



Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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Ties with European Union: Pak grateful to Spain for support

Detailed News On Page-01

Vast investment opportunities in Pakistan

Detailed News On Page-01



Babar vows to continue winning momentum

Detailed News On Page-06



Briefs

West taking Russia too lightly

DNA

MOSCOW: President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the West was taking Russia's warnings not to cross its "red lines" too lightly and that Moscow needed serious security guarantees from the West. In a wide-ranging foreign policy speech, the Kremlin leader also described relations with the United States as "unsatisfactory" but said Russia remained open to dialogue with Washington. The Kremlin said in September that NATO would overstep a Russian red line if it expanded its military infrastructure in Ukraine.

Joint session a black day

DNA

QUETTA: Molana Fazal ur Rehman Thursday attempted to control the electoral process of the country before the general elections of 2023. Addressing an Ulema convention in Quetta, Fazl said termed July 25, 2018, as a "black day" when, he added, the general elections were rigged in the country. "Yesterday was also a black day in parliament," said Fazl, who also heads the anti-government PDM alliance. He further added that the country was "no one's property" and would be run with the "will of the people and the Constitution".

Taking steps to curb inflation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue, Shaukat Tarin on Thursday said the government has taken pragmatic steps to tackle the inflation, stabilize foreign exchange and increase productivity. Adviser stressed that priority sectors such as modernization of agriculture, Information Technology (IT) and industry were vital for increase in exports and economic growth.

PM all praise for voting legislation

says provision of voting rights will enhance expatriates' importance; technology must be used

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Thursday said that voting right to overseas Pakistanis provided through Wednesday's legislation, would not only enrich their importance but also enable them to keep a check on governments using their power of vote. "Every government will be compelled to value the overseas Pakistanis because (now) they can vote. When they will vote, they will elect a government which will ease their lives," he said addressing the launching ceremony of a portal to help the expatriates get digitally verified their power of attorney. He said in democracy, the voters could keep a check on their government through their vote. As the overseas Pakistanis were around nine million in number, the governments would be forced to value them duly. Secondly, he said the legislation on the use of EVM in elections was also made possible as NADRA made it easier to ensure election using the latest technology. He said as the technology had changed the world altogether, its non-usage would be nothing but a silly approach. He recalled that the Election Commission in 2008 and a judicial commission in 2015 had also recommended the use of EVM to ensure holding a transparent election. He viewed that in fact those desiring to take advantage of old system would never let the change to come in. He also mentioned the resistance faced by the government from within the Utility Stores and FBR when it tried to automate their working to bring in transparency.

Continued on Page 06

'Worse than martial law'; Opp. slams govt

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The joint Opposition on Thursday lashed out at the government for bulldozing more than three dozen bills in a joint sitting of Parliament, terming the move "worse than martial law". In Wednesday's joint session of Parliament, a record 33 bills were passed in a single day, including the controversial bills related to the use of electronic voting machines (EVMs) and the International Court of Justice. PPP Senator Sherry Rehman, speaking during a press conference in Islamabad along with PML-N Secretary-General Ahsan Iqbal, said: "The events that transpired yesterday in the assembly were not even witnessed during Musharraf's era [...] it was worse than martial law." The PPP lawmaker said the government had "trampled" democracy in Parliament by getting the bills passed through an "artificial majority". "We will challenge these bills at every forum possible," she said. PML-N leader Iqbal said it was the "blackest day" in the history of Parliament, expressing the hope that

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Manuel Duran of Spain apprising FM Shah Mehmood Qureshi of picture exhibition during an event to mark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations. - DNA

Ties with EU: Pakistan grateful to Spain: FM

Qureshi says that since establishment of our diplomatic relations 70 years ago, our ties have grown

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

Cultural ties with Pak priority: Spanish envoy

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that Pakistan is grateful to Spain for its support at the European Union and other forums. The foreign Minister was addressing an event marking the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Pakistan-Spain diplomatic relations. Qureshi said that it was Pakistan's national poet, the great Muhammad Iqbal who in 1933 visited Spain and went to see the Mosque of Cordoba. Iqbal was so moved by the magnificence and solemnity of the Mosque, he penned his now immortal poem in homage, called Masjid-i-Qartaba (The Mosque of Cordoba). Iqbal saw the Mosque as a cultural landmark of Islam. In fact, if you glance towards these magnificent petals above me, you will see a portrait of Allama Iqbal etched into the stone. Deliberating upon the importance of people-to-people contacts, Qureshi said it is the people of

Continued on Page 06

Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran has said Spain and Pakistan enjoy excellent relations adding cultural relations being given new dimensions. He expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of a function arranged to celebrate 70 years of Pak-Spain friendship. Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood

Qureshi was the chief guest. Guests enjoyed live Flamenco and Pakistani music. A photo exhibition was also arranged on the occasion. Ambassador Duran further said Spanish foreign minister's recent visit to Pakistan further cemented relations between the two countries.

- Detailed news of Ambassador's address along with more pictures shall be published in tomorrow's edition

Afghanistan on brink of catastrophe; UN warns

"Now is not the time to turn away from the Afghan people," Lyons said at a press conference

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The UN envoy for Afghanistan says the country is "on the brink of a humanitarian catastrophe", urging the international community to find ways to provide financial support to the Afghan people, who "feel abandoned". Deborah Lyons said an estimated 60 percent of Afghanistan's 38 million people are facing crisis levels of hunger in a food emergency that will likely worsen over the winter. "Now is not the time to turn away from the Afghan people," Lyons said at a press conference on Wednesday at the UN. "To abandon the Afghan people now would be a historic mistake - a mistake that has been made before with tragic consequences."

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan urges int'l community to unfreeze Afghan assets

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: Pakistan drew the world community's attention to the dire humanitarian and economic crisis in Afghanistan and fervently called for lifting the "unjustified freeze" on the war-torn country's assets to enable it to deal with the critical situation. "Cash is needed to revive the economy - to pay salaries, restore small businesses, revive the banking system," Ambassador Munir Akram told UN Security Council while highlighting that 28 million Afghans were facing acute food insecurity. Speaking in the 15-member council's meeting on

Afghanistan, the Pakistani envoy warned that the consequences of a major humanitarian crisis and economic collapse would be horrendous - massive human suffering, the outflow of millions of more Afghan refugees, the likelihood of chaos and further conflict and reinforcement of Da'ish and other terrorist groups. "When the millions of Afghan refugees start flowing across our borders, we who are hosting 4 million Afghan refugees already will not be able to take more, they will have to go elsewhere," Ambassador Akram said. "These are consequences which the international community must avoid."

TLP chief Saad Rizvi released

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) chief Saad Rizvi has been released from jail and later reached the Rehmatul Lil Alameen Mosque, a party spokesperson said Thursday. Rizvi was taken into custody on deputy commissioner Lahore's directives in April shortly after the party announced countrywide protests. The TLP chief has been released after a reference, filed in the Supreme Court's federal review board for his detention, was withdrawn. Rizvi's release follows days of protests staged by the then proscribed party.

Schools, colleges behind extremism, not Madressahs

Ch Fawad says Islam always advocated for tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the society

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry on Thursday said it is schools and colleges that are the major reason behind extremism, not madressahs, as is the popular belief. "In the 90s, teachers were appointed to preach extremism," the information minister said, while addressing the launching ceremony of "Charter of Peace", organised by Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies. Chaudhry said the state and govern-



Continued on Page 06

DG ISI pays farewell call on PM

PM appreciated the efforts and services of Lt Gen Faiz Hameed as DG ISI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Director-General of Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI) Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed paid farewell call to Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad Thursday. In the farewell meeting, the PM appreciated the efforts and services of Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed as DG ISI for the country's security. He also expressed their best wishes for Lt Gen Faiz Hameed on his new assignment as the Peshawar Corps Commander. A day earlier, the DG ISI paid a farewell visit to President Dr Arif Alvi at the Presidential Palace, where the President, too, appreciated the efforts and services of Lt Gen Hameed as DG ISI for the country's security. (Picture on Page 07)

CAA launches online app

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) has launched an app for identifying and reporting hazards, risky incidents, accidents and safety issues witnessed during air travel directly to the authority, it emerged on Thursday. The Android app, called the "Voluntary Hazard/Incident Reporting System", is available on the Google Play store. According to a statement issued by the PCAA, the app covers a wide range of reporting areas, including "hazard, incident, accident, damage, deficiency, violation, failure and services".

Inside...

- UAF VC calls to boost up production capability - Page 02
- Business community assures support to Pak Sweet Homes - Page 03
- COMSTECH, IOFS join hands to explore new opportunities - Page 04
- Biden, Xi Jinping attempt to defuse US-China tensions - Page 05
- Muguruza beats Anett to clinch WTA Finals - Page 06
- Experts call for Pak-Uzbek Women engagement - Page 07
- Indonesian Women Association organizes Batik Fashion Show - Page 08

'Pak keen to enhance bilateral relations with Italy'

Dr Shahzad expressed these views in a meeting with Italian Ambassador Andreas Ferrarese

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Andreas Ferrarese Thursday called on Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem, Leader of the House in the Senate and discussed issues of mutual interest. Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem said that Pakistan was keen to further enhance bilateral relations, trade and economic ties with Italy and there is need to enhance the exchange of parliamentary and trade delegations to further strengthen people-to-people contacts. Leader of the House said that recent joint sitting of the Parliament of Pakistan was a historic in which legislation was enacted fulfilling the longstanding demand of Pakistanis abroad for the right to vote, said a news release. He said that 150,000 Pakistanis are currently living in Italy. Pakistani Diaspora is playing a vital role in the development and prosperity of both

Italy and Pakistan. He said that Pakistanis residing in Italy were contributing around 600 million dollars in foreign exchange to Pa-

kistan. He thanked leadership of Italy for its support on GSP Plus. Dr. Shahzad Waseem said that the bilateral trade volume needs to be

further increased. "There are vast opportunities for trade and investment in various fields between the two countries. Italian investors

can benefit from investing in Pakistan. Italy has a prominent place among European countries".

