



Islamabad POST

Sunday, December 19, 2021

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Germany grants EURO 13.5m for Tree Tsunami

Shaukat Khanum funding



UNGA adopts Pak-sponsored resolution



Briefs

All set for first phase of LG polls in KP

DNA

PESHAWAR: All is set for the first phase of local government elections being held in 17 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa amid tight security today (Sunday). Around 79,479 policemen and personnel of other security forces have been deployed for the security during the LG polls. The elections for the slot of mayor city council Dera Ismail Khan were postponed after the death of Awami National Party's candidate, Mohammad Umar Khitab, in an attack on Saturday. Security in DIK and other districts was upgraded after the incident. As per the Election Commission of Pakistan, 2,507 polling stations have been declared most sensitive, 4,188 sensitive while 528 have been categorized as normal. A total of 9,223 polling stations and 28,892 polling booths have been set up for the polls being held in half of the districts of the province. The polls will be held in the rest of the KP next month. As many as 860 polling stations have been declared sensitive, 165 most sensitive while 224 have been placed in normal category in Peshawar.

17 killed in Karachi SITE area blast

DNA

KARACHI: Seventeen people lost their lives and 11 others injured in a powerful explosion that wrecked a bank in 17 districts of SITE area of the metropolitan city on Saturday afternoon. It was feared that some more victims might be trapped under the building debris as the search continued into early hours of Sunday. Earlier, around 1:50pm a powerful explosion razed the building to the ground. The boom was heard for miles and shattered windowpanes of nearby buildings besides damaging vehicles parked in its proximity. The building housing the bank, near the Paracha Chowk, was built on Sher Shah Nullah and the powerful blast caused severe damage to the bank, killing and injuring most of the clients and staff. Several people either alive or dead were trapped under the debris requiring heavy machinery to retrieve them. The ambulance services transported the casualties to the Civil Hospital, Karachi. While the rescue work was underway, another minor explosion also took place, causing panic and fear but fortunately it did not cause any damage. Apparently, it resulted when live electric wires came in contact with gas line. The hospital authorities and the police had initially confirmed 15 deaths and 16 injured in the explosion at the time the story was being filed. Later, two more bodies were pulled from under the debris, raising the death toll to 17, con-

firmed SHO Zawwar Husain. However, the condition of a few injured persons was said to be critical. It was also reported that 13 bank staffers were on duty at the time of explosion. Zahid, Sardar and Junaid and a security guard, namely Younus were among the dead while Abdul Wahab, Sameer and Arsalan, who were present in the bank at the time luckily remained unhurt. PTI MNA Alamgir Khan's father was among those who died in the explosion. The eyewitness said that there were a few bank customers who were buried beneath the debris as well. Another eyewitness spoke to Geo News and said that he was having petrol filled in his motorcycle when the blast took place. He said he saw a few people fall into the nullah underneath the building when the blast took place. Reacting over the incident, Prime Minister Imran Khan wrote on Twitter: "My heartfelt prayers [and] condolences go to all the families of victims of the twin blasts at Sher Shah Paracha Chowk, Karachi." Expressing grief over Alamgir's loss, he said: "I am especially saddened to hear of the loss of our MNA Alamgir Khan's father who also perished in the blast. May Allah give him the strength to bear this loss." DIG South Kharal said police have obtained CCTV footage of nearby places – the bank and an office. The police official said that a forensics team also obtained samples from the debris, and that the overall scope of the investigation had been extended. "A clearer picture of what happened will be before us by tonight," he added.

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Shaukat Khanum funding allegations 'false, defamatory' Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi welcomes Azerbaijan's Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov. – DNA

Shaukat Khanum allegations false: PM

ISLAMABAD: Following allegations regarding Shaukat Khanum Memorial Trust's (SKMT) funding, Prime Minister Imran Khan submitted an affidavit terming all statements issued in this regard as "false and defamatory". The affidavit was shared with the media by the PM's Office after the premier on Friday attended the online court proceedings from his office in the presence of his counsel, Senator Waleed Iqbal. – DNA

Two OIC sessions and two contrasting goals

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD: Forty-one years ago, when foreign ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) met in Islamabad for an extraordinary session on Afghanistan, the agenda was in contrast to the one scheduled to be held in the federal capital on Sunday. The extraordinary meeting held from January 27 to 29 in 1980 was convened against the backdrop of the Soviet Un-

ion's invasion of Afghanistan. The final declaration approved the suspension of Afghanistan's OIC membership, in addition to cutting its financial and humanitarian aid, because the 57-member bloc wanted to penalise the Soviet-backed government in Kabul. The declaration decided to withhold recognition of the "illegal regime" until the complete withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country. It also called upon all member states to stop aid and all forms of assistance given to the regime.

#OIC4Afg | #OICinPakistan

UNITING TO ADDRESS HUMANITARIAN CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN

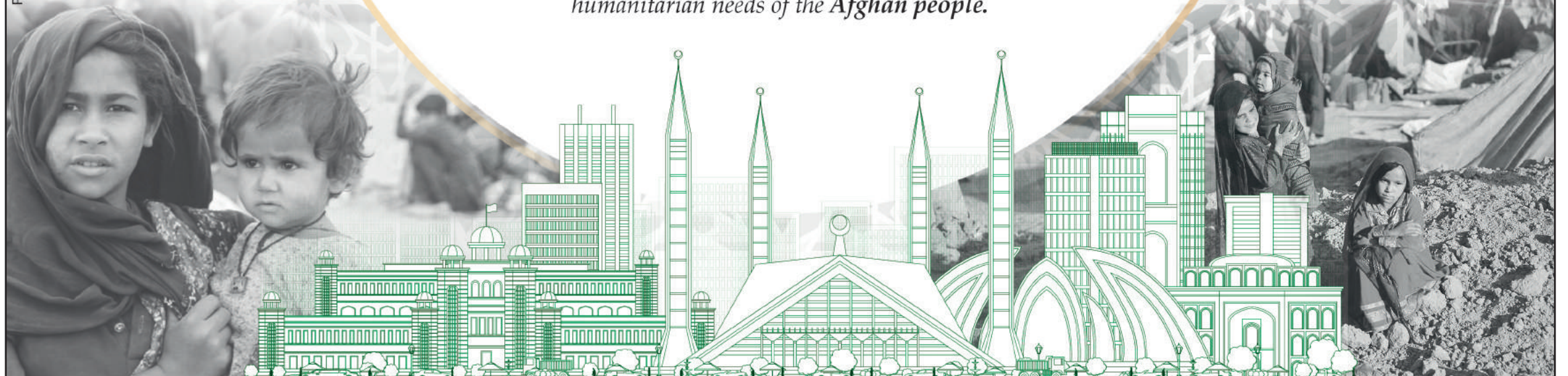


17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers

Islamabad
December 19, 2021

The Extraordinary Session aims to provide an opportunity to consider practical arrangements and concrete steps to help address the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people.

