his endorsement or trying to escape his wrath? Why is he likely to be the party’s official candidate in 2024? To be sure, a lot depends on next year’s midterm elections.

A victory on November 8, 2022, that allows for a Republican majority in either or both Houses of Congress, will render Biden a sitting duck president and boost Trump’s chances come November 5, 2024. Come to think of it, a Republican defeat could also propel Trump to the top of the 2024 list as the most likely saviour of the party’s influence against visibly ageing Biden or against his vice president, the lightweight Kamala Harris. Trump may have been a terrible president but he has proven himself a talented populist. His uncanny fearmongering is the main source of his influence and the driver behind his popularity, especially among the Republican base. Funnily enough, Trump allegedly did not even know what “populist” meant when he first began to think about running for office, as one hilarious anecdote at the beginning of Woodward’s first book illustrates.

The fact that Trump received 75 million votes after four disastrous years that included mismanaging the pandemic and leading to an economic crash, and social unrest, and that he continues to be so popular with the party base, despite damning media reports, is a testimony to his ability to rally support, albeit by dubious means. Paradoxical as it may be, this ostentatious bling-bling billionaire has convinced the majority of his party base and much of the country’s white working class that he is their best if not their only ally against the snobbish, selfish elites who manage America’s decline. In fact, he has garnered the support of the majority of white Americans, against the federal bureaucracy or as he has called it, “the Deep State”, which stands accused of assaulting their rights, freedoms, culture and, well, privileges. Trump has mastered the politics of fear and fury as Woodward’s books show. In the epilogue to Peril, the third book in the trilogy which was published in September, the author recounts an earlier conversation with Trump, the bombastic and confident outsider as well as the petty and cruel insider, who is tantalised by the pros-

pect of power and is eager to use fear to get his way. “Real power is, I don’t even want to use the word ‘fear,’” Trump says, and he adds, “I bring rage out, I do bring rage out, I always have.” But Woodward is so focused on demonising Trump that he fails to see or highlight the cynicism of his influential detractors. He goes to a great length exposing the former president but says little about Washington’s elites that enabled him. But Trump’s populism would not have been as effective if it were not for the cynicism of his detractors. The ruling elites who pretend to be “holier than thou”, while robbing the country blind; who preach political correctness but lack political decency; who hold onto power even if it means presiding over the US’s decline.

In that vein, Woodward’s trilogy constitutes selectively edited accounts of those complicit with Trump, who talked only after they were fired by Trump, or after Trump was fired by the American people. They are taken at their word and excused about the rest. When Woodward recounts Trump’s various exchanges with Gary Cohn, the former Goldman Sachs executive-turned-White House-economic adviser, the former president is portrayed as an idiotic protectionist who roots for US manufacturing, while the laissez-faire, free-trade investment banker is seen as a brilliant man. But is it really OK, for example, that the US imports a significant amount of antibiotics and other basic medicines from China? No less during pandemic times? Woodward seems to have never met a Wall Street executive or an Ivy League school graduate he did not like. Same for the generals, the congressional leaders, and the establishment figures: they are either right or excused for their wrongness. Bottom line, Trump is evil but the establishment is good, even if run by a corrupt self-serving elite, be it, Democrat or Republican. When Trump demands justification for any of the hundreds of military bases around the globe or demands immediate troops withdrawal from any part of the world, he is portrayed as a fool, ignorant of national security interests and processes. Any shrinking of US overseas military commitments is so preposterous in the eyes of Woodward and his beloved generals that it does not even merit comment. And that is why as long as it is business as usual in Washington, as long as the ruling elites continue to be satisfied with managing US decline, Trumpism will persist and metastasise and there is no stopping Trump and co laughing their way to Washington, again. In sum, Trump will certainly run. And if he wins, as he may well do – my fingers trembling as I type – his victory will spell the death of American democracy with grave consequences the world over.

– *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

Africa cannot be a French pawn

Ranvir S. Nayar



The relationship with neighboring Chad, which was almost entirely a French colony for over 150 years, has also been going through the rough and tumble for the past few months, especially as the French began drawing down their ill fated and barely effective antiterror military operation in the Sahel region

SEPTEMBER was not a good month for French President Emmanuel Macron. First, he had to deal with the bomb dropped on him by France’s closest allies – the US and Britain – who had jointly muscled in on a deal that France had signed with Australia for the supply of a dozen nuclear-propelled submarines. Macron and the entire French diplomacy was left staring in disbelief when the new “AUK-US” partnership announced that the \$65 billion deal with France was off and now it was the UK and US that would supply the subs.

Even as Macron was trying to deal with the unexpected situation in the Indo-Pacific, other crises were either brewing or erupted, this time far closer home, in west and northern Africa, where within a matter of days, the French saw a series of close relationships turn sour. France was suddenly in a very public spat with countries ranging from Mali and Chad in west Africa to Algeria and Morocco in the north.

Even as France was accusing the AUKUS countries of backstabbing it, Mali accused France of abandoning it in the midst of an ongoing battle with a clutch of extremist organizations ranging from Daesh to Al-Qaeda. The French, in turn, said Mali had engaged Russian mercenary outfit the Wagner Group to help in the battle and it was not willing to play along with this. The relationship with neighboring Chad, which was almost entirely a French colony for over 150 years, has also been going through the rough and tumble for the past few months, especially as the French began drawing down their ill fated and barely effective antiterror military operation in the Sahel region. France has deployed over 5,500 soldiers for the past eight years to counter the spread of Daesh and Al-Qaeda in the Sahel region. But Paris has little to show for its efforts as the terrorists have been killing thousands of civilians as well as local

troops, while also claiming the lives of 55 French soldiers.

The announcement by Macron in June of a drawdown to Barkhane marked a complete reversal by the president since his election in 2017. Soon after taking charge at the Elysée, Macron had announced a broad initiative for the Sahel region and had also invited leaders of the entire region to Paris for an all-encompassing summit. Besides talking about development in the region, Macron also significantly enhanced French military engagement in west Africa. However, as his first term comes to a close, facing a strong challenge from the farright, Macron has been forced to abandon the Sahel and bring the curtains down on a military campaign that has cost over \$2 billion and has never been popular at home. The military disaster reflects French challenges in a region that Paris has long seen as its backyard and an opportunity to showcase France as a global power with a lot of influence beyond its borders. Even though most of the countries in north and west Africa have been independent for nearly 60 years, France has never really had a clean break from the continent, keeping its interests and interference handy over the decades. It was a common parlance in Paris that whenever there is a coup d’etat in any former French colony, one aircraft would ferry the deposed leader to exile in Paris and the same plane would leave with the new leader who has just finished his exile in France to head back home.