Ambassador of Italy said that there are vast investment opportunities in Pakistan which will be fully utilized. Ambassador appreciated the role played by government of Pakistan in providing humanitarian assistance for safe evacuation of foreigners from Afghanistan. Leader of the House reiterated that Pakistan strives for peace and development in the region and will continue to play its positive role for peace. Senator Dr. Shahzad Waseem while referring to the efforts of Prime Minister Imran Khan regarding issue of climate change said that the environment friendly policies of the Government of Pakistan were very well received at the international level. The Italian Ambassador remarked that the Pakistani community in Italy was playing a positive role in the development of Italy and acts as a bridge between the two countries.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy, Andreas Ferrarese calls on Leader of the House in Senate, Dr. Shahzad Waseem. - DNA

UAF VC calls to boost up production capability

The timely sowing balance use of fertilizers, drill sowing, eradication of weeds and other methods would increase productivity

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: It is alarming to note that despite being an agrarian country, Pakistan is importing 3 million tons of wheat worth Rs. 175 billion. For which, it is prerequisite to increase per acre production in order to ensure food security, become self-sufficient in wheat and to curb the crises, said University of Agriculture, Faisalabad Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan.

Addressing a farmers' convention held in Government High School No1 Shahkot as part of Punjab government ongoing wheat sowing campaign, he said progressive farmers are getting wheat yields of up to 80 maunds per acre, while our average wheat production is limited to 31 maunds.

The timely sowing balance use of fertilizers, drill sowing, eradication of weeds and other methods would increase productivity. He also said that the country was losing 15 percent of production during harvest

through outdated combine harvester. Therefore it should be repaired or replaced with sophisticated harvesting machines to boost up the production. He said that in China, thousands of the students had been sent in the agricultural fields to get practical experience.

He said that UAF in collaboration with Agriculture, Extension Department Punjab has sent as many as 22,000 students in the farmer field of the five divisions of the province to equip the farming community with latest wheat production techniques. Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Hussain Jahanian Gardezi briefed Prime Minister Imran Khan about the wheat campaign.

He said that under the wheat campaign, they are committed to boost up production by 10 percent means three maunds per acre. He said that Government High School No1 Shahkot school is giving the praiseworthy contribution by producing quality education and recognized at the provincial level. Pro-Vice Chancellor UAF

Prof Dr Anas Sarwar said that the agriculture sector is the backbone of our economy and the poverty alleviation was directly linked with the sector. He said that wheat campaign will bring tangible results. He said that under the nine-day wheat campaign, three days road show, four days training of farmers, smart farmer gathering and grand rally are being organized.

Director Extension, Lahore Dr. Sher Muhammad Sharawat said that government was committed to agriculture sector which is backbone of our economy. He said that implementation of agriculture experts recommendation should be ensured by the farming community to increase the desired level of increase in wheat.

Principal Officer PRP UAF Prof Dr Muhammad Jalal Arif said the university in collaboration with agriculture extension department has launched wheat campaign on the directive of Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Hussain Jahanian Gardezi and Secretary Agricul-

ture Asad Rehman Gilani. He said that Prof. Dr. Iqbal Ahmad Khan is personally monitoring the all the campaign for the miraculous results. He said enhanced collaboration between farmers and agriculture experts were needed for the uplift of the sector.

Chairman Department of Sociology Dr Iqbal Ahmad Khan said that modern agriculture practices are imperative to meet the demand of ever increasing population. He said that UAF was making all possible measures for the development of the agriculture sector. He stressed upon the need to shun the broadcasting method of sowing and promote drill sowing.

Principal School Zulfikar Ali said that Dr Iqbal is the alumnus of the Government High School No1 Shahkot. He said inhabitants of the Shahkot are proud of Dr Iqbal who has earned marvelous recognition at national and international level for his unmatched and sincere contribution for the agriculture sector, academia and research.



LAHORE: Punjab minister Syed Saeed Ul Hassan along with Indian Punjab CM Charanjit Singh, along with his cabinet members on their visit to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur. – APP

EVMS ultimate solution of rigging

PESHAWAR: District Development Advisory Committee (DDAC) Kohat, Chairman, Ziaullah Bangash on Thursday said that joint session of the parliament passed historic legislation to conduct general elections through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMS) and giving right to vote to overseas Pakistanis.

Talking to APP, he said that election reforms were need of the hour keeping in view rigging complaints by political parties in general elections. "We have to embrace new technologies and advancement in science to streamline issue and ensure holding free, fair and transparent elections."

He said EVMS would ensure transparency in the electoral process and help address the complaints of rigging.

He said that many countries were holding elections through EVMS without any complaint of manipulation of technology. Bangash said that elections through EVMS would not compromise the secrecy of voters and would ensure timely counting of votes and compilation of election results. – APP

Indian Punjab CM visits Kartarpur

The first batch of 28 Indian Sikhs, including women, visited the gurdwara on Wednesday through Kartarpur corridor

LAHORE: Indian Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi, along with his cabinet members, visited the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur through Kartarpur Corridor, here on Thursday.

Channi, with a group of 30 people, visited Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the second day of the reopening of the route, which remained suspended for some 20 months following

the COVID-19 outbreak. Evacuee Trust Property Board spokesperson Amir Hashmi said that another delegation of Sikh Yatrees from India also visited the gurdwara.

The first batch of 28 Indian Sikhs, including women, visited the gurdwara on Wednesday through Kartarpur corridor on the first day of its reopening.

Kartarpur Corridor Project Management Unit

Chief Executive Officer Muhammad Latif, Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee office-bearers and Gujranwala Commissioner greeted the Sikh Yatrees, who arrived here a day before the annual commemoration of the birthday of Baba Guru Nanak.

Latif said that over 100 Indian pilgrims were expected to visit the historic gurdwara on Thursday. – APP



Air pollution can worsen Covid infection

ISLAMABAD: People infected with Covid, who had long-term exposure to air pollution, are more likely to end up in hospital or intensive care, found a study.

The study found an association between higher exposure to Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and increased disease symptoms, particularly for severe cases that ended in the hospital or in intensive care.

The association with PM2.5 was stronger for men over 60 years of age and people living in socioeconomically deprived areas, said the researchers from Barcelona Institute of Global Health (ISGlobal), Medical Daily reported.

A series of previous studies have suggested that regions with higher pre-pandemic levels of air pollution had a higher incidence of Covid-19 cases and deaths. However, the reasons for these associations are not yet clear; air pollution could favour airborne transmission of the virus, or it could increase an individual's susceptibility to infection or disease.

"The problem is that previous studies were based on reported cases, which had been diagnosed, but missed all the asymptomatic or undiagnosed cases," said first author Manolis Kogevinas, researcher at ISGlobal.

To understand, the team measured a series of virus-specific antibodies in a cohort of adults living in Catalonia, with information on the long-term exposure of such individuals to air pollutants (NO2, PM2.5, black carbon and ozone).

The study, published in Environment Health Perspectives, included 9,605 participants among which there were 481 confirmed cases (5 per cent). In addition, blood samples from over 4,000 participants were taken to determine the presence and quantity of IgM, IgA and IgG antibodies to five viral antigens. – APP

PPL bags top Corporate Philanthropy Award

The company has maintained the top slot for the 16th consecutive year in the large national category

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has once again received the highest Corporate Philanthropy Award for being the largest corporate giver in terms of volume of donations during 2019-20. Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP) judged the winner based on their research-based annual philanthropy survey.

The company has maintained the top slot for the 16th consecutive year in the large national category. Advisor to the Prime Minister on Finance and Revenue Shaukat Tarin

presented the award to Chief Community Development Officer, PPL Kamran Sher during the Corporate Philanthropy Awards event organized by PCP on November 16 in Islamabad.

The event was attended by business leaders, development professionals and media.

As a responsible corporate citizen, PPL's Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, spanning over six decades, is rooted in a rich tradition of sharing the benefits of development with stakeholder communities.

Over years, the scope, outreach and financial input of PPL's CSR portfolio has

substantially increased to support long-term, sustainable projects in education, healthcare, infrastructure development, livelihood generation and sports for deserving communities in operational as well as large urban areas. Going well beyond the dedicated financial input of 1.5 percent of its annual pre-tax profit for CSR initiatives, PPL's actual spending in 2019-20 was Rs. 1.75 billion which is about 2.5 percent of its pre-tax-profit for the year.

Moreover, during 2020-21, PPL crossed the two-billion-rupee mark which is the largest-ever CSR contribution made by the company.

Turkmen envoy calls on Energy minister

ISLAMABAD: Turkmen Ambassador to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov Thursday called on Minister for Energy Hammad Azhar and discussed matters pertaining to ongoing bilateral gas and power projects.

The minister apprised the envoy about the measures taken by Pakistan to strengthen its energy sector, a news release said.

Hammad said Pakistan was committed to early completion of gas and power projects it initiated in collaboration with Turkmenistan.

He said Pakistan was playing a key role in economic uplift of the region, adding Pakistan always gave importance to promote regional cooperation and coordination.

The increased regional ties would prove as a game-changer in the region, he added. – APP

FESCO introduces android mobile app "FESCO Light"

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has introduced the latest android mobile app "FESCO Light". The basic aim of this app is to facilitate the FESCO consumers. This app can be downloaded from the play

store of any android mobile phone.

The FESCO consumers belonging to eight district including Faisalabad, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Bhakkar, Mianwali, Khushab, Chinot and Sargodha can easily register after entry their name, electricity bill reference number, CNIC and mobile phone on this app.

After registration & sign in consumers cannot get information about load management schedule, duplicate bill, registration of electricity related complaints and information regarding previous electricity bills but also estimate the cost of electricity bill through bills estimator.



KARACHI: Director Belind travel Belarus Julia, reading Daily "Islamabad Post" and expressed economic development between both the countries will be developed after travel relations. 17th ITIF Asia will definitely build travel relations between Pakistan and Belarus. – DNA

Ehsaas Roshan Riayat reg starts from today

It is also necessary for the Kiryana merchants to have their account opened in National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) as well as have smart phone

ATTOCK: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar Thursday announced that the SMS Registration Service of 8171 will open from Friday (today) for the intending beneficiaries to register for Ehsaas Roshan Riayat program from Friday (today).

Talking to the media during her visit to the Kiryana stores in Fateh Jang, Dr. Sania said that the registration process for the eligible households and grocery merchants under the Ehsaas Roshan Riayat program continued across the country through the web portal while SMS service of 8171 to register the eligible buyers will open from tomorrow.