PID(0)413321





ISLAMABAD: Federal minister for information and broadcasting, Chaudhary Fawad Hussain, federal minister for interior, Shaikh Rasheed Ahmad & minister of state for information and broadcasting Farrukh Habib talking to media. – APP

876 women candidates elected unopposed in KP polls

DNA

PESHAWAR: As many as 2,032 candidates have been elected unopposed in 17 districts of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where the local government elections are scheduled to be held on Dec 19. On the general seats, 217 candidates have been elected unopposed while on women seats, 876 females elected without any competition. As many as 285 growers have been elected unopposed on farmers' seats, while 500 candidates on youth seats and 154 on minorities' seats have been elected without facing competition. From Peshawar, 62 have been elected unopposed on general seats; 145 females elected on women seats; 105 on farmers' seats; and 45 candidates have won the election without competition. From Nowshera, 12 candidates have won the election unopposed on general seats; 51 females on women seats; 19 on farmers' seats; 34 on youth seats; and 11 on minorities' seats. From Charsadda, 9 contestants have been elected without any contest on general seats; 55 females on women seats; 30 on farmers' seats; and 9 on minorities' seats. From Khyber district, 24 candidates

have won the election with competition on general seats; 51 on women seats; 18 on farmers' seats; 30 on youth seats; and 12 on minorities' seats. From Mardan District, 15 candidates have been elected unopposed on women seats; 1 on farmers' seats; and 5 on youth seats. From Mardan, 9 contestants have won the polls without competition on general seats; 99 on women seats; 38 on farmers' seats; 68 on youth seats; and 15 on minorities' seats. From Swabi, 18 candidates have been elected unopposed on general seats; 84 on women seats; 40 on farmers' seats; 57 on youth seats; and 2 on minorities' seats. From Kohat, 6 contestants have won election without contest on general seats; 61 on women seats; 8 on farmers' seats; 24 on youth seats; and 10 on minorities' seats. From Karak, 9 candidates have been elected unopposed on general seats; 2 on women seats; 1 on farmers' seats; and 1 on minorities' seats. From Hangu, 14 contestants have won the polls without competition on general seats; 24 on women seats; 16 on farmers' seats; and 1 on minorities' seats. From Bannu, 3 candidates have been elected unopposed on general seats; 22 on women seats; 5 on farmers' seats; 11 on youth seats; and 7 on minorities' seats.

Delay in registration of FIR not tolerable: IG Punjab

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Rao Sardar Ali Khan has said that delay in registration of FIR is not tolerable in any case, cases should be registered immediately on applications of citizens. He issued these instructions while listening to the problems of the citizens during a Khuli Katchehry (open court) held at Central Police Office here on Friday and giving orders to the officers for redressal. He said that strict action will be taken against those who would delay in the registration of cases without any reason. Rao said that action should be taken on priority basis against the mafias occupying the property and lands of the people and strict

legal action should be taken against such mafias and their facilitators. He said that detailed reports of operations against criminals grabbing public and private property should be sent to the Central Police Office regularly. IG Punjab directed that field and supervisory officers in all districts should hold regular open courts at their offices or public places and senior citizens, disabled and women attending open courts should be heard on priority basis. He reiterated that police are a disciplined force so all officers and personnel must be punctual, adhere to SOPs issued in professional matters and take good care of discipline. – APP

FESCO issues shutdown schedule

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has issued shutdown schedule for Monday due to necessary repair, maintenance and expansion of electricity lines. According to the schedule, the power supply from Dry Port feeder emanating from 132-KV Chiniot Road grid station, Quran Academy Road, Jhumra Road and Hamdard-1 feeders originating from 132-KV Steam Power grid station, Yousuf Abad feeder emanating from 132-KV Nishat Abad grid station, College Road, Lahore Road, Arkana and new Awagat feeders originating from 132-KV Jaranwala grid station, Lalian City feeder emanating from 132-KV Lalian grid station, Pipal Bhatta feeder originating from 132-KV Barana grid station, College Road feeder emanating from 132-KV Chenab Nagar grid station, Amin Abad and Kareem Town feeders originating from 132-KV Factory Area grid station, Shadab feeder emanating from 132-KV Jhang Road grid station, Painsara feeder originating from 132-KV Nia Lahore grid station, al-Mustafa Shaheed feeder emanating from 132-KV Sitiana grid station, Hariamwala feeder originating from 132-KV Sitiana Road grid station, new Sabzi Mandi, FIG, Looana, al-Fareed feeders emanating from 132-KV Thikriwala grid station feeders emanating from 132-KV Tariq Abad grid station will remain suspended from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. whereas Theraj feeder originating from 132-KV Jaranwala grid station will observe load shedding from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on December 20, 2021.

New SME policy to catalyze economic activities: Atif Munir

President FCCI said that SME is the only hope to offset the ill impacts of corona and for this purpose the Government has taken elaborate and comprehensive measures to incentivize them through policy interventions