France has also been accused of using its military and monetary might to install or depose leaders – depending on who would do its bidding – giving lucrative contracts to French business or its political leaders. Even as it was still trying to get out of the Sahel quicksand, France got involved in another verbal spat with some African nations. In a sudden move, France said it would dramatically cut the

number of visas issues to nationals of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia. It justified its decision by saying that the three former colonies were not doing enough to allow illegal immigrants to return. France said it was “a drastic decision, and unprecedented, but one made necessary by the fact that these countries are refusing to take back nationals who we do not want or cannot keep in France.” Both Algeria and Morocco reacted furiously to the move and accused the French of not telling the full truth.

Though Macron’s moves in west and north Africa may appear to be independent of each other, his actions in various African countries seem to have been prompted more by events at home rather than overseas. With just over six months before the presidential elections, Macron is facing heat from all sides. For a long while he has been trailing far-right leader Marine Le Pen in opinion polls. However, in the past few weeks there have been dramatic changes in the political scenario in France with the emergence of another far-right candidate, columnist Eric Zemmour, whose anti-Muslim and anti-migrant comments make Le Pen seem like a gentle nun in the church.

The French politicians seem to realize that there is a hard shift to the right, at least among the candidates and their statements, pushing Macron to take decisions that he expects to go down well with at least a section of French voters.

While some African leaders may be willing to understand and ignore his actions and comments as those propelled by domestic compulsions rather than a drastic shift in the official stance of France, the damage caused by these actions is unlikely to disappear or be made good once the elections are over. France needs to make a clean break with its policies towards its former colonies and start afresh, instead of again using Africa as a pawn for its own short-term interests.

– *Courtesy: Arab News*

Briefs

Fazl says they will not accept electoral reforms

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have also been rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). “The government that came to power through rigging elections is now talking about electoral reforms,” the PDM chief stated, adding that the government is introducing e-voting machines to win the next general elections. Fazl said that the people of Pakistan have once again pinned their hopes on Jami- at Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F). “Thousands of people answered the call when JUI-F had sought their support,” he said, adding that ever since the PTI-led government came into power, his party has been calling it “an illegitimate government.” The JUI-F chief was of the view that Pakistanis living abroad have also given up on the government. “First the youth and now overseas Pakistanis are being deceived,” he said. He also shed light on the economic crisis that Pakistan is facing and said that the “country’s economy has been devastated.” “The Pakistani rupee has dropped to an all-time low against the US dollar,” he said, adding that the world is neither ready to do business with us nor ready to help us. “Large investments came from China, however, the government didn’t utilise the amount properly,” he said.

Israel accuses Iran of Cyprus attack plot

FROM PAGE 01

“A person has been arrested, in whose possession a pistol and cartridges were found.” “It is a sensitive case, which is why a remand request was held behind closed doors,” Papatheodorou added. Cypriot media, citing a police source, have reported that the suspect, who has not been charged, was arrested on Sept. 27 in the capital Nicosia, just after crossing by car from a checkpoint linking the Turkish-controlled north and the southern parts of the ethnically divided island. A silencer was also found in his vehicle, the reports said. People using the checkpoint at the time reported extensive searches of vehicles during the crossover transit. Israel appeared to hint that its intelligence services had contributed to Cyprus’ foiling of the suspected attack plot. “There are security threats. As you can see, the Shin Bet, the Mossad, all of the security forces know how to handle them,” Foreign Minister Yair Lapid told reporters when asked about the incident. “The fact is that we’re there. We’re minding matters.” Cypriot media have also reported that the suspect was on the island for about 20 days prior to his arrest and rented two cars in succession. They said he used an electric scooter to travel frequently to the north side of the island via a pedestrian crossing. In his statement, Sidi denied local media reports on Sunday that described the arrest as having thwarted a criminally motivated assassination attempt against Teddy Sagi, an Israeli magnate.

Biden calls Republicans ‘reckless...’

FROM PAGE 01

home in Delaware, Biden plunged into the most consequential period of his presidency so far. On one side, he faces Republican determination to cripple his momentum and recapture control of Congress in next year’s midterm legislative elections. On the other, Biden is struggling with infighting between Democrats over his infrastructure and social spending bills. With the speech calling out Republicans and a trip to Michigan on Tuesday to promote his domestic spending plans, the 78-year-old political veteran hopes to regain the initiative.

Ramiz Raja seeks business community’s help for cricket

The PCB chief met the leader of the metropolis’ business community at the AKD head office on Monday, where he discussed with them ideas to help boost Pakistan’s cricket economy

DNA

KARACHI: Karachi business tycoon Aqeel Karim Dhedi has promised Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ramiz Raja that he will invest for the construction of a hotel near the National Stadium. The PCB chief met the leader of the metropolis’ business community at the AKD head office on Monday, where he discussed with them ideas to help boost Pakistan’s cricket economy. Dhedi told Ramiz that he will single-handedly invest for the the construction of a 200-room five-star hotel around the Na-

tional Stadium. He told him that it was very easy for him to pump in \$8-9million for the project. The hotel’s main purpose will be to accommodate touring international sides and further improve on the standard security arrangements PCB makes for them. The following ideas were also discussed during the meeting: Ramiz praised Dhedi for taking interest in investing in the sport. “We

need such players,” Ramiz. “They will open [opportunities] for us and he has promised us that he will stand with us.” The PCB chief said the board will guide Dhedi and other investors on how to use their financial resources towards the development of cricket. “We will also tell him that how can he help us,” Ramiz said. “I thank him for inviting us. He understands the commercial aspect of cricket very well.

We’ll involve him in the cricket setup in the future.” Dhedi said he was glad that the PCB was finally understanding the importance of the business community and is ready to hear them out. “We had a lot of ideas for cricket but we were never asked to share,” said the business giant. “Now that Ramiz himself has come to Karachi to meet the `business community, we’ve told him a lot of things. Cricket in Pakistan will certainly change in the coming days.” In the meeting, the investors, including Dhedi, showed their intent to compete with India in the commercial aspect of cricket.