The overall subsidy of Rs. 1000 is being given to the eligible people on flour, pulses and cooking oil or ghee through this program which is being implemented on fast track basis to provide relief to the citizens as per directives of the Prime Minister, Imran Khan.

The subsidy of Rs. 22 per kg is being given on flour, Rs.55 per kg on pulses and Rs. 105 per liter on cooking oil or ghee at the designated grocery stores. Dr. Sania emphasized that it is mandatory for both the buyer and



grocery merchants to have mobile SIMs issued on their own Computerized National Identity Cards to register for this program. It is also necessary for the Kiryana merchants to have their account opened in National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) as well as have smart phone.

Dr. Sania said that the Kiryana merchants are enthusiastically participating in the registration process in a large number. The SMS service of 8171 will enable maximum people (buyers) to register for the program through sending their CNIC number on 8171 through SMS. "If their

mobile number is not registered with their CNICs, they will receive a message to register their SIMs first".

To a question, Dr. Sania said that Kiryana merchants belonging to any city, village, union council or any far flung area will be able to download the app on their mobile phone and get register for this program after scrutiny process.

Responding to the media, Dr. Sania said that the purpose of her visits to the small Kiryana stores was to educate the Kiryana merchants about the program and respond to their queries. She said that Prime Minister Imran Khan has directed to ensure transparency and merit in the implementation of this program.

"We are doing our utmost efforts to ensure transparency in this program at every level", she added. "We are in effort of completing registration process of this program at our earliest to provide relief to the citizens", she said.

The subsidy will be directly provided to the grocery merchants in their bank accounts. The merchants will also be given commission while luck draw will also held after every three months to give them gifts like mobile phones, motorcycles etc, she said. – APP

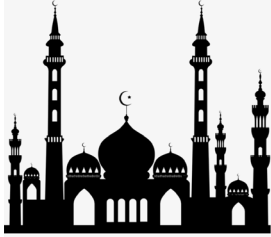
Govt for affordable residential facilities

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Labor, Shoukat Yousafzai Thursday said that government was incessantly working to provide affordable residential facilities to lower middle class following vision of Prime Minister, Imran Khan.

He was chairing a meeting that was convened to discuss provision of affordable residential facilities to people. The meeting was also attended by provincial housing minister, Dr. Amdad Ali and additional Chief Secretary, Shahab Ali Shah.

The meeting was told that most of the applicants that offered their properties for construction of affordable residential homes are from Mardan, Charsadda and Swat. He said that NADRA verified list of 14751 applicants has been received. – APP

SERVICES



Namaz Timings

Fajr..... 05:16 am
Zohr..... 11:53 am
Asr..... 03:25 pm
Maghrib..... 05:03 pm
Isha..... 06:30 pm



Hotels & Restaurants

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



Airlines

Turkish Airlines.....8494949



Emergency

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



Enquiry

Edhi Ambulance.....115
PIAFlightInfo.....114
PIACargo.....9280979
Railway Inquiry.....117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

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



Departments

CDA.....9221334-43
CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3



Complaints

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

Islamabad Metropolitan

Corporation.....9209224
Potohar Town.....9209224
RawalTown.....5773343

Wasa Water Tank

Rawalpindi.....0331-5022125

Business community assures support to Pak Sweet Homes

Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, ICCI lauded the services of Zummarad Khan for dedicating his life for the welfare of orphan children

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Zummarad Khan, Patron-in-Chief, Pakistan Sweet Homes (PSH) said that his institution was working to provide better education to orphan children and all this was being done with the support of our collaborators. He said that 17 girls of PSH have been admitted to the Girls Cadet College Larkana, which was a source of pride for him. He said that the matric and intermediate students of PSH were also showing excellent results. He said that for the first time in the history, a cadet college of orphan students has been started in which 150 PSH students were getting education. He hoped that as per past practice, the business community would continue to cooperate with PSH enabling it to contribute more effectively towards the economic empowerment of orphan children. He expressed these views during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with orphan children to congratulate the ICCI Office Bearers on their election.



country dedicated to providing shelter and education to the orphan kids. He said with the support of collaborators, PSH has established its network in all parts of the country for providing shelter to thousands of orphan children. He said that this whole network of PSH was expanding with the support of collaborators to

empower the orphans so that they could become productive citizens and play an effective role in the economic development of the country. Speaking at the occasion, Muhammad Shakeel Munir, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry lauded the services of Zummarad Khan for dedicating his

life for the welfare of orphan children. He said that providing education to orphan children of PSH was a great service to humanity and was optimistic that many of them would excel in various fields of life including entrepreneurship. He said that Islam laid great stress on taking good care of orphans and assured that business community will continue to cooperate with PSH in its mission of providing a better quality of life to the orphan kids. Jamshaid Akhtar Sheikh, Senior Vice President ICCI said that businessmen were cooperating with many welfare-oriented projects to contribute for social development and assured that they would cooperate with PSH as well so that it could be further strengthened to serve more orphan kids across Pakistan. Muhammad Faheem Khan, Vice President ICCI said that Chamber would help in promoting entrepreneurship in PSH students to make them job creators instead of job seekers. Former Presidents ICCI Sheikh Amir Waheed, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Basir Daud, former Senior Vice Presidents ICCI Muhammad Naveed Malik, Tahir Abbasi, Khalid Chaudhry and others were also present in the meeting and they appreciated the services of Zummarad Khan for PSH.

Gas supply to domestic consumers will be ensured

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy (CCOE) was informed on Thursday that the enhanced demand of domestic consumers would be met through savings from captive power generation. The meeting presided over by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Asad Umar here was informed that the prudent pressure management plan would also be developed to ensure the stable supply of gas to the consumers. The Petroleum Division presented the projected natural gas supply and demand position in the country for the coming winter. During the meeting, Petroleum Division presented a detailed impact analysis of different policy options for the management of gas demand during winter 2021-22. Gas supply to CNG would be curtailed during the winters and industrial activity would also be a focus in the gas management plans, especially the export industry. The CCOE approved the demand side of the proposals submitted by the Petroleum Division. It was further directed that the CCoE would consider the supply side proposals in the next meeting. The CCoE also considered the summary presented by the Maritime Affairs Division on the construction of Oil Storage at Oil Installation Area Keamari, Karachi. The meeting was informed that insufficient storage infrastructure at the ports created a bottleneck in the supply chain and results in increased costs. - APP



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a meeting with the visiting parliamentary delegation of Bahrain, led by the Speaker of the Council of Representatives of Bahrain, Mrs. Fawzia Bint Abdulla Zainal, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Experts for stakeholders' say on post-Covid challenges

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Experts at a panel discussion have emphasized for a major role of stakeholders, especially parliamentarians, educationists and parents for moving forward with education agenda to resolve host of critical issues and limitations created with the Covid-19 pandemic in the country. The policy discussion was organized by the Pakistan Coalition for Education (PCE) as part of its 12th Annual Convention in Islamabad with a theme "Re-thinking education in the times of Covid-19". Sharmila Faruqi, former Advisor to Sindh Chief Minister, Deputy Focal Person Policy Planning and Implementation Unit Balochistan Abdul Khaliq, and National Coordinator of PCE, Zehra Arshad, were the main participants of the discussion. They discussed the grave situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic in the country and its negative impacts especially on the

education sector. The discussion revolved around the urgent need for all stakeholders, especially the parliamentarians to come together and address the areas where the existing public education system, and more recently, the digital education is falling short in accommodating the needs of the marginalized communities. Sharmila Faruqi, former Advisor to Sindh Chief Minister, was of the view that the youth does not have proper accessibility to technology such as smartphones, laptops, and the Covid-19 has highlighted this inequality. She mentioned that only 32 percent of students across the country reported that learning material was provided by their schools during the lockdowns. The most important aspect to promote education is poverty reduction. "We also need to have focus on social protection programs to ensure



currently in practice to adopt in Balochistan keeping in mind the extensive challenges and poverty in the province. He said that they need a system that ensures the continuity of learning in the future. "Our government has allowed us leverage as they have created new positions of IT teachers to facilitate the process of online education which is an achievement of the institute," he explained. National Coordinator of PCE, Zehra Arshad, gave an overview of the educational landscape under the COVID and explained how important it is to ensure inclusivity. She emphasized the governments to review policies and plans by including all partners and stakeholders like civil society organizations, parents and teachers across the board to ensure their voices are heard and incorporated into the policy making process to transform education in the post-pandemic era.

Govt to build a knowledge-based economy

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunications Syed Aminul Haq Thursday said that Pakistan is committed to provide an environment where masses can reap the rewards of a thriving digital economy. "The Pakistan government has a vision to further build a knowledge-based economy. Our membership of the DCO will continue to provide opportunities for collaboration between governments to develop an inclusive global digital economy" he said while talking to a delegation of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO). The four-member delegation was led by Ms. Deemah Al-Yahya, Secretary General of the Digital Cooperation Organization is presently in Pakistan on official visit. The DCO consists of 7 founding countries: Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, Nigeria and Oman. Secretary IT Dr. Sohail Rajput, Member IT Syed Junaid Imam, Member Telecom Muhammad Omar Malik, Member International Coordination Ajmal Awan and other officials were also present in the meeting, said a news release.