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

ISLAMABAD: New SME policy will catalyze the economic activities in addition to helping the young educated and talented youth to start their own businesses instead of running after the jobs, said Mr. Atif Munir Sheikh, President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI). He was commenting on the new SME policy approved by the federal cabinet. He said that according to the statistics more than one million small manufacturers are working in Pakistan and their contribution in growth is above 78%. "These manufacturers have potential to further grow but they have their own financial limitations", he said and added that they were earlier denied access to the capital. "Hence they could not fully exploit their inherent potential", he added. Continuing President FCCI said that SME is the only hope to offset the ill

impacts of corona and for this purpose the Government has taken elaborate and comprehensive measures to incentivize them through policy interventions. He said that in Faisalabad the SME sector was also contributing 80% share in industrial production in addition to creating maximum job opportunities for the bursting population. He appreciated the categorization of the SME sector into low, medium and high-risk industries along with appropriate facilities for each segment. He said that this policy has offered guarantee free loans up to Rs. 10 million but this is not enough in view of rapid depreciation of Pak rupee, hence this limit must be enhanced up to Rs. 20 million. The exemption from NOCs for low-risk industries is also a positive step which would help start-ups to fully concentrate on their businesses instead of visiting offices to get NOCs from different offices. He said that in the

current age of digitalization, it is not a difficult job and the Government could easily manage and facilitate start-ups by saving them from unnecessary bureaucratic procedures and hiccoughs. In this connection, he particularly mentioned the newly introduced "one window operation" and said that its scope must be enhanced to the SME sector. He said that new portals should also be activated so that male and female start-ups could get the required permissions while sitting from their homes. He mentioned special facilities for the females and said that they could enjoy tax-rebate up to 25%. "It will certainly attract women to start their own businesses with this special incentive", he said and added that the new policy will play a major role in transforming our import-based economy to a dynamic export oriented sector. He said that it will also encourage our youth to produce imported items locally in order to discourage the increasing imports.

Virgin Atlantic completes 1st year of operations to Pakistan



DNA

ISLAMABAD: This week Virgin Atlantic celebrates 12 months of flying from UK to Pakistan. Strong demand from Pakistan diaspora visiting friends and relatives has contributed to a successful first year of operations. Virgin Atlantic has established itself as the number one carrier for travel from Pakistan to UK, with award-winning service and a choice of three direct routes. Pakistan was Virgin's first new country to launch during the pandemic, and the first time it has ever flown from Manchester to Asia. Virgin Atlantic has continued operations throughout the last year, even during periods of the tightest travel restrictions, demonstrating the resilience of the Pakistan market. Highlights of the year included carrying both the men's and women's Pakistan Cricket team to UK and beyond for their Caribbean tours in 2021. Virgin Atlantic operates the state

of the art Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft on all routes from Pakistan, offering the airline's Upper Class, Premium and Economy cabins. Passengers can take advantage of over 1,000 hours of in-flight entertainment, which includes a selection of Urdu films and TV programmes. Virgin Atlantic offers Halal food options for customers along with its award-winning service. Virgin Atlantic offers seamless connectivity via London Heathrow to North America, offering speedy connections to destinations such as New York JFK, Boston and Los Angeles. As well as transporting customers, Virgin Atlantic offers a fast, efficient cargo service. This has enabled trade between exporters and importers in both the UK and Pakistan. The UK is the largest export market for Pakistan in Europe, transporting high volumes of goods such as textiles, apparel and machinery. Passenger safety is Virgin Atlantic's number one priority and the airline has implemented a 'Fly Safe, Fly Well' programme during the Covid-19 pandemic.

GCWU 15th syndicate meeting held

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 15th syndicate meeting of the Government College Women University (GCWU) Faisalabad was held here on Friday. Provincial Minister for Higher Education Raja Yasir Humayon presided over the meeting, while Prof Dr Muhammad Tufail, Vice Chancellor Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan, Prof Dr Talat Naseer Pasha, Vice Chancellor Education University Lahore, Dr Tayyaba Shaheen, Chairperson Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Faisalabad, MPA Firdous Rai, Sara Hayyat and Qurat-ul-Ain from the HEC participated in the meeting. Vice-Chancellor GCWU Prof Dr Rubina Purohit briefed the participants about the university's annual report (2020-21), research activities, quality education, social services, E-Rozgar center, etc. The minister paid tribute to the Vice Chancellor on the university's performance and appreciated the efforts for development of the university, constitution of basic structure, faculty and administration. The minister stresses on vocational education for grooming the students' abilities through modern education.

CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Maintenance Division-I

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed tenders are hereby invited on percentage basis on NIT cost from the contractors duly enlisted with Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) in appropriate category and having valid PEC license for the year 2021-22 for work as detailed below:-

S. No.	Name of Work	NIT Cost	Earnest Money	Tender Fee	Date & Time of Receiving of Tenders	Date & Time of Opening of Tenders
1	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 20-H, St. 20, F-6/3	Rs.2,916,257/-	Rs. 87,500/-	Rs.2000/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	12-01-2022 12:00 Noon
2	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 253-F, St. 50, F-6/4	Rs.631,297/-	Rs. 19,000/-	Rs.1000/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	12-01-2022 12:00 Noon
3	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 256-F, St. 50, F-6/4	Rs.476,723/-	Rs. 14,500/-	Rs. 500/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	04-11-2021 11:30 AM
4	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 1/3-E, St. 5, G-7/2	Rs.351,977/-	Rs. 11,000/-	Rs. 500/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	12-01-2022 11:30 AM
5	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 3/2-C, St. 41, G-7/2	Rs.294,932/-	Rs. 10,000/-	Rs. 500/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	12-01-2022 11:30 AM
6	Repair / maintenance of H. No. 3/10-E, St. 49, F-6/4	Rs. 219,186/-	Rs. 10,000/-	Rs. 500/-	12-01-2022 11:30 AM	12-01-2022 11:30 AM

