



# Islamabad POST

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**Bids to harm CPEC are bound to fail, says Zhao Lijian**

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**UNICEF calls for safeguarding children rights**

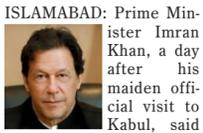
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## Briefs

**Afghan peace vital for us: PM**

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan, a day after his maiden official visit to Kabul, said that after the Afghans, it is Pakistanis that have the "greatest stake" in peace in Afghanistan. "My visit to Kabul was another step towards conveying Pakistan's commitment to peace in Afghanistan," said the premier on Friday, in his first tweet on the trip since his return. "I have never believed in military solutions which is why I always believed that in Afghanistan peace will be achieved through political dialogue," he added.

**Joe Biden turns 78**

DNA



WASHINGTON: US President-elect Joe Biden turned 78 on Friday. In exactly two months, he'll take the reins of a politically fractured nation facing the worst public health crisis in a century, high unemployment and a reckoning on racial injustice. As he wrestles with those issues, Biden will be attempting to accomplish another feat: Demonstrate to Americans that age is but a number and he's up to the job. Biden will be sworn in as the oldest president in the nation's history, displacing Ronald Reagan, who left the White House in 1989 when he was 77 years and 349 days old.

**Prepared to face NZ: Babar**

ABID RAZA



LAHORE: Pakistan's cricket captain Babar Azam on Friday said that the team was fully prepared to face New Zealand on its upcoming tour. During a press conference in Lahore, Azam expressed confidence in the team's ability to challenge the Kiwis and said: "Our team is very excited to go on its New Zealand tour and players are in the right frame of mind to perform to the best of their ability and potential." The batsman said that though the team was taking New Zealand as a challenge, it was not under pressure.

## Bids to harm CPEC bound to fail: China

"We are confident that with support of the international community, China and Pakistan can work together to ensure the success of the CPEC," said Zhao Lijian

AGENCIES / DNA

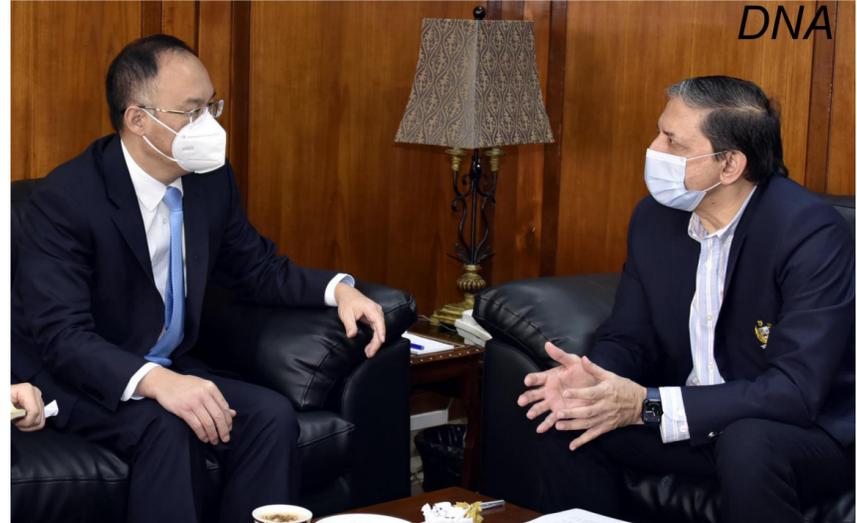
BEIJING: Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesman Friday indicated that any attempt to sabotage China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) flagship project would not succeed and said both countries could work together to ensure its success, with support of the international community. "I have already made my response to this issue. No attempt to sabotage the CPEC will succeed," Zhao Lijian made his remarks during a briefing while answering a question about Pakistan Foreign Minister and DG ISPR joint briefing during which they accused India of supporting terrorist elements and sabotaging CPEC. He said that China opposed all forms of terrorism and also opposed double standard on counter terrorism. "China calls on the international community, the regional countries in particular, to carry out counter terrorism cooperation and safeguard collective security," he added. Commending Pakistan on its positive contribution to global counter terrorism cause, he said that the Chinese side firmly supported Pakistan's efforts in countering terrorism, safeguarding its country and regional peace and security. He reiterated that the CPEC was an important and pioneering project of the Belt and

## CPEC to continue at all cost: FM

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said CPEC would continue to march ahead as per its schedule and despite all ifs and buts. In a statement on Friday, Shah Mahmood Qureshi made it clear that all attempts seeking packing up of the mega project are bound to fail. He said Pakistan govt was committed to the timely fruition of the project therefore let there no doubt about it.