On this occasion, the international delegation was given briefing on the initiatives and policies of the Ministry of IT. Minister IT further said that the member countries of the Digital Cooperation Organization can take advantage of Pakistan's IT professionals and their excellent English accent and world class talent. The creativity of freelancers and startups awaits foreign investors. The Ministry of IT, through its initiatives and projects, strives to provide the best internet and mobile services in remote areas of the country. He said, "Our goal is to bridge the rural-urban divide. The participation of the common man in the digital economy should be ensured while special measures are being taken to bring women in this field." - APP

4 gamblers arrested in Rawalpindi

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police on Thursday arrested four gamblers besides recovering bet money and other items from their possession. In a crackdown against the anti-social elements. According to police spokesman, Waris Khan Police had received information that some people were gambling while playing cards in the area. The police arrested the gamblers identified as Abdullah, Yasir Ali, Abdul Rehman alias Mani and Muhammad Shajeel. Police recovered cash stake money and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. - APP

7 arrested; 5800 grams charras recovered

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Police in a crackdown on Thursday against anti-social elements conducted raids in different areas and rounded up seven persons besides recovering 5800 grams charras, eight bottles of liquor and other items from their possession. According to the police spokesman, Sadiqabad police held Aqib Ali with 2400 grams charras and Muhammad Awais for having 2400 grams charras. Taxila, Sadiqabad, Jatli and Kalar Syedan police held Usama Shahzad with 600 grams charras, Alhart Masih with 120 grams charras, Ahsan Khursheed with 280 grams charras, Muhammad Afraz for having two bottles of liquor and Shakeel for carrying six liquor bottles. Separate cases have been registered against all the accused while further investigations were underway, he added. Division Superintendents of Police appreciated police teams and directed them to continue operations against lawbreakers. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Chinese Business Delegation visited UBG Central Secretariat Islamabad. Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group and Nasir Sheikh Chairman Pakistan China Business Forum pose with Chinese Delegation for a group photo. - DNA

President for promotion of virtual education

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Thursday stressing promotion of virtual education in the country called for steps to increase the number of graduates of information technology. He was talking to a delegation of Digital Cooperation Organization (DCO), joined by Secretary General DCO, Dima Aliha and Secretary IT Muhammad Sohail Rajput. The president said due to the effective policy of the government, the country's IT sector had achieved significant success. He mentioned that encouragement of women was necessary to help them participate in business and commercial activities complimented by information technology. He said the Digi Skills Programme aimed at imparting youth the education of information technology had so far given training to one million youth. He said steps were underway to reduce the digital divide between urban and rural areas. Under the vision of Digital Pakistan, he said, investment was being made to improve digital infrastructure and creating digital skills. President Alvi said the digitalization governance system and working of parliament would be completed by 2023, which he said, would help improve efficiency. He termed DCO the best platform to enhance digital collaboration and learn from each other's experiences. Secretary General DCO congratulated Pakistan on becoming a member of the organization and said that the organization would promote Pakistan as an attractive country for foreign investment in IT sector and a provider of cloud services. - DNA

Briefs

HEC holds training on PCP for KP universities

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Commission (HEC), Research & Analysis Activities Wing held an interactive training on Pakistan Citizen Portal for focal persons of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) here at HEC Regional Centre.

According to HEC on Thursday, as many as 50 focal persons from 38 KPK universities participated in the training. Dr. Iftikhar Hussain, Vice Chancellor, University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar was chief guest on the occasion.

The capacity building programme on Pakistan Citizen's Portal aims to help the focal persons address public complaints in an effective manner.

The participants were briefed on policy formulation for just and sustainable solution to public complaints. Besides, they were given awareness of Prime Minister Kamyab Jawan Programme's sports activities alongside briefings on importance of saving water and energy.

They were trained on handling the Dashboard of Pakistan Citizen Portal to easily understand complaints and suggestions handling processes.

Speaking on the occasion, Director HEC Saleemullah Sohoo told the focal persons that HEC is a hub for in-service capacity building and professional development of the university management across Pakistan.

He said it is imperative to impart capacity building trainings to the focal persons of HEIs with a special focus on effective management of complaints and redressal of public grievances in a better way.

He said that these trainings will also be arranged for focal persons of HEIs in other provinces. — APP

Two arrested for posting weapon pictures on Facebook

RAWALPINDI: The police have arrested two accused, one for uploading pictures and videos displaying weapons on his Facebook account and another for selling kites.

According to a police spokesman, an accused namely Hussain Abbas used to upload pictures and videos displaying weapons on his Facebook account. He was doing this to spread fear in the hearts of people on the social media app, he added.

"The aim of such activities is to create a culture of fear and superiority on social media," said the spokesman. "They wanted to show their power but the state's law is superior to all," he added.

He informed that police also recovered a 30 bore pistol and ammunition from his possession. He said, in another raid, Sadiqabad police held a kite seller namely Khuram Shahzad and recovered 80 kites and nine kite flying string rolls from his possession.

Separate cases had been registered against both the accused while further investigation were underway, he added. — APP

IESCO issues power suspension programme

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Friday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 08:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Klar Kahar Feeder, from 09:00 PM to 05:00 AM, G-10/1 Feeder and surroundings.

COMSTECH, IOFS join hands to explore new opportunities

In pursuit of common objectives both organizations intend to establish a general framework to facilitate and implement the collaboration and cooperation in areas of common interest

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU was signed at COMSTECH Secretariat by Coordinator General COMSTECH and Director General, IOFS.

Astana based IOFS fosters the socio-economic development of its member countries with ultimate goal of promoting food security, sustainable agriculture and rural development, whereas Islamabad based COMSTECH builds indigenous capabilities of OIC member states in the fields of science and technology through cooperation and mutual assistance.

In pursuit of common objectives both organizations intend to establish a general framework to facilitate and implement the collaboration and cooperation in areas of common interest. IOFS-COMSTECH partnership will focus on scaling-up ongoing initiatives and exploring new opportunities to



collaborate on global, regional and country-level priorities.

The areas of cooperation include: joint projects, identifying S&T

needs of OIC states, capacity-building activities in agriculture and

food security, exchange of information, and joint research.

IPEMC to play crucial role for dealing with Covid impacts

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Shafiqat Mahmood Thursday said that the IPEMC to play an instrumental role in developing a way forward for dealing with the impact of Covid-19 pandemic. He was presiding over 33rd Meeting of Inter-Provincial Education Minister's Conference (IPEMC) at a local hotel in Karachi, said the press release.

Syed Sardar Ali Shah, Provincial Minister for Education and Literacy Sindh and

Muhammad Ismail Rahoo, Provincial Minister for Universities & Board Sindh attended the meeting physically.

Sharam Khan Tarakai, Provincial Minister-Elementary & Secondary Education Department-KPK, Deewan Ali Khan, Minister Elementary and Secondary Education Department-AJK, Dr. Murad Rass, School Education Department-Punjab, Raja Yasir Humayun Sarfraz, Provincial Minister for Higher Education-Punjab attended the meeting virtually.

Senior officials of Federal Education Ministry, Provincial/regional educa-

tion departments of Sindh, KPK, Balochistan, Punjab, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan also participated in the meeting. A detailed presentation was given by the Federal Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training (MOFEPT), Naheed S. Durrani which shed light on the facilitation of provinces under Emergency Actions to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) Project.

She informed that yearly funds had been allocated to all 04 provinces and Federal. She further talked about the disbursement process of ASPIRE Joint Secretary-MOFEPT. Waseem Ajmal Chaudhary informed the participants about the Pakistan National Education Response and Resilience plan.

He said that this plan serves as an education response framework to Covid-19. He further informed that the plan covered both public and private sectors and included all levels of education. The experts of World Bank briefed the participants on the developmental projects i.e. Action to Strengthen Performance for Inclusive and Responsive Education (ASPIRE) and Response, Recovery and Resilience in Education Projects (RRREP).

Business community assures support to PSH

ISLAMABAD: Zummarad Khan, Patron-in-Chief, Pakistan Sweet Homes (PSH) Thursday said that his institution was working to provide better education to orphan children and all this was being done with the support of our collaborators.

He said that 17 girls of PSH had been admitted to the Girls Cadet College Larkana, which was a source of pride for him, said a press release issued here.

Zummarad said that the matric and intermediate students of PSH were also showing excellent results. He said that for the first time in the history, a cadet college of orphan students had been started in which 150 PSH students were getting education. He hoped that as per past practice, the business community would continue to cooperate with PSH enabling it to contribute more

effectively towards the economic empowerment of orphan children.

He expressed these views during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with orphan children to congratulate the ICCI Office Bearers on their election.

Zummarad Khan said that Pakistan Sweet Homes was the largest organization in the country dedicated to providing shelter and education to the orphan kids. He said with the support of collaborators, PSH had established its network in all parts of the country for providing shelter to thousands of orphan children.

He said that this whole network of PSH was expanding with the support of collaborators to empower the orphans so that they could become productive citizens and play an effective role in the economic development of the country. — APP

EVMs to ensure transparent in elections

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime on Political Communication Dr Shahbaz Gill on Thursday said Electronic Voting Machine (EVMs) would help ensure transparent elections in the country.

In response to the statement of Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, he said the EVMs would also help end rigging allegations forever.

He said in past, false promises were made with the overseas Pakistani but only Imran Khan has fulfilled his promise to give them right of vote.

He said politics of the 90's and 'Changa Manga' has been buried. No one would be able to buy EVMs with money, he added.

Gill said only those people would come to the House to whom people voted. "Vote ko Izzat du" slogan was only to give power to Nawaz Sharif, he said.

Gill said Criticism of the past Prime Minister on election system is shameful, Dr Shahbaz Gill said incompetent League courtiers always came into power through rigging in the elections in the past. Fraudsters are afraid of transparency, he said. — APP

160 CDA employees get govt quaters

ISLAMABAD: At least 160 employees of Capital Development Authority (CDA) were given government accommodation in different categories through computerized balloting.

The authority had sought National and Database Registration Authority (NADRA) services to ensure transparency in the allotment process, said its spokesman on Thursday. The government accommodations which were allotted includes 39 A type houses, 38-B type, 5-C type, 18-D type and 61-E type. Incumbent CDA administrations initiatives for promotion of merit and transparency in the Authority have started to bear fruit, the spokesman added. — APP

21 dengue cases reported at allied hospitals

RAWALPINDI: District Coordinator Epidemics Prevention and Control (DCEPC) Dr. Sajjad Mehmood, on Thursday said that around 21 new dengue cases have arrived in the three public sector hospitals of the Rawalpindi city during the last 24 hours, raising the tally of confirmed cases to 3321.

Among the new patients, the health officer informed that the Benazir Bhutto Hospital (BBH) had registered 11, District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ) three, while seven were registered with Holy Family Hospital (HFH) in 24 hours.