- Tender firm / documents can be purchased on cash payment (non refundable) for the works mentioned above from the office of Deputy Director Maintenance Division-I, CDA. Last date for submission of applications for purchase of tender forms / documents is 10-01-2022 at 12:00 Noon. The Tender documents will be issued to the contractors up to 11-01-2022.
- Application on original letter pad for issuance of tender documents shall accompany the name address(es), signature of the contractor, valid enrollment / renewal of the firm with the PEC, attested copy of CNIC, professional tax certificate, active Income tax and GST Certificate and at least three number of work order in last two financial year i.e. 2019-20 and 2020-21.
- The owner of the firm should submit the application and collect the tender documents by himself. In case of representative, copy of CNIC along with general / special power of attorney attested through respective court must be attached with the application. The attorney holder must be legitimate and should not be the employees of any Government / semi Government institute.
- Earnest money in the shape of call deposit generated only from firms account bearing name of firm in favour of Deputy Director Maintenance Division-I, CDA, from local scheduled bank of Islamabad must accompany with the application. Without call deposit, no application for issuance of tender will be entertained. Cash / cheque will not be accepted.
- Tender for the works mentioned above will be received and opened by Dy. Director Maintenance Division-I CDA, in his room No.154 Old Naval Head quarter G-6, Islamabad in the presence of contractors or their authorized representatives who care to attend.
- The contractors who are interested to participate in above mentioned tenders, they will have to submit their experience certificates of completed works of similar nature during the last two financial year i.e. 2019-20 and 2020-21 while submitting application, others wise tender will not be issued.
- The contractor will submit the documents as per item No. 16 of instruction of tender documents along with their tender, without which tender will be liable for rejection.
- The relative of a tendering authority should not be entertained for participation in the tenders.
- The bid security of all bidders should be deposited in CDA's bank account and same should be returned after the acceptance of the contract with the successful bidder.
- In case the total bid amount is less than 10% below the NIT amount, the bidder shall submit call deposit as performance Security equal to the difference between NIT amount and total quoted amount less 10% of NIT amount. That is required Performance Security-NIT amount- total bid amount-10% of NIT amount. This call deposit shall be in addition to the earnest money for the work and shall be deposited at the time of submission of bids. Bids not carrying the performance security shall be rejected. The performance security of the successful bidder shall be released after completion of the project.
- PEC certificate 2021-22 & Professional Tax Certificate in original will be seen before issuance of tender.
- CDA may reject all bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of bid proposals. CDA shall upon request communicate, to any contractor or supplier who submitted a bid / proposal, but is not required to justify those grounds.
- This notice may be seen at CDA Website, www.cda.gov.pk and PPRA Web Site, www.ppra.org.pk

DEPUTY DIRECTOR
Maintenance Division-I

PID (I) No. 4128/21

Sunflower cultivation schedule issued

FAISALABAD: The Agriculture Department has issued schedule for sunflower cultivation in the province and persuaded farmers to bring maximum land under cultivation of the cash crop. A spokesman for the department told APP on Friday, "Sunflower is an important edible oil producing crop and it can help Pakistan slash its import bill of edible oil, which is about Rs 300 billion per annum. Therefore, the Agriculture Department has divided Punjab into three zones regarding cultivation of sunflower crops". He said that growers of Dera Ghazi Khan and Rajanpur should immediately start cultivation of sunflower and complete it till January 31, while the peasants of Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, Khanewal, Multan, Muzaffargarh, Layyah, Lodhran, Bhakkar, Vehari and Bahawalnagar should cultivate sunflower from 1st to 31st of January. Similarly, farmers of Faisalabad, Mianwali, Sargodha, Khushab, Jhang, Sahiwal, Okara, Sialkot, Gujranwala, Lahore, Mandi Bahauddin, Kasur, Sheikhpura, Nankana Sahib, Narowal, Attock, Rawalpindi, Gujrat and Chakwal should cultivate sunflower crops from January 15 to February 15. – Bureau Report

Food System in Era of COVID-19

NAMRAH SHAHZAD

COVID-19 (COVID-19), created by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 is a highly contagious disease that was identified in mid-December 2019 and was declared a pandemic by the WHO on March 11, 2020. (Wuhan, China). Symptoms such as COVID-19 fever usually appear 5-6 days after infection and include cough, sore throat, fever, muscle and body pain and loss of smell or taste in some cases. The consumption of foods rich in vitamins and of functional foods can boost the immune system to help fight off viruses. For instance, Ascorbic acid (vitamin C), vitamin A (retinol, retinoic acid, and B-carotene), herbal and Chinese medicines (ginseng root) have been used to help in the treatment of viral diseases. High levels of urbanization and global trade in trade and travel have contributed to the spread of the virus worldwide. The Global Report on Food Crises 2020 found that 135 million people in 55 countries and territories are facing food insecurity at a "crisis" level or higher. The federal government and the National Accountability Bureau in Pakistan are taking strict actions against wheat and sugar hoarders. Onion and tomatoes exports were officially banned from the end of February un-

til 31 May 2020.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) increased by 8.2 percent between May 2019 and May 2020. An analysis of average prices during this outbreak of COVID-19, the price increased were; wheat flour per kilo 13.3 percent, IRR (regular) and basmati rice 8.8 percent, pulses prices have increased substantially, both beef and mutton 5.3 percent, fresh milk 3.4 percent and the chicken and eggs 28.5 and 20.3 percent respectively. Mango exports are expected to decline by 40 percent this year because of the lockdown of sea and air routes. There has been also a negative effect on cotton producers. According to estimates by the International Labour Organization (ILO), 2.9 million salaried workers are at risk due to the restrictions imposed by government. Last March, the United Nations allocated US\$2 billion to the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, which aims to enable organizations such as WHO, UNICEF, and WFP to reach more vulnerable communities and provide them with food, water and sanitation and vaccines, as well as COVID-19 test kits and medical equipment.

– The writer is the student of
Department of Food Science & Technology
Government College Women University Faisalabad

Students pay tribute to APS martyrs

FAISALABAD: The martyrs of APS, Peshawar were paid rich tribute during a ceremony, held at the Government MC Higher Secondary School Allama Iqbal Road, here on Friday. The ceremony was presided over by Principal Rao Muhammad Iqbal. Educationists, teachers and a large number of students were present. The principal said the martyrs of APS were the heroes of the nation. Their sacrifices would not go waste which united the Pakistani nation at a platform, he said. – APP

Islamabad POST

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Briefs

Merkel's party chooses Merz as leader

FOREIGN DESK

BERLIN: Members of Germany's biggest opposition party, the center-right Christian Democratic Union of former Chancellor Angela Merkel, have chosen prominent conservative Friedrich Merz as its new leader, the party said Friday.

Merz, making his third run for the CDU's top post, beat two centrist contenders and won a strong mandate — taking 62.1% support in a ballot of the party's membership. A party congress next month will have to sign off officially on the membership vote, but that should only be a formality.

Armin Laschet, the CDU's leader since January, is stepping down after leading the two-party Union bloc to its worst-ever election result in September, winning only 24.1% of the vote. The bloc, which the CDU dominates, was narrowly beaten by the center-left Social Democrats of new Chancellor Olaf Scholz. Merz, 66, has experience of being an opposition leader. He led the center-right group in parliament from 2000 to 2002, when Merkel pushed him out of that job. He left parliament in 2009, later practicing as a lawyer and heading the supervisory board of investment manager BlackRock's German branch.