UAE stadiums to be at 70% capacity for T20 World Cup

AGENCIES

DUBAI: Stadiums in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) will operate at 70 per cent of capacity for the Twenty20 World Cup, the organisers said, though conditions in Oman, where preliminary rounds are due to be played, have still to be fully assessed following a cyclone. Tropical Cyclone Shaheen struck coastal areas of Oman, including the capital of Muscat on Sunday, two weeks before preliminary round matches of the tournament commence on October 17. Some 3,000 fans would be accommodated at Al Amerat stadium in Muscat, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said in a statement on Sunday, though the cyclone left streets in the Omani capital under water, prompted evacuations from coastal

Tickets for Indo-Pak T20 World Cup clash sold out

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s match against India remains as one of the most highly anticipated fixtures in world cricket, which is exactly why millions of fans are eager to watch the fierce rivals go head-to-head whenever they meet. The tickets for India-Pakistan at T20 World Cup were sold within hours after they went on sale on Sunday. The seats in sections including General, General East, Premium, Pavilion East and Platinum, have all become unavailable on the Platinumlist, the website where the tickets are being sold for the T20 World Cup. Fans logged on to the website seconds after ICC announced that the tickets were on sale. Many fans were placed in queue with thousands of users ahead of them; the wait time was said to be more than an hour. On Sunday night, the only tickets which were available for purchase were Premium and Platinum tickets which cost Dh1,500 and Dh2,600 respectively. However, as of Monday morning, they have also become unavailable on Platinumlist. The T20 World Cup will kick-off from October 17 and the highly anticipated game between two fierce rivals is set to take place on October 24 at the Dubai International Stadium. The ICC has informed that all venues will be operating at approximately 70 percent of maximum seated capacity. – DNA

areas and delayed flights in and out of the country. The 16-team tournament was shifted to the Gulf states as result of a surge of Covid-19 infections in India, but the BCCI remains the event host. The ICC said the BCCI and itself had worked closely with host authorities to ensure fans are welcomed in a safe environment and Covid-19 protocols are applied at all venues. “The T20 World Cup is the largest sporting event to be held in the region and it will be the biggest global cricket event since the pandemic with fans in stadia,” the ICC said. “In the UAE all venues will be operating at approximately 70% of maximum seated capacity, whilst Abu Dhabi has also introduced new socially distanced ‘pods’ of a maximum of 4 spectators on their east and west grass mounds,” it said.

Senior US Diplomat discusses co-op with Uzbek President

AGENCIES

TASHKENT: US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman has met with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev in Tashkent to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries and the situation in Afghanistan. During the October 4 meeting in the Uzbek capital, Sherman thanked Mirziyoyev for his country’s “close cooperation with the United States in Afghanistan,” and “underscored the importance of the United States’ strategic partnership with Uzbekistan,” according to a statement from the State Department. The U.S. official also called for “continued progress on economic, democratic, and human rights reforms” in Uzbekistan. The Uzbek presidential press service said that the two sides “noted with satisfaction that in recent years the multifaceted cooperation between Uzbekistan and the United States has been developing rapidly.” The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan in August has triggered alarm among Uzbekistan and other neighboring Central Asian states over possible security threats emanating from the war-torn country and the potential for tens of thousands of refugees to cross the border. Mirziyoyev has positioned himself as a reformer since taking office following the death of his authoritarian predecessor, Islam Karimov, in 2016, releasing political prisoners and opening his country to its neighbors and the outside world. However, human rights groups say the reforms have not gone far enough.

Naomi Osaka drops out of top 10

TOKYO: Naomi Osaka has dropped out of the women’s top 10 for the first time since winning the 2018 US Open title. The Japanese player, who is now 12th, withdrew from this year’s French Open and missed Wimbledon to focus on her mental health. Osaka, 23, also took a break from tennis in September after her defence of the US Open title was ended by Leylah Fernandez in the third round. Great Britain’s Emma Raducanu, who beat Fernandez in the final, is ranked 22nd. – Agencies

England to make Australia tour decision this week

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: The England and Wales Cricket Board will meet this week to decide whether the men’s Ashes tour of Australia this winter will go ahead. England players were presented with the proposed conditions for the tour on Sunday evening. Some have concerns over whether families can travel, quarantine arrangements and any potential ‘bubble’ they may have to live in. The first Test begins on 8 December and the series is due to end on 18 January. An ECB statement read: “The board will decide whether the conditions are sufficient for the tour to go ahead and enable the selection of a squad befitting a series of this significance.” Australia has some of the strictest Covid-19 protocols in the world, a situation complicated by the fact its different states have their own regulations. The five Ashes Tests are due to be played in five states. The ECB added: “Over the weekend we have been talking to England men’s players and management to provide them with the latest information about the proposed arrangements for this

winter’s scheduled Ashes tour. “We remain in regular and positive dialogue with Cricket Australia over these arrangements as the picture is constantly evolving. “With health and wellbeing at the forefront, our focus is to ensure the tour can go ahead with conditions for players and management to perform at their best. “We will continue talking to our players this week to share information feedback.” land players in the Cup and face being home for months for the United Arab Oman from 17 November, leaves means that some play-nament without know- Root ‘desperate’ to play in the Ashes in Australia The red-ball specialists are not due to leave for Australia until early November. England are already without fast bowler Jofra Archer with an elbow injury, while all-rounder Ben Stokes could miss the tour as he takes an indefinite break from the game to protect his mental wellbeing.

Sachin Tendulkar, wife Anjali named in Pandora Papers

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: Indian cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar has been named in the recently published investigative report, called Pandora Papers, which exposed financial secrets of the powerful and elite across the world, on Sunday. The investigative report that was released on Sunday by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), leaked 11.9 million documents from 14 financial services companies globally. The former cricketer and his wife Anjali Tendulkar as well as his father-in-law Anand Mehta have been named in the investigation of records of Panama law firm Alcolgal which are part of Pandora Papers. The three were named as Beneficial Owners and Directors of a BVI-based company called Saas International Limited. However, Tendulkar’s attorney denies any wrongdoings regarding the investment: “Tendulkar’s attorney said the cricket player’s investment is legitimate and has been declared to tax authorities.”

UN chief highlights ‘enormous’ benefits of greener cities

“Three-quarters of the infrastructure that will exist in 2050 has yet to be built,” he said. “Economic recovery plans offer a generational opportunity to put climate action, renewable energy, and sustainable development at the heart of cities’ strategies and policies”

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that the benefits of making cities more environmentally friendly are “enormous”, and include reduced climate risk, more jobs, and better health and well-being. “City leadership in using green materials and constructing energy-efficient, resilient buildings powered by renewable energy, is essential to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050,” he said in his message for World Habitat Day, marked on Monday. The theme for this year’s celebration of cities and towns worldwide is accelerating urban action for a carbon-free world. Cities are responsible for about 75 per cent of the world’s energy consumption and over 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, it was pointed out. Urban areas across the globe are facing the dual crises of COVID-19 and climate change, the UN chief said. Around 4.5 billion people live in cities today, but that population is projected to grow by almost 50 per cent, by 2050.