"This year, around 3321 dengue cases were brought to the allied hospitals of the city, who were provided with the required treatment and 3228 discharged after recovery, including 1866 from HFH, 506 DHQ and 856 from BBH," he added. Dr. Sajjad informed that 44 patients were under treatment in HFH, out of which 39 were positive, 21 positive out of 34 in BBH and 19 confirmed cases out of the total 28 admitted in DHQ hospital. — APP

17 more tested positive for coronavirus

RAWALPINDI: As many as 17 more patients were tested positive for coronavirus during the last 24 hours in Rawalpindi district, with five belonging to Rawalpindi Cantonment area, four from Gujar Khan, two each from Kotli sattia, Potohar town and Rawal town, while one each case has arrived from Kalar Syeda and Islamabad. According to the daily situation report issued by the District Corona Management centre on Thursday, 21 Coronavirus confirmed patients were admitted to four city facilities, including seven each was admitted to the Institute of Urology and Fauji foundation hospital, six in Benazir Bhutto, and one in Bilal hospital. — APP



CUI, HEU hold 3rd workshop

ISLAMABAD: The COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) and College of Underwater Acoustic Engineering, Harbin Engineering University (HEU) of China have recently organized a joint 3rd China-Pakistan Marine Information Workshop at CUI, Wah Campus. The workshop was part of the One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiatives and China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project, a news release said here on Thursday. Pakistan Science Foundation (PSF) Chairman Professor Dr Shahid Baig was the chief guest on the occasion.

In his opening address, CUI Director Prof. Dr Muhammad Abid said the workshop was aimed at providing a dedicated platform for scientists, engineers,

academicians, industry professionals and researchers from Pakistan and China to deliberate on the emerging area of Marine Science and Technology in Pakistan. He said China's College of Underwater Acoustics Engineering, Harbin Engineering University, being part of OBOR initiatives, China had played an enormous role towards capacity building in Pakistan.

Realizing the importance of Marine Engineering and Marine Science, the CUI has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the HEU to carry out research in the field of Marine Informatics and Engineering and currently 12 students of HEU were doing research at the CUI Wah Campus. — APP

PTCL, Ufone holds annual Gala for employees

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PTCL Group held its Annual Sports and Family Fun Gala in Islamabad to provide employees and their families an excellent opportunity to break away from their work routine.

The gala is a long-standing tradition that helps employees come together as a single family to engage in sports and fun activities and make memories for life.

The gala had sports and fun activities designed for employees and family members from all ages. The sports activities were the highlight of the gala, which were actively contested by different teams from across the country.

PTCL Central Zone team clinched the Zonal cricket trophy after an exciting match with PTCL HQ. Whereas PTCL HQ Badminton team won the trophy in the final from PTCL Central Zone. In the table tennis finale, PTCL Central Zone were crowned the champions. Group Chief Human Resource Officer, PTCL &

Ufone, Syed Mazhar Hussain, presented trophies and memorabilia to the winners and runners ups. He praised all the participants for their sportsman spirit and exciting performances. Sharing his thoughts at the event, Group Chief Human Resource Officer, PTCL & Ufone, Syed Mazhar Hussain, said, "I am glad that

the entire PTCL and Ufone family is out here having a good time. The idea behind the event is to have PTCL and Ufone employees come together to enjoy and explore their talents for sports and fun activities. It gives them a much-needed break from their routine activities to boost their physical and mental health.



First time in Pak FF Grade-80 Steel Bar launched

Grade-80 steel will change the landscape of the construction industry through the industrial revolution and economic growth said, Chairman FF Steel, Nauman Wazir Khattak

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: First time in Pakistan Industry, Consultancy and Academia joined

hands for a major industrial breakthrough by bringing revolutionary steel product – Grade 80 steel bar. FF Steel held launch ceremony of the first-ever Grade-80 steel

bar, the strongest steel bar in Pakistan, at Serena Hotel Islamabad. Present at the ceremony were Honorable Senator Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Science and

Technology was Chief Guest on the occasion. Minister of Railways, Senator Azam Swati. MD NESPAK – Dr. Tahir Masood, Pro-Rector NUST – AVM Dr. Rizwan Riaz, PEC

Chairman – Muhammad Najeel Haroon, Senator Sajjad Hussain Turi, Senator Daud Khan, Senator Taj Muhammad Afridi and Senator Sana Baloch. Grade-80 steel will

change the landscape of the construction industry through the industrial revolution and economic growth said, Chairman FF Steel, Nauman Wazir Khattak. The product will have a significant effect on the Current Account Deficit. Given 13% less usage in construction and up to 10% cost-saving while using Grade-80 in comparison to Grade-60, it will considerably narrow down the current account deficit. According to Senator Shibli Faraz, through such initiatives good times are coming for the government and for the people of the country. He said that it will contribute to the country's imports and wealth creation.

An extensive research study was conducted in collaboration with NUST and NESPAK resulted into FF Grade-80 to be the most economically feasible and beneficial steel bar in Pakistan.



IMF conditions

IN May 2019, Pakistan signed on with the IMF on a \$6-billion (5.34 billion) bailout package. While it seemed a relief for the severely cash-strapped economy at that time, two years from then, we are reminded, with every tranche, the strict conditions attached to that bailout package. The bailout programme is subject to regular IMF reviews of Pakistan's economic policy and growth. Pakistan has braced itself for harsh economic conditions with every review. With nearly every tranche released, the IMF requires the government to take some very difficult decisions before it agrees to release the funds.

The time has come to again negotiate with the IMF to release a suspended \$1 billion tranche from the bailout package. This time, again, the IMF has set forth certain actions contingent upon which it will release the funds. According to Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Shaukat Tarin said, the approval of the pending sixth review of the extended fund facility (EFF) of the IMF requires five prior actions by the government. Three of the major prior actions include power tariffs, the withdrawal of exemptions, and grant of more autonomy to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP). The government has yet not disclosed the other two conditions. There is no sugar-coating the situation—these are indeed very difficult conditions, set at a time when Pakistan's economy is already suffering under the brunt of global inflation and severe currency devaluation. Yet the stringency of IMF negotiations should not be a surprise—Pakistan has still not recovered from the conditions met to receive the previous loan tranche of \$500 million from the IMF. The successful release of the previous tranche of the \$500 million from the IMF was responsible for the increase in electricity prices. The negotiations are still going on, and the government must try its best to properly justify every demand of the IMF before agreeing on it. This should be the last belt-tightening trajectory we have to take because of borrowing from financial institutions.

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Unwarranted raid

THE Indian armed forces killed two 'suspected freedom fighters' and two civilians in a gun battle in Hyderabad, IIOJK. As families of the deceased demand justice for the cold-blooded murders, one can expect that our government will promise to carry out an investigation into the matter. However, if it is anything like the countless probes carried out in the past, results may never come to light. The Indian government's brazen actions in IIOJK are becoming more brutal as they act with legal and political impunity. This must be corrected and Pakistan alone cannot shoulder the burden; the international community must act.

The gun battle between the security forces began when they stormed a shopping centre after receiving a tip-off which claimed that there were certain 'rebel's present. Those who witnessed the aggression claim that it was sudden, completely unwarranted and harsh as civilians were used as human shields by the forces. Judging from the fact that the Indian government refused to hand over the bodies of the dead and instead buried them privately also arouses extreme suspicion.

Outside of sounding the alarm yet again over the proceedings in Kashmir, we must decide upon a strategy that will actually mount some pressure on the Indian government and bring about justice for the sake of those who were murdered without a cause. Empty promises of fruitful investigations are not enough right now when the people of Kashmir are blindly being picked off of the roads and within homes. Over the last month, over 49 people have been killed in nearly a dozen gun battles alone. This points towards an increased level of violence perpetuated by the occupying forces and the increased reliance on self-defence by the people. No longer can reports of human beings being used as shields be tolerated. For the sake of the people of Kashmir, more must be done.

Biden, Xi Jinping attempt to defuse US-China tensions

Andrew Hammond

Xi is also acutely aware that, for all the new US president's indications that he might row back some of Trump's overt hostility to China, Biden has yet to reverse any of his predecessor's fundamental policies. Indeed, he has reaffirmed many of them, including rejecting nearly all of China's maritime claims in the South China Sea. The most likely prognosis for US-China ties in the short to medium term, therefore, is the biding of time and tensions

EXPECTATIONS had been set low for Monday's first presidential summit between Joe Biden and Xi Jinping. However, they spoke via video call for an unexpectedly long three-and-a-half hours, with the Chinese leader greeting his US counterpart as his "old friend." While it is much too optimistic to say that bilateral ties have now turned a corner, atmospherics have – at least temporarily – improved and this underlines that the direction of bilateral relations need not inevitably be toward ever greater hostility. The occasional warmth of the summit also builds on the unexpected bilateral climate cooperation deal

announced at COP26 in Glasgow.

Despite the wide-ranging security and economic-related disagreements that exist between the two sides, this month's climate accord indicates there may remain scope to work together where there are clearly defined common interests. After all, tackling global warming is a key political priority of both nations and Xi said in the meeting that "humanity lives in a global village and we face multiple challenges together. China and the United States need to increase communication and cooperation."

The fact that Biden and Xi have a personal backstory, having first got to know each other when they were both vice presidents, may prove helpful. This is because, while the potentially very difficult economic and security fundamentals will largely determine the course of US-China ties in the coming years, personal chemistry helps. Biden told Xi that "we need to establish some commonsense guardrails, to be clear and honest where we disagree, and work together where our interests intersect," so that competition does not turn into conflict. The importance of this personal factor was shown during Donald Trump's presidency, when the then US leader's erratic nature accentuated the natural zigzags in ties. During the Obama years, by contrast, relations remained generally cordial, in significant part because of the commitment of Xi and Barack Obama to bilateral stability. At that time, Xi even outlined a desire to fundamentally redevelop the great power relationship with the US to avoid the conflictual patterns of the past.

That goal still lacks any obvious definition the best part of a decade later and the dynamics of the bilateral relationship have changed very significantly in the intervening years. This is not just because of the controversies of the pandemic and the extra uncertainty injected into ties by Trump. Take the example of Taiwan, where China's recent incursions into Taipei's air defense identification zone have alarmed many in Washington. During this week's summit, Biden said he opposes unilateral efforts to change the status quo or undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, while Xi said that the US president

is playing with fire on the issue.

Even if such tensions can be managed in the coming years – which is a big if – there are wider in-built hazards in the bilateral landscape. These include American legislation requiring the US commerce secretary to deliver a "Report on Chinese Investment" in the US to Congress every two years up to 2026. The bill singles out Chinese investment as a security threat and zeros in on Beijing's "Made in China 2025" plan. This and other legislation, such as the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act, have sown the seeds for future strife, with the Chinese Defense Ministry asserting that they "abound in Cold War thinking, exaggerate the level of the China-US confrontation... undermine the atmosphere of development of China-US military ties, and damage China-US mutual trust and cooperation."