UK reports record number of corona cases

WEB DESK

LONDON: Fueled by the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, Britain registered a record number of daily corona-virus cases for the second day in a row.

A total of 88,376 new cases were reported, up from 78,610 cases 24 hours earlier, bringing the total number of corona-virus cases in the country to 11,097,851, according to official figures released Thursday.

Another 1,691 Omicron cases have been found in Britain, the biggest daily increase since the COVID-19 variant was detected in the country, taking the total Omicron cases found in the country to 11,708, the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) confirmed Wednesday. The country also reported a further 146 corona-virus-related deaths. The total number of corona-virus-related deaths in Britain now stands at 146,937, with 7,579 COVID-19 patients still in hospital. The latest data came as Susan Hopkins, the UKHSA's chief medical adviser, said every person infected with the Omicron COVID variant is believed to be passing it on to between three and five others on average.

Hopkins told MPs on the Commons health committee that for Omicron, the R value in Britain is between three and five, and the variant is spreading rapidly, doubling in size every two days. The current R value of the Delta epidemic in Britain is estimated to be between 1.1 and 1.2.

12 dead as typhoon batters the Philippines

CEBU: At least 12 people have died in the strongest typhoon to hit the Philippines this year, the disaster agency said Friday, after the storm swept across the archipelago uprooting trees, toppling power poles and flooding villages.

More than 300,000 people fled their homes and beachfront resorts as Typhoon Rai pummeled the southern and central regions of the country, knocking out communications in some areas and tearing roofs off buildings.

Rai was a super typhoon when it slammed into Siargao Island on Thursday, packing maximum sustained winds of 195 kilometres an hour. On Friday, wind speeds eased to 150 kilometres an hour, the state weather forecaster said. — APP

Uzbekistan, Korea agree to enhance strategic partnership

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, thanking for the invitation, emphasized that openness and mutual respect are a solid foundation on which relations between the two countries have historically been built

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: A solemn ceremony of the official meeting of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan took place at the Cheong Wa Dae residence of the President of the Republic of Korea, in the city of Seoul.

According to the press service of the head of our state, a guard of honor was lined up in honor of the distinguished guest and his spouse. The national anthems of the two countries were played. The solemn ceremony embodied the ancient history and bright modernity of the Land of the Morning Freshness.

The heads of state held talks with the participation of official delegations of the two countries.

President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in, welcoming the distinguished guest, emphasized that Seoul attaches great importance to further development of cooperation with Tashkent in the widest range of areas.

"I welcome the esteemed Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, my dear brother. Welcome to Seoul. I remember well our online meeting in January this year. This was my first summit, opening the year. Today we are meeting, spending the outgoing year in person. It is especially gratifying that it is with you that my diplomatic schedule for this year began and ends. Korea and Uzbekistan are special strate-



gic partners.

Together, various projects are being implemented in such areas as the production of agricultural equipment and electrical engineering, the power engineering industry and energy, as well as the construction of industrial enterprises.

Several important documents will be signed during your visit. We are ready to join hands with Uzbekistan, in response to global climate change, to develop cooperation in such promising areas as the creation of smart cities, smart farms,

ICT and manufacturing electric cars. In the coming year, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. I hope that in the new year we will jointly create a new page of prosperity", President Moon Jae-in said.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, thanking for the invitation, emphasized that openness and mutual respect are a solid foundation on which relations between the two countries have historically been built.

"I am very glad to meet you.

green development, to reveal the enormous intellectual potential of the talented Korean people", the President of Uzbekistan said.

Our countries have been strategic partners for 15 years. The friendship and political will of Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Moon Jae-in have become powerful incentives to give new dynamics to cooperation between Uzbekistan and Korea.

This is the fourth meeting of the heads of state. In October 2017, Shavkat Mirziyoyev paid his first state visit to the Republic of Korea. In April 2019, President Moon Jae-in paid a return visit to Uzbekistan, within the framework of which a Joint Declaration on a Special Strategic Partnership was adopted. Several new initiatives to further strengthen ties were announced by the leaders during the online summit in January 2021.

This visit to Korea is a logical continuation of intensive dialogue.

The Leader of Uzbekistan emphasized that today the very time requires us to reconsider the priorities of practical partnership in the long term. Cooperation between the two countries must fully respond to the modern challenges of the global economy.

The Republic of Korea is one of the key trade and economic partners of Uzbekistan. The trade turnover and the number of joint ventures have almost doubled in recent years.

Doha committed to boost ties with Baku

BAKU: Qatari ambassador Faisal bin Abdullah Hamad Al-Hanzab has said that his country is committed to strengthening ties with Azerbaijan, Trend reported on December 16. "The high-ranking officials of Qatar and Azerbaijan are greatly interested in the relations between two countries to strengthen the friendship and cooperation in all political, economic and social fields to achieve more prosperity," Al-Hanzab said.

Azerbaijan-Qatar bilateral relations are based on common values, friendship, joint cooperation and mutual interests, and are being reinforced with reciprocal respect and trust, he said. The ambassador stressed that Qatar is taking steps toward a bright and successful future by strengthening political, economic, and cultural connections, as well as boosting trade and investment possibilities for businesses of both nations. Meanwhile, Labor and Social Protection Minister Sahil Babayev reiterated that bilateral relations are developing at a high level and they are based on the principles of friendship and mutual respect.

"The high level of political dialogue is undoubtedly due to the political will and wise foresight of the leaders of the two countries, the great importance they attach to cooperation," Babayev underlined. — News Desk

UBG kicks off second round of FPCCI election campaign

DNA

LAHORE: Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry's The United Business Group (UBG), the largest alliance of chambers and trade associations, Friday kicked off second round of election campaign to further muster support of business community.

UBG vowed to continue serve business community with full devotion and help gear up the economic activities in the country on top priority.

Addressing the 30 members core committee here today, President SAARC chamber of commerce and UBG Chairman veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik greeted the newly elected UBG candidate Mohsin Maq-

bool Sheikh who returned unopposed Fpcci VP from interior sindh seat which speaks of UBG popularity and evolved new election strategy in the wake of the suspension of name of rival presidential candidate Irfan Iqbal Sheikh from final voter list by the Sindh High Court.