By mid-century, over 1.6 billion urban residents may have to survive through average summertime highs of 35 degrees Celsius. Guterres said that cities and towns are at the core of climate action to keep the 1.5 degrees goal within reach. “Three-quarters of the infrastructure that will exist in 2050 has yet to be built,” he said. “Economic recovery plans offer a generational opportunity to put climate action, renewable energy, and sustainable development at the heart of cities’ strategies and policies.” As populations grow in emerging economies, demand for transport, which accounts for nearly 20 per cent of global carbon emissions, is also multiplying. The UN Chief said cities are already working on this, trying to ensure that this demand is met by zero-emission vehicles and pub-

lic transit. Guterres concluded by asking for a global moratorium on internal combustion engines to underpin these efforts, saying it should happen by 2040 at the latest. In a message for the day, Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Maimunah Mohammad Sharif, said that unless the world takes urgent action, “the greenhouse gases produced by ever expanding urban centres, will continue to push global air temperatures higher.” Ms Sharif remembered that, this year, the day is celebrated only weeks before the UN climate change summit, COP26, happening in early November in Glasgow. For the UN-Habitat Chief, the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is an opportunity for the world’s cities to put climate action on top of their agenda. “This is a chance to change how we generate our pow-

er, construct our buildings, heat, cool and light up our offices and homes, and travel around from home to work,” she said. Ms Sharif asked for “well planned and well managed compact cities”, that allow for non-motorized transport and that reduce energy consumption from cooling and heating. “Cities are the incubators of innovation and new technology,” she said. “We must harness this strength for better climate change solutions.” For Ms Sharif, “action will differ from city to city”, but “the green transition must benefit everyone, especially the most vulnerable, and create new jobs.” Events this year will explore how governments and organizations can work together with communities, academic institutions and the private sector to create sustainable, carbon-neutral, inclusive cities and towns. World Habitat Day will also amplify the Race to Zero Campaign and encourage local governments to develop actionable zero-carbon plans in the run up to the COP26.

Opp. wants ministers sacked

FROM PAGE 01

right to remain in power,” he said, adding that there is “something not just fishy, but super fishy going on.” PM Imran Khan wore a “cloak of honesty” and “fooled” the people, Iqbal said, adding that the premier eroded Pakistan’s respect and pride. PPP Senator Sherry Rehman isn’t surprised that the premier’s close aides were named in the Pandora Papers. In a post on Twitter, the PPP leader said we all know that slogans of “corruption, free Pakistan and accountability” are all hollow and a way to target the opposition. “Will the Prime Minister go to the Supreme Court against his people? Or will a report be called for like in other scandals?” Rehman asked. Prime Minister Imran must ensure investigation of ministers and other people around him mentioned in the Pandora Papers in the same way he did in the case of Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz’s spokesman Muhammad Zubair said. He said the name of Junaid Saffar was being maligned to divert attention from the names of people who are part of the PTI government. Ali Dar, he said, is not a resident of Pakistan, so his name must not be repeatedly mentioned. Jamaat-e-Islami chief Sirajul Haq, meanwhile, demanded the immediate resignations of government ministers and advisers named in the Pandora Papers. The names of 700 Pakistanis, including government ministers and advisers, have appeared in the Pandora Papers. In his statement, the JI chief said that ministers and advisers should resign if their names are mentioned in the Pandora Papers, otherwise they should be sacked. He said that for transparency in the investigation and to avoid government influence, it was necessary to remove the government employees whose names were involved.

PM launches Kamyab Pakistan Programme

FROM PAGE 01

The KPP initiative has been designed to transform the lives of the marginalised segments of society. The programme shall disburse microcredit amounting to Rs1,400 billion for the poorest of the poor, providing them with much needed financial support to improve their livelihood. Financing under the KPP shall only be extended to families with a cumulative average monthly income of up to Rs50,000 per month.

Special cell to probe Pandora revelations

FROM PAGE 01

the majority of them are tax residents in the country. A veritable Pandora’s box of information has been opened, releasing unending trouble and woes for those named.

Abraham called up for England qualifiers

LONDON: Roma striker Tammy Abraham and Chelsea left-back Ben Chilwell were called into England’s squad for their forthcoming World Cup qualifiers on Monday. Abraham is back on the England scene for the first time in November 2020 after initially missing out when Gareth Southgate’s 23-man squad was announced on Thursday. The 24-year-old has been in good form since leaving Chelsea for Roma in a £34 million (\$46 million) deal in August. He has scored four goals in 10 appearances in all competitions for Jose Mourinho’s Serie A team. Chilwell is also added to the squad following an injury to Chelsea right-back Reece James. James was forced out during Chelsea’s recent defeat against Manchester City due to an ankle injury. He missed Wednesday’s Champions League defeat to Juventus in Turin and Saturday’s win against Southampton. – APP

Briefs

New Zealand drops 'zero-COVID' strategy

FOREIGN DESK

AUCKLAND: New Zealand has abandoned its long-standing COVID-19 elimination strategy in the face of a challenging delta outbreak, authorities announced on Monday. Instead, the country will focus on increasing vaccination rates and learning to live with the virus.

"With this outbreak and delta the return to zero is incredibly difficult," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said in a major policy shift. "This is a change in approach we were always going to make over time. Our delta outbreak has accelerated this transition. Vaccines will support it," she said. The move comes weeks after New Zealand's biggest city, Auckland, recorded its first COVID case after nearly six months of no infections. The city has now been under lockdown for close to 50 days, with restrictions extended to some other parts of the country. Restrictions in Auckland are set to be scaled back in phases starting Wednesday, Ardern said, allowing residents to leave their homes and connect with loved ones in the outdoors.

In the face of increased pressure over her approach, Ardern said she was not looking to record zero cases, but to stamp out the virus in an aggressive manner.

Russia test fires hypersonic missile

AGENCIES

MOSCOW: Russia said Monday it had completed two launches of hypersonic cruise missiles, including one from a submerged submarine, the latest tests of emerging weapons President Vladimir Putin has dubbed "invincible".

Moscow has in recent years touted the development of weapons that it hopes will give it the edge in any arms race with the United States at a time of growing tensions with the West. Hypersonics can travel more than five times the speed of sound and manoeuvre in mid-flight, making them much harder to track and intercept than traditional projectiles. The military said on Monday it had fired a Zircon missile from the Severodvinsk nuclear submarine and hit a test target in the Barents Sea in Russia's Arctic. "The test launch of the Zircon missile from a nuclear submarine was considered successful," the defence ministry said in a statement. The ministry released grainy video footage showing missile flares illuminating the night sky.

Two US scientists win Nobel Prize in Medicine

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: US scientists David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian have won the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for discoveries on nerve receptors for temperature and touch. David Julius and Ardem Patapoutian were given the award in the field of physiology or medicine on Monday, Secretary-General of the Nobel Committee Thomas Perlmann announced. "The groundbreaking discoveries...by this year's Nobel Prize laureates have allowed us to understand how heat, cold and mechanical force can initiate the nerve impulses that allow us to perceive and adapt to the world," the committee said upon announcing the winners. "In our daily lives, we take these sensations for granted, but how are nerve impulses initiated so that temperature and pressure can be perceived? This question has been solved by this year's Nobel Prize laureates," Patrik Ernfors, a member of the Nobel Committee, said the duo's discoveries unlock "one of the secrets of nature".