Amid all these challenges, a key issue that Xi will be pondering is how long Biden will be in power for. While the Chinese president is tightening his grip by laying the foundations for a third five-year term, it is not even certain that his US counterpart will seek a second, as he will be in his early 80s at the time of the 2024 election. This is not a trivial point, as Xi would be more likely to engage substantively with Biden if he expected the latter to be in power for eight years rather than four. Both may ultimately favor a strategic dialogue to try to find a framework, or grand bargain, to renew bilateral relations, but this is the type of initiative that may require more than a single US presidential term to formulate. Xi is also acutely aware that, for all the new US president's indications that he might row back some of Trump's overt hostility to China, Biden has yet to reverse any of his predecessor's fundamental policies. Indeed, he has reaffirmed many of them, including rejecting nearly all of China's maritime claims in the South China Sea. The most likely prognosis for US-China ties in the short to medium term, therefore, is the biding of time and tensions. However, this is not inevitable, despite the growing conventional wisdom that views bilateral ties through an ever more pessimistic prism.

– Courtesy Arab News

Who is benefiting from the Poland-Belarus border crisis?

Leonid Ragozin

Ukraine has also seen an escalation of tensions. In October, reports surfaced of the Ukrainian army using Turkish-built Bayraktar drones against Russian-backed forces in Donbas.

There is also an ongoing legal attack against Putin's man in Ukraine, Viktor Medvedchuk, and the clampdown on his media empire, which was accused of promoting Russian narratives. Additionally, there is a Polish angle in the ongoing crisis. It serves as a useful distraction for the far-right Polish government, which finds itself entangled in a bitter conflict with the EU over the rule of law

OVER the past few weeks, tensions along the Belarusian-Polish border have escalated, as thousands of asylum seekers try to cross into Poland, a member of the European Union. Belarus's lax visa process has lured many people from war-torn countries in the Middle East hoping to make it to EU territory.

When Poland deployed its military to the border to stop the entry of asylum-seekers, thousands of men, women and children were stranded in the cold on the Belarusian side of the border and became a political football between Belarus and Poland.

The crisis and the parallel escalation of tensions between Poland, Belarus and Russia have served governments on all sides in the pursuit of their foreign and domestic agendas. By now it is clear that the humanitarian disaster at the border was manufactured by Belarusian President Aleksander Lukashenko, who has been under sanctions and in isolation by the EU since last year's flawed presidential elections.

The Belarusian authorities directed the flow of asylum seekers towards the borders of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, which have refused to accept the results of the vote and are currently hosting the bulk of Belarusian political refugees and members of the quasi-government in exile. Lukashenko's desire to confront an open subversion of his regime by these countries is clear. But it is not only its neighbours to the west that Minsk is seeking to pressure. The border crisis is part of its larger strategy to blackmail both the West and Russia with the prospect of a full-out global conflict. Belarus is the closest ally of Russia and officially a part of an entity known as the Union of Russia and Belarus. The latter exists largely on paper, but it does provide for a common defence policy and free movement between the two countries, which means the Belarusian border with Poland and the two Baltic states is effectively Russia's external frontier separating its security zone from the realm of NATO. Therefore, any conflict at this border by extension becomes a conflict between Russia and NATO, which is exactly how the far-right government in Poland is now trying to frame it.

– Courtesy The Age

The abuse of technology Modi won't be talking about

Elaine Pearson

The rules also require social media companies with more than 5 million registered users in India – which pretty much means all the major internet companies – to appoint staff in-country. With more of their personnel living in India, where they could face criminal liability...

THIS week, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi will give a keynote address at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute's Sydney Dialogue, along with Prime Minister Scott Morrison. The dialogue is billed as a "world-first summit for emerging, critical and cyber technologies". Australia is deepening trade and investment ties with India, and technology has emerged as a key element in their growing bilateral and multilateral cooperation. Modi will describe how India's technology industry is solving global problems. His administration has called his flagship program Digital India – transforming India into an empowered digital economy with an emphasis on better delivery of government services – as one of India's biggest success stories. However, what the audience will not hear is how the Modi government has been using technology since it came to power in 2014 to curtail rights at home as part of an escalating crackdown on freedom of expression, association and peace-

ful assembly. Even as his government promotes a more digitally connected India, it shuts down the internet more than any other country in the world, increasingly to silence peaceful protests and criticism of the government. This has not only denied millions of people their fundamental rights, but has also affected businesses and cost the Indian economy billions of dollars in losses. As part of its playbook to quell dissent and gain greater control over online content, Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Hindu nationalist government enacted new internet rules targeting social media companies, digital news services and curated video streaming sites that will most likely have global consequences. These rules include overbroad restrictions on content, encourage self-censorship and require traceability of information that compromise end-to-end encryption on platforms such as WhatsApp or Signal.

The rules also require social media companies with more than 5 million registered users in India – which pretty much means all the major internet companies – to appoint staff in-country. With more of their personnel living in India, where they could face criminal liability and prosecution, companies will also find it difficult to resist arbitrary and disproportionate government orders to take down content or hand over data on users. In February, even before the rules came into force, the government threatened to punish Twitter's India-based employees with fines and jail terms after Twitter shut down some, but not all, accounts ordered by the Indian authorities, that were critical of the government's handling of the farmers' protests. Indian authorities are increasingly arresting human rights defenders, journalists, students, and members of religious minorities in politically motivated cases including under counterterrorism, sedition and national security laws. At the same time, its information technology law and internet rules put pressure on social media companies to censor content and share user information to aid these prosecutions. Police in India's northeast state of Tripura have filed terrorism cases against 102 social media

handles for posting content related to communal violence incidents in mid-October in which Hindu mobs attacked mosques and properties owned by Muslims, and sought information on these account owners. Some of these accounts appear to have been targeted because they were critical of state authorities' response to the violence.

Indian authorities have also been implicated in using the Israeli-produced spyware Pegasus to target activists, journalists and apparent opponents. The government has repeatedly stalled attempts to investigate these allegations. Its refusal to disclose information to the Supreme Court, arguing national security implications, finally led the court to appoint an independent committee to investigate. The executive branch has extremely broad powers of surveillance devoid of any meaningful safeguards, with no judicial authorisation or independent oversight. The Modi government has proposed a law on personal data protection that will further enhance state surveillance powers by granting exemptions to government agencies on vague grounds. Australia too has passed problematic laws that grant expansive digital surveillance powers to law enforcement agencies, without adequate safeguards to protect privacy.

But strengthening bilateral ties through technology should come with a frank discussion on shortcomings and a deepening commitment not to compromise on fundamental rights, including freedom of speech and assembly, and privacy, encryption, and data protections. As part of this, Australia should ask the Indian government to drop criminal charges against activists and critics in politically motivated cases, roll back internet rules and enact a data protection law that restricts the government's discretionary powers. Instead of using technology as a tool for repression, the Indian government should act in a manner befitting a rule-of-law-based democracy and use technology to shore up rights, make governance more accountable and lead to a more just and equitable society.

– Courtesy The Age

– Courtesy Al Jazeera

Briefs

Germany reports record 65,371 Covid cases

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: Germany recorded its highest daily number of coronavirus cases on Thursday with more than 65,000 new infections, as officials warned that many hospitals were at the limits of their capacity. The Robert Koch Institute (RKI), the country's disease control agency, confirmed 65,371 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, up from 52,826 cases reported on Wednesday. The virus claimed 264 more lives, bringing the country's death toll in the pandemic to 98,538. Health authorities in the southern state of Bavaria warned that many hospitals have reached their full capacity with seriously ill COVID-19 patients, and started transferring new patients to other cities and states. There were 3,376 seriously ill coronavirus patients in intensive care units (ICUs) across the country on Wednesday, with 1,710 of them on mechanical ventilators. Germany has seen a resurgence of coronavirus as people spend more time indoors during the colder months, and a large number of people are still unvaccinated against the disease. As many as 56.3 million people, or 67.7% of the country's population, are fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

Pak designer shows beauty of Chinese Qipao

BEIJING: Global Qipao Festival, also Global Qipao Invitation Exhibition was held in Hangzhou city eastern China. Qipao, also known as cheongsam, is a traditional Chinese dress. According to China Economic Net (CEN) Asim Mushtaq, a Pakistani PhD student at Zhejiang Sci-Tech University, participated in the event and submitted his cheongsam design. "When China National Silk Museum announced to organize the exhibition then I decided to take part in it to give some presentation by Pakistan. I think it's a great opportunity for cultural fusion. Cheongsam is a very famous traditional costume of China with very attractive form and often made of silk. While in Pakistan, silk is not produced in high quantity so I tried the Cheongsam design on ZARI fabric and Mixed silk fabric," Asim told CEN. Majored in Materials Science and Engineering, Asim has a unique perspective on the choice of fabric for cheongsam design. "Embroidery on the clothes for female as well as male is one of the Pakistani cultural designs. So while designing cheongsam for the exhibition, I consult with the Pakistani tailoring master to have a fusion of Pakistani embroidery and glass applique on the Chinese cheongsam," Asim said. The organizers invited many fashion designers from Asian countries based on the traditional form of Cheongsam. "Every designer would apply their own design idea and their country culture with the theme of Nature. I think Qipao is the best carrier to exchange and integrate the Asian cultures." - APP

65 bodies found in hidden grave in Mexico

BOGOTA: Some 65 bodies have been found in a hidden mass grave in Mexico, local media reported Wednesday. The bodies were found in a secret grave in the city of Alvarado. Police confirmed the total figure, adding that the corpses were exhumed in the presence of the prosecutor and police officers. It is estimated that the victims were killed between 2011 and 2012 in a showdown between gangs. Personal belongings such as bank cards and identity information were found on the bodies. Searches for the causes of death of the victims will continue, reports added. - APP

Experts call for Pak-Uzbek Women engagement

The significant subject discussions addressed the challenges faced in developing entrepreneurial linkages between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and presented constructive solutions through discussion and linkages