He said UBG since its inception always attached great importance to business community and advocated their cause at all levels without any fear. He said UBG leadership several times took up the burning issues of business community with PM, federal ministers and advisors to PM including Governor Punjab for getting them addressed on top priority.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said leading traders associations throughout the country have also reposed full confidence on

UBG policies which is one of the major breakthrough and success in real term and we will sweep election with a wide margin. He said that always only true democracy prevail in trade politics of UBG and people with integrity have been given responsibilities so that that could contribute to image of FPCCI and resolve issues of the business community.

"We firmly believe in rule of law, promotion of democratic system and strengthening of national economy by safeguarding the interests of traders," he added. UBG patron in chief SM Muneer, UBG president Zubair Tufail, Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, Presidential candidate Dr Nouman Idris Butt, SVP candidate Hanif Gohar, Secretary Information Dr Mirza Ikhtiar Baig also spoke.

Amb. Sajjad, Belarusian minister discuss industrial cooperation

DNA

MINSK: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belarus Sajjad Haider Khan held a meeting with the Deputy Minister of Industry of Belarus Mr. Alexandr Ogorodnikov. The meeting was also attended by the Deputy Head of the Economic Relations Department Mr. Anatoly Grynevich. The two sides discussed development of mutual industrial collaboration and noted the positive increase in trade figures during the current year. They also reviewed the ongoing talks regarding establishing a joint venture for tractor manufacturing in Pakistan as well as the opportunity for holding agricultural machinery exhibitions in Pakistan accompanied with demonstrations of the agricultural implements.

The Ambassador briefed the Deputy Minister on the available investment opportunities and benefits in the special economic zones being established in Pakistan under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The parties agreed to continue consultations for mutually beneficial cooperation between the two countries.



Painting exhibition on Sino-Pak ties held

BEIJING: Chinese and Pakistani students held here a painting exhibition on Sino-Pak friendship of new era, China Economic Net reported on Thursday.

The report says, 2021 is the 70th year since China and Pakistan established diplomatic ties. Students from both countries depicted the precious friendship in their heart via a great many paintings at the 'Art Exhibition of Chinese-Pakistani Students for Celebrating the 70th Anniversary of China-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations'. Displayed at Henan Normal University in China, University of Sargodha and Roots Millennium Schools in Pakistan, Chinese and Pakistani students' paintings impressed people of the two countries a lot. — APP

UNHCR orders int'l probe into Ethiopia abuses

Nearly 10 million people in northern Ethiopia face acute food insecurity, and at least two million have been forced to flee their homes. Humanitarian workers have little access and face hostility. Ethiopia's government has sought to restrict reporting on the war and arrested some journalists

NEWS DESK

NEW YORK: The UN Human Rights Council has voted to launch an international investigation into abuses in Ethiopia, despite protests from Addis Ababa, amid warnings of looming generalised violence.

The 47-member council voted with 21 in favour, 15 opposed and 11 abstentions on Friday to order the establishment of "an international commission of human rights experts on Ethiopia" to probe a wide range of alleged violations and abuses by all sides.

Speaking at the largely virtual one-day session, Nada al-Nashif, the deputy rights chief, said the UN was continuing to receive "credible reports" that all sides in the brutal 13-month conflict have been committing severe human rights violations amid a deepening humanitarian crisis.



Al-Nashif warned that the risk in Ethiopia "of increasing hatred, violence and discrimination is very high", which could lead to "generalised violence, [with] major implications, not only for millions of people in Ethiopia, but also across the region".

Earlier, Ethiopia's government had slammed the decision to hold the special session and has urged countries to vote against the draft text.

"We call on all council members to ... stand against short-sighted interests and refuse the politicisa-

tion of human rights by rejecting this resolution," said Ambassador Zembe Kebede, accusing the Geneva-based body of having been "hijacked" and used as an "instrument of political pressure".

"My government will not cooperate with any mechanisms that may be imposed on it because this is ... a deliberate destabilisation effort." Nearly 10 million people in northern Ethiopia face acute food insecurity, and at least two million have been forced to flee their homes. Humanitarian workers have little access and face hostility. Ethiopia's government has sought to restrict reporting on the war and arrested some journalists. Between 5,000 and 7,000 people swept up under Ethiopia's new state of emergency remain imprisoned, most of them Tigrayans, al-Nashif said.

"Many are detained incommunicado or in unknown locations. This is tantamount to enforced disap-

pearance, and a matter of very grave alarm."

The Ethiopian ambassador said Ethiopia's government had set up an "inter-ministerial task force" in response to the human rights report issued last month, and it has begun work.

A joint investigation by the UN rights office and Ethiopia's human rights commission warned last month that possible war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed by all sides during the Tigray conflict.

The government-created Ethiopian Human Rights Commission acknowledged in a statement this week that there was "value-added" in encouraging the joint investigation to continue, but said the creation of a new body "is repetitive, counterproductive to ongoing implementation processes, and further delays redress for victims and survivors".

Czech Republic gets new govt

PRAGUE: The Czech president on Friday appointed a new government led by Petr Fiala, a right-winger whose alliance won a general election more than two months ago. "In line with the constitution... the president appointed the members of the new government today," Vratislav Mynar, the head of President Milos Zeman's office, said at the ceremony. Comprising 18 members from five parties, including three women, the government has a 108-vote majority in the 200-seat parliament.

It will have to deal with widespread Covid-19 infections in the EU country, where the pandemic is in full swing.

Fiala's team will also have to tackle soaring inflation and a spike in energy prices, as well as divisions in society caused by the pandemic.

His right-wing Civic Democrats narrowly won October's general election in an alliance with the centrist Christian Democrats and the centre-right TOP 09 party. Their Together coalition then teamed up with a centrist alliance of the Pirate Party and the Mayors and Independents movement to form the government.

They ousted billionaire populist prime minister Andrej Babis, Zeman, who was expected to oversee the government talks, missed the build-up as he was hospitalized over serious liver problems on October 10, a day after the vote. — Agencies

Belarus jails activist for 13 years over protests

NEWS DESK

MOSCOW: Belarus on Friday sentenced an activist to 13 years in prison for taking part in mass demonstrations last summer, one of hundreds jailed for protesting against strongman Alexander Lukashenko.