Diplomatic tensions escalate between France and Algeria

"There were previous colonizations. I am fascinated to see Turkey's ability to make people totally forget the role it played in Algeria and the domination it has exercised, and to explain that we are the only colonizers. It's great. Algerians believe it"

AGENCIES

PARIS: Tensions between France and Algeria have continued to rise following remarks by French President Emmanuel Macron on the North African country's colonial past. On Thursday, Macron met with the descendants of Algerians at the Elysee Palace who fought on France's side during Algeria's war of independence, the French daily Le Monde reported. "The building of Algeria as a nation is a phenomenon worth watching. Was there an Algerian nation before French colonization? That is the question," said Macron, according to the report. "There were previous colonizations. I am fascinated to see Turkey's ability to make people totally forget the role it played in Algeria and the domination it has exercised, and to explain that we are the only colonizers. It's great. Algerians believe it," he reportedly added. Macron reportedly argued that the "official history of Algeria has been rewritten, not based on truths, but based on hatred against France." He said that after it gained independence from France in 1962, Algeria was built on "a memorial rent" maintained by "the politico-military system," adding the whole problem is presented as France.

Macron said he would like to produce Arabic and Berber publications to counter the "disinformation" and "propaganda" in the Maghreb that is "carried out by the Turks and completely rewrites history." The Algerian Presidency issued a statement Saturday broadcast on state television condemning the French president's remarks. "Macron's remarks are an unacceptable insult

Algeria shuts airspace to French military

FOREIGN DESK

ALGIERS: Algeria has closed its airspace to French military planes, France's military said, escalating the biggest row between the countries in years. A spokesperson for the French Armed Forces said on Sunday that Algeria had closed its airspace to two flights, but that it would have "no major consequences" for operations in the Sahel region, south of Algeria. Algeria's government and military were not immediately available for comment on the closure of airspace. On Saturday, Algeria recalled its ambassador to Paris citing comments attributed to French President Emmanuel Macron, who was quoted in Le Monde as saying Algeria's "politico-military system" had rewritten the history of its colonisation by France based on

to the memory of over 5.63 million martyrs who sacrificed themselves with a valiant resistance against French colonialism [between 1830-1962]," it said.

It said the numerous colonial crimes committed by France are a genocide against the Algerian people and noted that the statements attributed to Macron were not officially denied. It said Algeria rejects interference in its internal

affairs and the Algerian Ambassador to France, Mohamed Antar-Daoud, has been recalled for consultations.

Tensions between the two countries have been growing since France decided to cut the number of visas issued to Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans. Paris announced Tuesday that it will reduce the number of visas available to people from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, ac-

causing the governments of the North African countries of refusing to take back irregular migrants expelled from France.

According to French media, orders were issued to deport 7,731 Algerians between January and July this year but Algerian authorities provided consular documents required for the repatriation for just 31 people. Algeria then summoned the French Ambassador to Algeria, Francois Gouyette, to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Chakib Kaid, the Foreign Ministry's secretary general, conveyed Algeria's grievances to the French envoy, according to a ministry statement. He said the French government's "unilateral decision...was issued without coordination with the Algerian side," which raises questions about "its motives" and implementation. French Prime Minister Jean Castex was scheduled to visit Algeria on April 11 for a high-level Franco-Algerian intergovernmental committee meeting, but it was cancelled by the French side due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following day, France insisted there were no tensions with Algeria after Castex abruptly called off the visit. Shortly after, appearing on a news program, Clement Beaune, France's secretary of state for European affairs, said: "There are sometimes use of excessive words in Franco-Algerian relations."

He was referring to a statement by Algeria's Labor Minister El Hachemi Djabaoub, who declared France "our traditional and eternal enemy." Algerian Army Chief of Staff General Said Chengriha earlier this year also called on France to hand over maps of nuclear test sites in his country's desert in the 1960s to be cleared of radiation.

Russia dismisses Pandora Papers

MOSCOW: Russia has dismissed revelations leaked in the Pandora Papers as "unsubstantiated claims" after an investigation by a media consortium shone a light on wealth allegedly amassed by Kremlin-linked individuals. The Pandora Papers investigation, involving some 600 journalists from media including The Washington Post, the BBC and The Guardian, is based on a leak of 11.9 million documents from 14 financial services companies around the world. The files were leaked to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and published on Sunday. Putin is not directly named, but he is linked via associates to secret assets in Monaco, notably a waterfront home acquired by a Russian woman reported to have had a child with the Russian leader. — Agencies

Romanian billionaire dies in plane crash

WEB DESK

MILAN: A small private plane has crashed into an empty building on the outskirts of Milan in northern Italy, killing all eight people on board, according to police. The plane, which took off from Milan's Linate city airport on Sunday, was headed for the island of Sardinia, officials said. It was piloted by Romanian billionaire Dan Petrescu, according to Italian media. The 68-year-old was one of Romania's richest men. He headed a major construction firm and owned a string of supermarkets and malls. He also held German nationality, the Corriere della Sera newspaper reported. Corriere and the AGI news agency said Petrescu's 65-year-old wife, who also had French nationality, and their son Dan Stefano, 30, were killed. Also on the plane with the family were four of their friends, two sisters and a couple with their one-year-old child. The crash occurred just outside a metro station in the Milan suburb of San Donato. People in the area reported hearing a blast when the plane collided with the two-storey building, which was empty at the time as it was being renovated.

Ethiopia's Abiy sworn in as PM for second term

AGENCIES

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has been sworn in for a new five-year term as his government faces a host of challenges, including a months-long conflict in the northern region of Tigray. Abiy took the oath of office, administered by Supreme Court Chief Justice Meaza Ashenafi, on Monday following similar oaths by the speaker and deputy speaker of the parliament's lower house. "I, Abiy Ahmed Ali, today in the House of People's Representatives, accept the appointment as prime minister, as I pledge to undertake responsibly and with faith to the constitution the responsibility placed upon me by the people," he said. Abiy's Prosperity Party was declared the winner of parliamentary elections earlier this year in a vote criticised and, at times, boycotted by opposition parties but described by some outside electoral observers as better run than those in the past. In June, the prime minister's party won 410 of the 436 parliamentary seats that were contested.