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On 18th November 2021, an Online International Conference "Pakistan-Uzbekistan Women Entrepreneurial Connectivity: Exploring Future Prospects" was jointly organized by Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, Embassy of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Islamabad, & Uzbekistan Business Women Association, Tashkent. The conference brought together women entrepreneurs and relevant subject experts at a single platform for a fruitful discussion. The significant subject discussions addressed the challenges faced in developing entrepreneurial linkages between Pakistan and Uzbekistan and presented constructive solutions through discussion and linkages. The conference commenced with the remarks of Ms. Gulnora Makhmudova, Chairperson, and Business Women Association of Uzbekistan. She extended gratitude to Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad, and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan for the support and guidance to women entrepreneurs of Uzbekistan. She highlighted that cooperation between women of both countries is very important for Pakistan and Uzbekistan as they have a huge potential in economic partnerships, specifically in entrepreneurship. Ms. Madiha Ghaffar, Media, and Communication Manager, Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad stated that Uzbekistan and Pa-



kistan have always shared great historical, cultural, and religious ties. Under the present leadership of Uzbekistan, the year 2021 has witnessed an impressive improvement in the bilateral trade relations of Pakistan and Uzbekistan. Women Entrepreneurs from both countries can play a vital role in facilitating this connectivity by exploring the possible areas of collaboration. Ms. Amna Malik, President COPAIR, AMG & Melange Media Group from Pakistan shared that there is a need to collaborate in the pharmaceutical and textile sectors. She was of the view that both Uzbekistan and Pakistan should explore the possibilities of connecting women entrepreneurs. She

highlighted the prospects of collaborating in construction and building. She stated that we would like to get connected with the craftsman of Uzbekistan to implement their designs in Pakistan. Ms. Amna also highlighted that the best way to connect women is through ICT. In this aspect, we can help startups, SMEs and entrepreneurs to organize training for students and fresh entrepreneurs. Furthermore, organizing public talks for women to share their success stories is also very important. Dr. Farida Faisal, Associate Professor, University Institute of Management Sciences, PMAS- Arid Agriculture University, and Rawalpindi, Pakistan stated that women in Pakistan are very much interested in

National values crucial in bringing up young generation

"Children are the future of society. The formation of our children as individuals loyal to our national values and high moral standards is of exceptional importance for the progress of our country."

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that the national values are of exceptional importance in bringing up the young generation. Azertag reported on November 18. He made the remarks in an address to participants of the All-Republican Forum of Azerbaijan Children on November 18. "Children are the future of society. The formation of our children as individuals loyal to our national values and high moral standards is of exceptional importance for the progress of our country," he said. He noted that the consistent social policy of Azerbaijan to protect children's rights also serves this purpose. The president emphasized that many of the issues raised at the last forum are fully reflected in the "2020-2030: Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for Children", which aims to ensure the comprehensive protection of children's rights. "You are lucky to be living in

our country as it has entered the new century and the new millennium as an independent state. You should be proud to be witnessing the glorious and dignified history of our victorious people," he said. Aliyev underlined that with the victory in the Patriotic War, the Azerbaijani army restored not only historical justice but also the rights and freedoms of more than a million refugees and IDPs, which had been violated for more than 30 years, "thus avenging our innocent children who fell victim to enemy provocations". He added that today Azerbaijan is on the path of rapid development. "The fact that our country is getting stronger and stronger every year is also a guarantee of your happy and prosperous future. The current generation will entrust mighty Azerbaijan to you. That is why you must always work hard and represent the Motherland with a deeper realization of your responsibilities. I believe that you, as a spiritually rich generation, will grow up in the spirit of Azerbaijanism and spare no effort for the future development and success of our Republic," he said. "Your [children] participation in this Forum, which brings together all Azerbaijani children, is a manifestation of the great confidence shown in you. I do hope that the discussions you will hold within the Forum will mark the beginning of a new stage in the implementation of our country's children policy," he added.



ISLAMABAD: Director-General of Inter-Services Intelligence (DG ISI) Lieutenant General Faiz Hameed pays a farewell call to Prime Minister Imran Khan. - DNA

Clashes erupt in Sudan's capital after bloodiest day since coup

AGENCIES

KHARTOUM: Street confrontations have again shaken Sudan's capital, a day after security forces shot dead 15 protesters in the bloodiest day since the military's October 25 takeover. On Thursday, police fired tear gas to disperse dozens of anti-coup protesters who had stayed on the streets of north Khartoum overnight, braving an intensifying crackdown that has drawn international condemnation, witnesses said. Police tore down makeshift barricades the protesters had erected the previous day. Later in the day, dozens of

protesters returned to rebuild them and police again fired tear gas in a bid to clear the streets, witnesses said. "Protesters responded by hurling stones at the police," one witness told the AFP news agency. Top general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan detained the civilian leadership and declared a state of emergency on October 25. The Sudanese military, led by al-Burhan, seized power, dissolving the transitional government arresting dozens of civilian officials and politicians, and declaring a state of emergency. The takeover upended a fragile planned transition to democratic rule, more than two years after a popular uprising

forced the removal of long-time leader Omar al-Bashir. Last week, al-Burhan appointed a new governing Sovereign Council, replacing the country's transitional government, which comprised of civilian and military figures. Al-Burhan insists the military's move "was not a coup" but a step to "rectify the course of the transition" to civilian rule. Thousands took to the streets on Wednesday in Khartoum and other cities but were met by the deadliest crackdown since the coup. At least 15 people, mostly from northern Khartoum, were killed on Wednesday alone, according to medics, raising the death toll of protesters to 39 in recent weeks.

"We condemn violence towards peaceful protesters and call for the respect and protection of human rights in Sudan," said the US State Department's Bureau of African Affairs on Twitter on Wednesday. Wednesday's demonstrations were organised despite a near-total shutdown of internet services and disruption of telephone lines across Sudan. In a statement, the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors (CCSD) said security forces "used live bullets heavily in different areas of the capital" and that there are "tens of gunshot injuries, some of them in serious condition".

Minsk proposes plan to ease border crisis

European countries accuse Belarus of flying in thousands of migrants from the Middle East and pushing them to attempt to cross the frontier illegally. Belarus denies fomenting the crisis

AGENCIES

MINSK: Belarus said on Thursday it had proposed a plan to solve the migrant crisis at its borders, which would see the European Union take on 2,000 migrants while Minsk would send another 5,000 back home. It was unclear if the plan could be acceptable to the EU, especially as it came with caveats and was announced just shortly after the European Commission said there could be no negotiation with Belarus over the plight of the migrants. But in a potential first concrete sign of an easing of the crisis, hundreds of Iraqis checked in at a Minsk airport for a flight back to Iraq earlier on Thursday, the first such flight in months. European countries accuse Belarus of flying in thousands of migrants from the Middle East and pushing them to attempt to cross the frontier illegally. Belarus denies fomenting the crisis. Thousands of migrants have been trapped in freezing woods at the border. In a cruel sign of the harsh conditions there, a couple, both injured, told the Polish Centre for International Aid, an NGO, on Thursday that their one-year-old child had died in the forest. Previously it had been estimated that at least eight people had died at the border in recent months. An African migrant whose identity was unknown was buried on Thursday at a Muslim cemetery in Bohoniki, in north-east

West trying to put pressure on Minsk: Putin

MINSK: The West is using the migrant crisis to put pressure on Minsk, but forgets about its own humanitarian commitments, Russian President Vladimir Putin said on 18 November. TASS reports. "It is obvious that Western countries are using the migrant crisis at the Belarusian-Polish border as a new pretext to create tension in the region close to us, to put pressure on Minsk. At the same time they forget about their own commitments in the humanitarian field," the Russian leader said. Vladimir Putin also criticized Poland for



forces are acting at the border. The first thought that crosses your mind is feeling sorry for the children. The Poles unleash water cannons and use tear gas although the children are nearby," Vladimir Putin said. - News Desk

Poland, near Belarus, the second migrant funeral there this week. "It is hard," said Maciej Szczesnowicz, a leader of the local Tatar Muslim community. "It pains me that people went to another country... and met such a fate here in Poland." A Reuters reporter on the Belarusian side of the frontier saw a group of 200-300 people, mainly men but also families with young children, wrapped in blankets and huddled around makeshift fires, trying to keep warm near the Kuznica-Bruzgi border point.

Some had set up a few tents, and a man could be seen feeding a baby. They were surrounded by Belarusian soldiers wearing masks, helmets and vests, and a water cannon could be seen on the Polish side of the border. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko discussed his proposal with German Chancellor Angela Merkel in a phone call on Wednesday, their second call this week, Lukashenko's spokeswoman was quoted as saying by Belta news agency. Merkel had agreed to discuss it with the EU, the spokes-

Tashkent hosts tourism forum

NEWS DESK

TASHKENT: The Tourism Forum was held within the framework of the Second Forum of Uzbekistan - Russian Interregional Cooperation, via videoconference, reports "Dunyo" IA correspondent. The event was attended by representatives of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Uzbekistan, the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, deputy hokims of Bukhara, Samarkand and Khorezm regions for tourism, sports and culture, heads of travel companies of the country. Russia was represented by the leadership of the Federal Agency for Tourism and the Association of Tour Operators, ministers of the Chelyabinsk Region and the Republic of Crimea, representatives of the mayor's offices of Moscow, Saint Petersburg, as well as travel companies. The Uzbek side presented presentations and information on the tourism potential of the country, the development of the sphere, measures to support the private sector by the state during a pandemic, and the conditions created to receive foreign visitors. As First Deputy Minister of Tourism and Sports Ulugbek Azamov noted, Russia has one of the leading places in cooperation with Uzbekistan in tourism and Russian citizens are very active in visiting the country as tourists. It was noted with satisfaction that the flow of visitors from Russia to Uzbekistan is increasing annually, and in the pre-pandemic 2019, this figure exceeded 455 thousand people.