Eduard Palchys, 31, was found guilty of organising mass unrest and inciting hatred. He joins a long list of designated political prisoners in the ex-Soviet country, with local rights group Vyasna saying 929 are currently behind bars.

Palchys was arrested in September 2020, shortly after nationwide protests erupted in the wake of a disputed election which Lukashenko claimed he won by a landslide. Belarus's exiled opposition leader Svetlana Tikhanovskaya condemned the ruling and posted a video of Palchys in the defendant's cage in court.

"It was a closed trial, so nobody could see how the regime represses an innocent person," she said. "Eduard's daughter was born when he was already behind bars," she said. She added that "we won't stop until all political prisoners are freed."

Australia, Britain ink free trade agreement

WEB DESK

LONDON: The deal abolishes 99 percent of taxes on exports, saving Australia about \$10 billion and saving Britain about \$144 million a year. Australia and Britain have signed a free trade agreement that will eliminate almost all taxes on exports between the countries.

The FTA was signed on Friday at a virtual ceremony by Australian Trade Minister Dan Tehan in Adelaide and Britain's Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan in London.

Tehan said the deal, which will take effect sometime in 2022, will grow investments and help with the recovery from the pandemic.

"Our economies will be able to operate seamlessly again," Tehan said. "The experiences and opportunities that young Australians and young Brits will be able to get through this initiative is just fantastic."

Trevelyan said the deal showed what Britain can achieve "as an agile, independent sovereign trading nation."

"This is just the start as we get on the front foot and seize the seismic opportunities that await us on the world stage," she said.



Pakistan *Welcomes* all distinguished guests for the 17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers

Islamabad, December 19, 2021



H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha

Secretary General, Organization of Islamic Cooperation

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) under my leadership has been following with utmost concern the dire humanitarian situation in Afghanistan over the past many months and years. The recent developments have further complicated the needs and the suffering faced by the people of Afghanistan. It has taken a heavier toll on women and children, who remain the most vulnerable during the crisis.

I take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the Chair of the Islamic Summit for taking the important initiative of calling for an extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers on this humanitarian situation. At the same time, I express my deep appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its generosity in hosting the Conference.

Throughout the Afghan conflict, the OIC has reiterated its full commitment in support of the peace process led and owned by the people of Afghanistan. These were expressed clearly in the decisions and resolutions adopted on the situation in Afghanistan by the meetings of the Islamic Summit and the Council of Foreign Ministers, in addition to the Makkah Declaration issued on 11 July 2018 following the International Ulama Conference on Peace and Stability in Afghanistan.

As an important member of the OIC, Afghanistan needs the full support and solidarity of its Member States. There is an immediate and pressing need to deliver on a huge scale, essential humanitarian aid in areas such as health, food security, and sanitation. I urge OIC Member States, through the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Solidarity Fund to mobilize the necessary financial resources in order to organize and implement an assistance plan for Afghanistan.

I am confident that the OIC family, the United Nations, regional partners as well as key stakeholders would take all necessary steps to bring sustainable solutions to the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.



Dr. Arif Alvi

President, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

I extend a warm welcome to the Foreign Ministers and distinguished guests. It is our privilege and honor to extend to them our warm hospitality in the beautiful city of Islamabad.

I sincerely appreciate the Ministers and Senior Officials of the OIC Member States who responded to the call of the Organization to convene the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Islamabad on 19 December 2021. Their presence here is a manifestation of the solidarity of the Muslim Ummah in support of the people of Afghanistan.

It is heartening to see that the OIC has come together to address the needs of their Muslim brethren in Afghanistan, who face serious challenges in meeting their basic and fundamental needs.

I hope that the OIC will not only exhibit firm resolve to stand by the people of Afghanistan, but will also take concrete actions to assist them in this hour of need. Our Afghan brethren must not feel abandoned. We must take practical steps to help them meet the humanitarian challenges they confront.

As Afghanistan's neighbor and a brotherly country, Pakistan has always extended all possible assistance to Afghanistan and its people. Just as in 1980, when Pakistan hosted the 1st Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan, today we are here to mobilize support for the Afghan people again.

We are confident that, with cooperation and support of the OIC Member and the broader international community, we will once again be successful in advancing our shared objectives.



Imran Khan

Prime Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan is pleased to host the 17th Extraordinary Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) on 19 December 2021 in Islamabad. This Extraordinary Session will review the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan and identify concrete measures for helping the Afghan people that are in dire need of international support and assistance.

Afghanistan, today, faces a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions. It could trigger an economic collapse, exacerbate the security situation, spur instability, and lead to mass exodus of refugees from the country.

As the collective voice of the Muslim Ummah, the OIC can and must play its part in helping address the urgent humanitarian and socio-economic needs of our Afghan brethren.

I greatly appreciate the initiative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Summit Chair of the OIC, to convene this Extraordinary Session – which Pakistan offered to host. I extend a very warm welcome to all the Foreign Ministers, high representatives, and Senior Officials from Member States and Observers of the OIC as well as the special invitees from other countries and regional and international organisations who are travelling to Islamabad.

It is my sincere hope that, true to the tradition of Islamic solidarity and brotherhood, this meeting will go a long way in contributing towards achieving meaningful outcomes for our Afghan brothers and sisters. It would also help galvanize support from other international actors and partners for the well-being of the Afghan people, which is an essential pre-requisite for consolidating peace and stability in Afghanistan.



Shah Mehmood Qureshi

Foreign Minister, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Pakistan is hosting an Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan on 19 December 2021. The previous such Afghanistan-related Session was in 1981. It offered to host the Session in the backdrop of a proposal made by Saudi Arabia – the current Chair of Islamic Summit. In addition to the 56 Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, important stakeholders like the UN bodies, international financial institutions and the P-5 have been invited.

We have been engaged in extensive diplomatic outreach in the wake of recent developments in Afghanistan. The convening of the Extraordinary Session is a continuation of these efforts, aimed at containing and reversing the rapidly deteriorating humanitarian situation and a potential economic collapse in Afghanistan.

The Session would offer a platform to consider practical and concrete steps to help address the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people and craft a credible mechanism for delivery of assistance. The Session would also seek to draw the attention of the broader international community to the unfolding situation in Afghanistan, which has the potential to worsen the security situation, spur instability, cause mass exodus of refugees, and adversely impact regional and international peace and security.