India to pay \$674 for every covid death

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court's order followed a petition by lawyers seeking compensation under India's disaster management laws. India has officially recorded more than 447,000 Covid-19 deaths so far. However, experts believe that up to 10 times more people could have died in the pandemic. They have arrived at different estimates after examining excess deaths - a measure of how many more people are dying than would be expected compared to the previous few years. On Monday Justice MR Shah said the "next of kin and kin of the deceased person" shall be paid this compensation within a month of applying. This would be "over and above the amounts paid by the centre and state under various benevolent schemes", he said. The court added that the compensation should be paid within 30 days after a family submits an application. In June, petitioners sought the court's intervention in paying compensation to the families of Covid-19 victims. They said since Covid-19 was "specially" notified as a disaster under India's National Disaster Management Act, compensation should be paid to the victims. The 2005 law was enacted for efficient management of disasters, including preparation of mitigation strategies, capacity-building and compensation for lost lives, injuries and damaged properties. — APP



ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d'affaires a.i. Angela P. Aggeler had her first meeting with NCSWPK Chairperson Nilofar Bakhtiar to learn about NCSW priorities & discuss our commitment to advance the issues that affect women & girls in Pakistan. — DNA

Indian farmers to step up protests after nine killed

NEW DELHI: Farmers in India have vowed to intensify their months-long protest against laws aimed at liberalising agriculture as tensions flare a day after nine people were killed in northern Uttar Pradesh state's Lakhimpur Kheri district. The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday announced 4.5m Indian rupees (\$60,530) compensation to the families of the victims of Sunday's violence. The state government also said a retired High Court judge will investigate the incident. The farmers, meanwhile, have decided to step up their protests against the contentious farm laws. "We'll intensify our agitation in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of the country to highlight the plight of innocent farmers," Dharmendra Malik, a senior leader of the Bharatiya Kisan Union, told Reuters news agency. "The government might try to discredit the 10-month-long movement, but we will remain peaceful in our struggle." Four farmers died on Sunday when a car owned by federal Minister of State for Home, Ajay Mishra, ran over protesting farmers in the Uttar Pradesh town of Lakhimpur Kheri, officials and farm leaders said. Farm leaders alleged Mishra's son was in the car when it ran over the protesters, but the junior home minister denied it. Mishra said his driver and three members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who were in the car, were all killed by the protesters in the violence that broke out after the incident. "They were beaten to death by the farmers," Mishra said in a statement. Police also said they recovered the body of a local journalist from the spot where violence ensued Sunday but did not provide further details on how he was killed. — Foreign Desk

Sabina urges int'l condemnation of Armenian war crimes

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijan's Human Rights Commissioner (Ombudsman) Sabina Aliyeva has called the world community and international organizations to strongly condemn Armenian war crimes and gross violations of international law, the ombudsman office reported on its website on October 4. In a statement on the anniversary of casualties and destructions caused by the shelling of Ganja city and other areas of Azerbaijan by Armenian armed forces, Aliyeva said: "On the eve of the anniversary of those events, which resulted in numerous casualties and are tragic not only for the people of Azerbaijan but also for humanity, once again appealing to the world community and international organizations, I call on them to strongly condemn war crimes accompanied by gross violations of international law, as well as of IHL

and resulted in the killing of civilians, and to push for decisive steps to bring the Armenian military-political leadership to justice." She recalled that on October 4, 2020, starting from early hours, Armenian armed forces attacked from the prohibited munitions Ganja city, the second-largest and densely populated city located far from the former conflict zone. Aliyeva emphasized that on this day, Mingachevir city, where the largest hydroelectric power station and war reservoir are located,

as well as Khizi and Absheron, which were located far away from the area of active hostilities, were also chosen by Armenia as a target. The ombudsman added that the Armenian armed forces deliberately and in a targeted manner shelled the populous settlements in Beylagan, Tartar cities, Fuzuli's Horadiz city, Barda, Aghdam, Aghjabedi, Jabrayil and other densely populated civilian objects from the heavy artillery and missiles. "As a consequence, there were many killed and wounded among the peaceful

population; civilian objects, historic monuments and cultural property, administrative buildings, and other social objects were heavily damaged," the statement read. She noted that on-site investigations were conducted after those attacks and the findings have been documented and addressed to the international community as a report. The statement stressed that Armenia perpetrated war crimes once again showing disrespect for international law, while IHL requires distinguishing between combatants and civilians, civilian and military objectives during the hostilities. "Unfortunately, I would like to note that the military-political leadership of Armenia, which committed war crimes in gross violation of the norms and principles of international law, has not yet been held accountable and prosecuted for serious crimes," the ombudsman stressed.



Britain sends military amid fuel crisis

Panic buying of fuel amid the shortage of truckers triggered chaotic scenes across major cities last week with queues of drivers stacked up. Some have had fist fights over the pumps while others hoarded fuel in old water bottles

AGENCIES

LONDON: British military personnel in combat fatigues arrived on Monday at a BP (BP.L) storage depot after the government ordered the army to help deliver fuel to tackle an acute shortage of truckers. Britain's supply chains for everything from pork, petrol and poultry to medicines and milk have been strained to breaking point by shortages of labour in the wake of the Brexit and COVID crises. Panic buying of fuel amid the

shortage of truckers triggered chaotic scenes across major cities last week with queues of drivers stacked up. Some have had fist fights over the pumps while others hoarded fuel in old water bottles. "As an extra precaution, we've put the extra drivers on," Prime Minister Boris Johnson's finance minister, Rishi Sunak, told LBC radio. "The situation has been improving now for I think over a week every day ... it is getting better and as demand settles back to more normal levels the strong expectation is things will resolve themselves." Reuters reporters said they saw at

least two dozen gas stations still closed across London and southern England. Drivers were still queuing outside those stations which were open. The Petrol Retailers Association said about 22% of fuel stations in London and the southeast were still without fuel, and the association's executive director, Gordon Balmer, said it might take a week to 10 days to get stocks back up to normal. British ministers have repeatedly denied that the fuel crisis has anything to do with Brexit and have cast the trucker shortage as a global problem, though other

European neighbours have not experienced queues at gas stations. "The HGV drivers is not a UK issue, it's a Europe wide issue and beyond," Sunak said. "I want people to know that we are doing everything we can to mitigate some of those challenges, where we can make a difference." Johnson said on Sunday he would not return to "uncontrolled immigration" to solve fuel, gas and Christmas food crises, suggesting such strains were part of a period of post-Brexit adjustment. Amid the fuel station crisis, farmers have repeatedly warned that a shortage of butchers and abattoir

workers could force a cull of more than 100,000 pigs backed up on farms. Adding to the sense of chaos on Monday, the British capital was brought to a standstill by climate change activists who blocked major routes into London. About 50 campaigners from Insulate Britain, which wants the government to commit to providing insulation for 29 million homes, blocked busy routes into the city including the Blackwall Tunnel in east London and a bridge over the River Thames in southwest of the capital. Police said they made 38 arrests.

Briefs

Iran foresees nuclear talks resuming by November

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Iran foresees talks with world powers aimed at reviving its nuclear deal resuming by early November, foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh said Monday.

"I don't think it will take us the same amount of time as it took the Biden administration to come," Khatibzadeh said, referring to US diplomats under President Joe Biden indirectly joining the Vienna talks.

For the government of Iran's ultraconservative new President Ebrahim Raisi, "I don't think the (return to talks) will take as much as 90 days," he said, suggesting talks will be underway again by early November.