South Korea interested in urea import from Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The fertilizer policy announced by the government has increased its domestic production capacity by approximately 2 million tons and helped Pakistan to attain self-sufficiency in urea production. "The excess capacity will earn precious foreign exchange for the country," Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Engro Fertilizer Imran Ahmed told media persons after a meeting with South Korean Ambassador to Pakistan Suh Sangpyo and Counsellor (DCM) June Seo Park. He said domestic fertilizer industry had enabled USD 3 billion import substitution for the country during the current year. After achieving self-sufficiency for the domestic demand, the CFO said, the industry was now geared up to generate significant exports from untapped low BTU indigenous gas resources. He said South Korea had shown interest in importing urea from Pakistan after its urea supplies had been impacted due to recent limitation on export of urea and other fertilizers from China. "Pakistan has significant potential to export urea and earn valuable foreign currency for the country" he added. - APP

France detains two far-right activists

WEB DESK

PARIS: French security personnel have detained two far-right activists, media reports said Wednesday. The activists were discussing purchasing arms on the instant messaging application Telegram, according to the Cnews news outlet. The General Directorate of Internal Security apprehended the activists in southwestern Montauban and Gironde provinces. Cnews also reported that a preliminary investigation was initiated by the National Anti-Terrorist Prosecutor's Office against the activists for forming a terrorist organization and "direct provocation through an online means of communication to an act of terrorism." In searches at the activists' residences, dozens of weapons and ammunition as well as equipment for making explosives were discovered.

Briefs

Russia test fires Zircon hypersonic missile

MOSCOW: Russia said on Thursday it had carried out another successful test of its Zircon hypersonic cruise missile, one of the latest additions to the country's arsenal of weapons called "invincible" by President Vladimir Putin. 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 Thursday it had fired the Zircon missile from the Admiral Gorchkov warship and hit a test target in Russia's Arctic waters. "The shot was conducted on a sea target in the waters of the White Sea," Russia's defence ministry said in a statement carried by news agencies. It added that the missile eliminated its target with a "direct hit". — APP

Ashrafi vows discrimination-free society

ISLAMABAD: Special Representative to the Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East Hafiz Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi Thursday said that the Constitution of Pakistan guaranteed the rights of minorities. Addressing a seminar on international tolerance day organized by Muslim World League, he said Prime Minister and the State is very clear on teachings of Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), thus the government constituted Secrat Authority to spread the message of Islam. Shedding light on the message of Islam on peace, love, affection, tolerance, coexistence and humanity on the international tolerance day, he urged the world to foster respect for diverse faiths and cultures and reject extremism in any form. He appreciated the role of Saudi Arabia and Muslim World League in spreading the message of Islam of tolerance, peace and love all over the world. He said Paigham-e-Pakistan in Islamabad and Makkah Al-Mukarramah Charter have the same object to promote global unity and coexistence and highlight the message of Islam for peace and brotherhood. — APP

G7 urges Belarus to end crisis

NEWS DESK

SOKOLKA: The Polish army detained dozens of migrants who crossed the Belarus border and accused Belarusian special forces of masterminding the operation, as G7 foreign ministers on Thursday urged Minsk to end the migrant crisis. Around 2,000 people, mainly from the Middle East, are estimated to be living near the Poland-Belarus border in dire conditions and desperate to cross into the European Union. The EU says Belarus engineered the crisis in retaliation for sanctions on the ex-Soviet country. Minsk and its main ally Russia have rejected the charges and criticised the EU for not taking in the migrants seeking to cross over. "We call on the regime to cease immediately its aggressive and exploitative campaign," the EU and foreign ministers of the G7 global powers said. But Belarus has said it wants to de-escalate the crisis. Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko's spokeswoman Natalya Eismont said on Thursday that there were currently around 7,000 migrants in the country. She said Belarus will send 5,000 of the migrants home, while German Chancellor Angela Merkel will negotiate with the EU on creating "a humanitarian corridor to Germany" for the 2,000 on the border.

Indonesian Women Association organizes Batik Fashion Show

Coffee Morning brought the guests an opportunity to understand and get the exposure of Indonesia's diverse culture and its philosophical, and historical values through its most famous Indonesian textile which is called "Batik". Batik has been recognized by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The spouse of the Indonesian Ambassador Mrs. Irina Tugio hosted Wastra Indonesia featuring Fashion Show to Celebrate the Value of Cultural Heritage and Diversity during the coffee morning at the Indonesian Embassy on November 18, 2021.

The event showcased batik and weaving products to the invited guests most of whom were wives of heads of foreign representatives, international organizations and the President of Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA), Ms. Mehwish Sohail who is also the wife of the Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Pakistan.

Mrs. Irina Tugio welcomed the guest at the Indonesian Embassy. She introduced the concept of Wastra Indonesia to the guest. Mrs. Iriana Tugio highlighted the importance of Wastra as it is a special product because the majority of its makers are women who work as Small and Medium Enterprises. She said the Wastra is also an ancestral heritage that is an Indonesian cultural asset and has a vital social role in various parts of Indonesia because each Wastra has its own uniqueness and story.

Coffee Morning brought the guests an opportunity to understand and get the exposure of Indonesia's diverse culture and its philosophical, and historical values through its most famous Indonesian textile which is called "Batik". Batik has been recognized by UNESCO as a world cultural heritage.

The exhibition also featured a mesmerizing fashion show and the models displaying wide range of batik dresses drew great applause from the audience considering that the models were the wives of the ambassadors who enthusiastically participated in exhibiting batik on the ramp and in many cases



exhibited their own collection of batik. The wives of the Ambassadors who performed as models at the fashion show included Madam Zhanna Assanova from Kazakhstan, Madam Irena (Czech), Madam Reema (Bangladesh), Madam Henriette (Netherlands), Madam Pornrat Krachaiwong (Thailand) besides Indonesian models, Miyra Mathilda and Yanti Budi. The participants appreciated the host Mrs. Iriana Tugio for her great effort in promoting cultural ties and giving them an opportunity to be a part of the beautiful cultural event, which is truly enjoyable and learning experience for them. The performance activities were also continued with the promotion of Indonesian culinary offerings Indonesian delicacies such as satay, meatballs, peanut crackers, traditional snacks, cakes among others. This exciting and lively

fashion show which involved the wives of the ambassadors was the first of its kind in the capital. The wife of the Czech Ambassador Ms. Irena said, "This is the first time we have this kind of fashion show I have attended and we should arrange such events on regularly basis." "All is so beautiful," said Ms. Rema, the wife of the Bangladesh Ambassador when observing clothes at the fashion show. "I would love to buy these clothes," she added. The event was concluded with a note of thanks and Mrs. Iriana Tugio extended her heartfelt gratitude to the honorable guests who attended the event and invited them to visit the wonderful Asia-Indonesia.

(Detailed coverage in the coming issue of Centreline Magazine)



US grants \$7 million to address covid-19 effects in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United States government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), will contribute \$7 million to the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) ongoing project to address the secondary effects of COVID-19 in Pakistan.

USAID Mission Director Julie Koenen and ADB Country Director Yong Ye attended a signing ceremony yesterday in Islamabad. ADB will use USAID's \$7 million contribution to provide cash grants to Pakistani families in need of financial assistance due to the pandemic. The grants will be distributed through the Government of Pakistan's Ehsaas Emergency Cash program managed by the Benazir Income Support Fund Program. USAID's funds also will provide technical and administrative support to ensure effectiveness, accountability, and transparency for the program beneficiaries. Speaking at the ceremony, USAID Mission Director



Koenen said, "Fighting this pandemic will take significant resources and an urgent, collective effort among governments, civil society, the private sector, philanthropists, multilateral organizations, and other international partners." She further added, "This contribution to ADB will support the Government of Pakistan's efforts to imple-

ment the Ehsaas Program through the provision of direct cash grants to underprivileged Pakistani families affected by closures and work stoppages during the COVID-19 pandemic." The \$7mn contribution to the ADB is part of an overall U.S. commitment to assist countries affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The United States has

delivered more than \$63 million in COVID-19 assistance through our partnership with the Pakistani government. Since the start of the pandemic, the United States has worked together with Pakistan to improve infection prevention and control, enhance patient care, expand laboratory testing, and support frontline healthcare workers.

Pak rejects US designation on religious freedom

SAIFULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday rejected the US State Department's assessment under the US domestic legislation on religious freedom, terming it arbitrary and selective. The designation of Pakistan as a "Country of Particular Concern" is completely against the realities on the ground and raises serious doubts about the credibility of this exercise, Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Asim Iftikhar said during his weekly press briefing. Each year the US secretary of state identifies "governments and non-state actors, who, because of their religious freedom violations, merit designation under the International Religious Freedom Act", a statement by US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken said. The US secretary of state has placed Pakistan and several other countries on the list for allegedly "having engaged in or tolerated systematic, ongo-

ing, and egregious violations of religious freedom". Iftikhar noted that such subjective designations do not contribute towards promoting the cause of religious freedom worldwide. "Pakistan and the US have been constructively engaging on the subject at the bilateral level, a fact regrettably overlooked by the US," the spokesperson said. "Pakistani society is multi-religious and pluralistic with a rich tradition of inter-faith harmony. Religious freedom and the protection of the rights of minorities are guaranteed by our constitution and ensured through a range of legislative, policy, and administrative measures," he said. Iftikhar highlighted that the glaring omission of India, where the RSS-BJP regime and their leaders openly disregard religious freedom and discriminate against minority communities in an institutionalised manner, is unfortunate and puts the credibility of the US report into question.

Hissein Taha assumes office as OIC Secy Gen

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Amb. Hissein Ibrahim Taha, the Secretary-General elect of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), assumed office on Wednesday at the OIC's General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah. Amb. Hissein Taha was elected in November 2020 during the 47th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in Niamey, Republic of Niger, as a representative of the African Group, as per the geographical rotation of the office of the OIC's Secretary-General. The said session elected him as the new OIC's Secretary-General for five years, starting November 2021, a press release reaching here from Jeddah on Thursday said. Amb. Hissein Taha is a Chadian diplomat who had held several positions in his country, including Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, and International Cooperation, Minister (Assistant Deputy Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Republic).

17th ITIF concludes with local, foreign participation



NAZIR H SIYAL

KARACHI: International Trade and Industrial Fair (ITIF) was of utmost importance regarding economic relations that would promote advanced education and development in the country. E-commerce Gateway of Pakistan playing vital role in promoting the strong relationships. A different delegations of international level led by Mr. Andrei Metelitsa, Ambassador Republic of Belarus and the Consul General of Iran

Hassan Nourain and their products at their corner representation have expressed that it will boost bilateral trade between countries. Julia and Evgeny Prokopovich the directors of Belind travel hoped for cultural and business tour opportunities ahead to make strong relationships with Pakistan. The organizer E-commerce Gateway Umair Nizam distributed shields among the representatives country and the business. He told the citizens visited in conclusion day of the fair observed all SOPs.

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