A keen proponent of Islamic solidarity and joint Islamic action, Pakistan is a founding member of OIC, that values the Organization's role and contribution. We hope that the Extraordinary Session will meet its primary objective of alleviating the sufferings of Afghan people at this difficult time.

17th Extra-Ordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers

Islamabad, 19 December 2021

- Pakistan is going to host the 17th Extra-ordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers on 19 December in Islamabad.
- The focus of this Conference is the Situation in Afghanistan – and to be more specific – the **Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan**.
- In the context of the developments in Afghanistan since 15th August, and the way the humanitarian challenges confronting the people of Afghanistan have escalated in recent weeks, this **Extra-ordinary Session of OIC holds great significance as part of the growing international concern about the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and the urgent need to address it.**
- How vitally important all of this is for Pakistan is more than evident. Pakistan is the country most **directly and greatly concerned by the impending crisis** in Afghanistan. We are therefore obliged to be at the forefront of efforts to help stabilize the situation in Afghanistan, and to encourage and mobilize international engagement to address the imminent challenges.
- On 29 November, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – the OIC Summit Chair – took the important initiative to convene an Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers, to consider the situation in Afghanistan.
- Pakistan strongly welcomed this initiative, and offered to host the Session on 19th December in Islamabad.
- Besides **OIC Members and Observers, the UN system, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), international and regional organizations, and non-OIC members including the P-5, EU, and major countries like Germany and Japan, are among other invitees. Foreign Ministers of all key OIC members are expected to attend.**
- Afghanistan is a founding member of the OIC. As part of the Islamic Ummah, we are bound by fraternal bonds of amity and brotherhood with the people of Afghanistan.
- Over the years, the OIC has extended consistent support to the people of Afghanistan. Today, more than ever before, the Afghan people need support of the international community including the OIC.

Focus of the Conference

- The backdrop of this Conference is the serious humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.
- Millions face starvation. According to UN estimates, more than half of Afghanistan's population – **around 22.8 million Afghans face crisis levels of hunger**. The situation is getting worse by the day, especially with winter setting in.
- World Food Programme (WFP) has warned that 3.2 million children are at risk of acute malnutrition. According to UNHCR, 665,000 people have been newly displaced within Afghanistan between January and are at risk of acute malnutrition.

According to UNHCR, 665,000 people have been newly displaced within Afghanistan between January and September 2021 – in addition to the 2.9 million people already internally displaced.

- According to **UNDP, 97 % of Afghans could fall below the poverty line** unless the crisis is addressed.
- "Afghanistan is in free fall" according to Martin Griffiths, Head of UN Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Peter Maurer, ICRC Chief.
- The economy is imploding and there is little cash left for people's everyday transactions.
- **Suspension of development and other foreign assistance, funding by IFIs and freezing of Afghan assets abroad have exacerbated the situation.** There is a clear danger of economic collapse.
- So there is already a cash liquidity crisis. And international financial and commercial transactions have been hampered due to the fear of violating sanctions imposed long ago. **This is not only affecting trade and commerce, but also the mobilization and delivery of humanitarian assistance.**
- **If left unattended, the situation could aggravate into a major humanitarian crisis with serious consequences** – increased instability and chaos, mass exodus of refugees (that has not happened so far), the terrorist threat emanating from an ungoverned Afghanistan, all adversely affecting regional and international peace and security.
- This will impact Pakistan and other immediate neighbours in the first place, but also the region and beyond.

Pakistan's Proactive Diplomacy

- On its part, **Pakistan has been engaged in intense diplomatic outreach** with regard to the situation in Afghanistan. This is illustrated by the **Prime Minister's contacts with world leaders, Foreign Minister Qureshi's numerous bilateral** interactions, including in New York on sidelines of UNGA, and visit to 4 neighbouring countries of Afghanistan (Iran, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan), establishment of the 6 neighbouring countries platform at Pakistan's initiative, exchange of visits with Afghanistan, participation in the Moscow format meetings, hosting of Troika Plus meeting and various other visits and interactions including the recent visit of the Foreign Minister to Brussels are part of this effort.
- **Pakistan has also stepped forward and provided humanitarian assistance** to Afghanistan in terms of emergency food, medical and other supplies. Arrangements are being made to send more supplies under the 5 billion Rupees assistance package by the Government. Pakistan is also acting as a bridge to facilitate the provision of UN and other international and bilateral assistance for Afghanistan.

- **Pakistan's consistent message has been to emphasize the need for continued, constructive engagement of the international community with Afghanistan** – with a view to seizing this window of opportunity for durable peace and stability in Afghanistan after four decades of conflict. **The world should not repeat the mistakes of the past in abandoning the people of Afghanistan.**

- While there are divergence of views and expectations, and understandably so, on political questions and issues, such as recognition, the need for inclusive political set-up, human rights, and terrorism, etc., there is nevertheless **an emerging consensus on the need to address the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.** We think this is a positive result of our efforts and outreach.

- **Today, the international community is concerned over the situation in Afghanistan.** Afghanistan's international partners also want to help.

- **As the collective voice of the Islamic Ummah, the OIC can and must play its part in addressing the humanitarian needs of Afghanistan. OIC's leadership would also help galvanize other international actors to come forward and extend a helping hand to the Afghan people.**

- If a humanitarian crisis is averted and economic stability is assured, peace in the country can be consolidated. This will also have a regional peace dividend.

- Continued engagement of the international community with Afghanistan is, therefore, an imperative.

- Against this backdrop, some of the key objectives of the Extra-ordinary Session of the OIC are:

- To express **solidarity** of the Muslim Ummah with the people of Afghanistan
- To consider **practical arrangements and concrete steps** to help address the humanitarian needs of the Afghan people – especially in terms of food shortages, displacement of people, and potential economic collapse.
- To **galvanize international support for the provision of urgent and sustained humanitarian assistance.** To this end, the possibility of a dedicated 'special purpose vehicle' under the aegis of the OIC is under consideration.

- We expect that in addition to expressing solidarity, the OIC member states and rest of the international community present will consider making **pledges of financial and in-kind support.**

- A broader objective of the Conference is also to refocus the attention of the international community to the fact that the unfolding situation in Afghanistan is not only a humanitarian challenge, but has wider implications on security and stability of the region and beyond, and thus requires a more **comprehensive and concerted political approach.**