It is the first time Iran has suggested a rough date for a possible return to the table. The 2015 nuclear deal gave Iran sanctions relief in return for tight controls on its nuclear programme, monitored by the UN.

In 2018 then-US president Donald Trump withdrew from the multilateral deal and began reimposing sanctions. Tehran has gradually rolled back its nuclear commitments since 2019.

Dutch companies keen to invest in solid waste projects

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Netherlands Wouter Plomp called on the Federal Minister for Energy Muhammad Hamad Azhar Monday in his office to discuss the issues of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the Minister highlighted the initiatives of his government to enhance the share of renewable energy in the energy mix of Pakistan which has been targeted to be 45% by 2030, said a press release.

He informed that all the future energy projects would be renewable energy based. The Minister reiterated that Pakistan is keen to develop cleaner and environmentally friendly sources of energy.

He further added that Pakistan is introducing policy of wheeling of electricity which would allow power producers to sell electricity to any local business entity instead of central power purchasing agency.

He also informed that Pakistan is investing heavily to enhance the transmission capacity of the country removing all bottlenecks and excavating new transmission lines.

Sh Rasheed denies having knowledge of TTP talks

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rasheed has denied having any knowledge of talks with Taliban insisting that Prime Minister Imran Khan has said that dialogue will be held with those Taliban who will lay down their arms. The interior minister was talking to the media on Monday. He informed that Nadra had been tasked to arrest people who were involved in the holding of dollars. For this purpose, Eagle Mobile Squad has been launched, he added. He regretted that the Islamabad police did not have the locators.

Regarding removing flaws in the Nadra record, Rasheed said: "His ministry will clear the mess of 10 years in the national identity cards." He told media persons that 136 Nadra officials had been suspended on issuing fake identity cards, adding that 90 inquiries were underway and 300 Nadra officials were charge-sheeted so far. He also revealed that his ministry was taking action against those responsible for issuing fake certificates of vaccination. He hinted at introducing a new biometric policy.

World leaders scramble to limit Pandora Papers damage

Some 35 current and ex-leaders are featured in 11.9 million documents leaked from financial services companies across world

NEWS DESK

LONDON: Governments moved on Monday to limit the fallout from a release of millions of documents detailing how leaders have used offshore tax havens to stash assets worth hundreds of millions of dollars. Some 35 current and former leaders are featured in roughly 11.9 million documents leaked from financial services companies across the world that include reports of luxury homes on the French Riviera, Monte Carlo and California. The documents, known as the "Pandora Papers", were obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) and released in stories by media partners including The Washington Post, the BBC and The Guardian. Allegations range from corruption to money laundering and tax avoidance.

Although holding assets offshore or using shell companies is not illegal in most countries, the revelations are embarrassing for leaders who have pushed austerity measures or campaigned against corruption. Russian leader Vladimir Putin is not named but he is linked via associates to secret assets in Monaco, particularly a waterfront home acquired by a Russian woman reported to have had a child with him.

"This is just a set of largely unsubstantiated claims," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We didn't see anything on hidden wealth within Putin's inner circle." Jordan was also keen to play down the revelations, which exposed how King Abdullah II created a network of offshore companies and tax havens to amass a \$100 million property empire from California to London.

The country's royal court said the properties were funded with the king's personal

wealth and were used for official and private visits.

"Any allegations that link these private properties to public funds or assistance are baseless and deliberate attempts to distort facts," a statement said.

The ICIJ found links between almost 1,000 companies in offshore havens and 336 high-level politicians and public officials, including more than a dozen serving heads of state and government, country leaders, cabinet ministers, ambassadors and others.

More than two-thirds of the companies were set up in the British Virgin Islands. Family and associates of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev – long accused of corruption in the central Asian nation – are alleged to have been secretly involved in property deals in Britain worth hundreds of millions.

And the documents also show how Czech

Prime Minister Andrej Babis – who faces an election later this week – failed to declare an offshore investment company used to purchase a chateau worth \$22 million in the south of France.

"I have never done anything illegal or wrong," Babis hit back in a tweet, calling the revelations a smear attempt aimed at influencing the election.

Nearly 2 million of the 11.9 million leaked documents came from a Panamanian law firm called Alcomgal, which the ICIJ said had become "a magnet for the rich and powerful" seeking to hide wealth offshore.

Alcomgal, whose clients allegedly included the Jordanian monarch and Czech prime minister, rejected accusations of shady dealings.

ICIJ's director Gerard Ryle said in a video accompanying the investigation that those best placed to halt such practices were the ones who were benefiting most.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Matsuda Kuninori pays a farewell call on Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. – DNA

Qureshi lauds Amb. Matsuda's services

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that there are vast investment opportunities for Japanese companies in Pakistan.

According to details, Ambassador of Japan Koninori Matsuda had a farewell meeting with Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in which issues of mutual interest including bilateral relations and promotion of bilateral cooperation in various fields were discussed.

During the meeting, the Japanese Ambassador informed the Foreign Minister that Toyota intends to invest heavily in the field of hybrid car manufacturing in Pakistan.

The Japanese Ambassador said that Japan was taking practical steps to procure trained manpower from Pakistan and in this regard interviews of one thousand engineers have been completed. Japanese Ambassador Koninori Matsuda further said that several major Japanese companies have expressed keen interest in setting up food processing plants in Pakistan. JICA will take steps to improve the drainage system in Multan. On the occasion, the Foreign Minister appreciated the services of the Japanese Ambassador in promoting bilateral relations between Pakistan and Japan, while the Foreign Minister also extended best wishes to the Japanese Ambassador.

KSA confirms first round of talks with new Iranian govt

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has confirmed that it had held its first round of direct talks with Iran's new government last month, part of a process begun earlier this year to reduce tension between the Gulf's rival powers. Both nations severed ties in 2016 and began talks in April, at a time when Washington and Tehran were discussing reviving a nuclear pact that Riyadh and its allies had opposed.

Three rounds of Saudi-Iranian talks were held in Iraq in the months before Iran's new president, Ebrahim Raisi, took office in August. Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said the latest round had

taken place on September 21. He did not give the location of the meeting. The date coincides with a speech by Raisi at the UN General Assembly in New York.

"These discussions are still in the exploratory phase. We hope they will provide a basis to address unresolved issues between the two sides and we will strive and work to realise that," he told a joint news conference.

Riyadh and Tehran have both said they hope the talks can ease tensions, while playing down expectations of a major diplomatic breakthrough. Iran did not immediately comment on the September 21 round of talks. Riyadh has said it would judge the government of Raisi by the reality on the ground.



Pak, SCO joint anti-terrorist exercise 2021 concludes

The Chinese and Pakistani troops participated in the exercise and shared their experiences

NEHAL MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: The two-week long Joint Anti-Terrorist Exercise (JATE) – 2021 closing ceremony was held at National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi where troops of Chinese and Pakistani armed forces took part in the drill.

This was the first ever military exercise conducted in Pakistan under the

ambit of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Regional Anti Terrorism Structure (RATS), said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release on Monday.

The exercise focused on enhancing cooperation and cohesiveness in combating international terrorism. The Chinese and Pakistani troops participated in the exercise and shared their experiences of capacity building and innovative

approaches and methods on emerging technologies being used to counter the evolving threats.

The exercise was conducted in two stages. Stage one of the training was conducted in respective SCO member countries from 26-31 July while stage 2 conducted in Pakistan from 21 September to 4 October 2021.

During the two weeks long training, participating troops from China

and Pakistan extensively practiced various drills as part of the Joint Counter Terrorism Operations from planning to conduct; including Cordon and Search, Compound Clearance, Close Quarter Battle, Rappelling from Helicopter, Explosive Handling and Medical Evacuation. Commander Central Command Lieutenant General Shaheen Mazher Mehmood was the chief guest on the closing ceremony.

Hindu mob in India attacks Church during Sunday mass

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: In the latest anti-Christian violence in the officially secular country, around 200 men armed with rods and sticks stormed a church in northern India during Sunday prayer service, police said. At least five people were injured in the attack allegedly carried out by members of Hindu vigilante groups in Uttarakhand state, according to a complaint by the church authorities.

The frenzied mob destroyed furniture, photographs, and musical instruments while shouting slogans hailing the Hindu God Ram, they said. "We have been conducting raids since last night to nab the leader of the mob. An investigation is on to identify the remaining 150-200 people involved in the incident," local police official Vivek Kumar told AFP.

Priyo Sadhna Porter, the pastor of the church in Roorkee city, said she could identify most of the attackers as they belonged to Bajrang Dal, a Hindu vigilante

group, and other similar outfits. "We demand strict action against them," she told the Times of India newspaper.

Since the beginning of the year, there have been similar attacks on Christian churches, mainly in Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh – two Indian states with large populations of marginalised, low-caste tribal communities. Hindu groups accuse pastors and activists of converting tens of thousands of tribal people by offering cash and other incentives, a charge denied by the Christian community.

Lowest global virus death toll for 11 months

The 53,245 deaths recorded worldwide between September 27 and October 3, an average of 7,606 each day, showed that the global pandemic continues the downward trend that began at the end of August

AGENCIES

PARIS: The weekly number of coronavirus deaths worldwide has fallen to levels unseen for almost a year, according to an AFP count on Monday based on official national figures.

The 53,245 deaths recorded worldwide between September 27 and October 3, an average of 7,606 each day, showed that the global pandemic continues the downward trend that began at the end of August, after a peak of around 10,000 deaths per day.

The new weekly death toll figure is the lowest recorded since Oct 31-November 6, 2020.

Over the last month the number of Covid-19 related deaths has fallen by almost a quarter, as vaccination campaigns make

Pakistan reports lowest death toll since July

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday reported 1,490 new COVID-19 cases and 27 more deaths, the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Monday. The NCOC said the country's number of overall confirmed cases had risen to 1,251,348, including 1,177,249 who have recovered. The number of active cases has dropped to 46,206 who are under treatment across the country, while 3,407 are in critical condition. According to the NCOC, the pandemic killed 27 people on Sunday, increasing the death toll to 27,893. Pakistan's southern Sindh province is the most affected region of the country with 460,111 infections followed by eastern Punjab province which has reported 433,286 infections. – APP

progress. After a year of Coronavirus waves, linked in particular to the spread of variants including the more contagious Delta strain, the curve of new cases is

also down, by almost a third compared to the end of August.

With nearly 81 doses of anti-Covid-19 vaccine administered per 100 inhabitants

worldwide, according to an AFP count, the authorities hope to see this decline continue, even if there are still major disparities between regions.

For every 100 residents of North America 123 vaccines doses have been administered. The figure for Africa is 11 doses per 100 people, with half the nations on the continent managing to fully vaccinate just two percent of their people, according to the World Health Organization's Africa office.

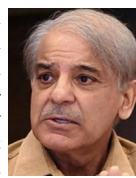
Since the virus was first discovered in China in late 2019, around 4.8 million people have died of Covid-19 around the world.

The WHO has said that taking into account excess mortality directly and indirectly linked to Covid-19 the pandemic's true overall toll could be two to three times higher than official records.

Shehbaz slams govt over power tariff hike

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PML-N President and Opposition leader in the National Assembly Shehbaz Sharif has



demanding of the government to withdraw notification of Rs1.72 raise in the electricity prices terming it an inept and corrupt government's new injustice.

In a statement released on Monday, Shehbaz dubbed the recent raise in the power tariff rate as an extreme kind of aggression on the part of inefficient rulers. He called upon the government to have mercy on the nation.

He said that the government was constantly throwing thunderbolts of inflation by hiking prices of petrol, gas and electricity. Shehbaz lamented that the government could not give anything good to the poor masses except rising inflation. "From increase in the policy rate to a hike in the prices of daily used items, it depicts an unending cycle of an incompetent and corrupt government," he reiterated.

Lashing out at the government, the PML-N president said that every single decision taken by the government always brought a bad luck for the poor people.

Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp services down

WEB DESK

CALIFORNIA: Major social media services including Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp were hit by a massive outage on Monday, tracking sites showed, impacting potentially tens of millions of users.

Outage tracker Downdetector was showing outages in heavily populated areas like Washington and Paris, with problems being reported from around 1545 GMT.

Downdetector showed there were more than 20,000 incidents of people reporting issues with Facebook and Instagram.

Users trying to access Facebook in affected areas were greeted with the message: "Something went wrong. We're working on it and we'll get it fixed as soon as we can." "We're aware that some people are having trouble accessing our apps and products," Facebook spokesman Andy Stone said on Twitter.

India out to malign Pak through fake news in Tajik media

ISLAMABAD: After suffering frustration to fulfill its designs in Afghanistan, India is now trying to malign Pakistan in Tajikistan by sponsoring fake news stories and articles.

According to security analysts, it is creating a negative image of Pakistan among the Tajik people like it did in Afghanistan during former governments of Karzai and Ghani. By blaming Pakistan for Taliban's surge in Afghanistan, it tried to influence Tajik people by propagating that Taliban posed threat to India and Tajikistan alike.

According to experts, it is now an established fact that Indian government's backed media has been frequently opposing Taliban government and their return to power. India is trying to misguide the world community about the situation in Afghanistan as it does not want peace in the region.

According to international affairs experts, after Tajikistan raised certain concerns over Taliban's rule, it is now trying to find an opportunity in such concerns by adding fuel to undermine Tajik-Afghan ties, besides creating a divide between Pakistan and Tajikistan by sponsoring anti-Pakistan news. Its frustration has increased manifold as its plays to exert influence in the Central Asia through palpable presence in Afghanistan came to an end. – APP