Road Initiative and it was not only important for common development of the two countries but also for regional connectivity and prosperity. "We are confident that with support of the international community, China and Pakistan can work together to ensure the success of the CPEC," he said. Recently Pakistan shared a dossier with the international community which has incriminating evidence of India harboring, training and financing terrorist networks that not only seek to destabilize Pakistan but also the disruption of the CPEC.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of People's Republic of China in a meeting with Senator Salim Mandviwalla. - DNA

## China wishes to further boost ties with Pakistan

Ambassador of China Nong Rong says Parliamentary visits are an excellent means of improving and enhancing relations between the two countries

ANSAR BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of China Nong Rong has said that Parliamentary visits are an excellent means of improving and enhancing relations between the two countries. Ambassador Nong Rong made made these remarks during his meeting with Deputy Chairman Senate, Saleem Mandviwalla at his Chamber in Parliament House.

He added that being an old friend of Pakistan, China wishes to see solidarity in bilateral relations. He said that introduction of concessional trade policies would play an important role to attract Chinese investment in Pakistan. Ambassador of China Nong Rong thanked Deputy Chairman Senate Senator Saleem Mandviwalla for his hospitality and said that he looked forward to developing stronger links through various parliamentary/business

avenues between the two countries. Deputy Chairman Senate, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla while discussing trade and investment opportunities with China said that improving inter-parliamentary relations between the two countries will help enhance business and trade ties. He said that in addition to this he looks forward to more interaction with the Pak-China friendship Group that he convenes. He showed reservations

towards the total bilateral trade worth USD 18 billion between the two countries with a deficit of USD 8 billion. He stressed the need decrease the trade deficit and explore unconventional areas of trade and investment in Pakistan. Deputy Chairman Senate, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla suggested that direct Yuan-Rupee trade would enhance and strengthen trade ties between the two countries considerably.

## Arab media reports Ayman Al-Zawahiri's death

WEB DESK

KABUL: Al-Qaeda chief and Egyptian national Ayman Al-Zawahiri has died in Afghanistan from natural causes, Arab media reported on Friday. The news reports came a few days after social media carried speculation that the Al-Qaeda chief had passed away. Zawahiri was last seen in a video message that was released by the militant group on the 19th anniversary of the 9/11 attacks in the US. Arab News stated in its report that it spoke to at least four security sources



in Pakistan and Afghanistan - who spoke on condition of anonymity - out of which two confirmed Zawahiri's death. An Al-Qaeda translator said Zawahiri had died last week in Ghazni. "He died of asthma because he

had no formal treatment." A Pakistani official has been cited by Arab News as saying that he believed Zawahiri had died, most probably by natural causes. Another source close to the Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan said Zawahiri had died this month and that a few followers had offered his funeral prayers. He did not elaborate as to whether the funeral prayers were offered in absentia or as his body was buried in the grave. "What we know is that he was having some breathing issues and has passed away somewhere in Afghanistan," said the source.

## Pak, Egypt enjoy cordial relations, says COAS

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Tarek Mohamed Dahroug, Egypt Ambassador to Pakistan called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), on Friday. According to a press release issued by the ISPR, matters pertaining to regional security, cooperation in all fields of defence and security were discussed during the meet-



ing. Speaking on the occasion, COAS General Qamar Javed Bajwa said: "Pakistan and Egypt enjoy brotherly relations." He emphasized the need for enhancing bilateral cooperation in all spheres. The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's efforts for regional peace and stability.

## Afghan govt, Taliban agree peace talk rules

ISLAMABAD: The Afghan government and the Taliban have resolved key sticking points that had stalled peace talks for weeks, several sources told AFP on Friday, clearing the way for negotiations to move forward. Talks started September 12 in the Qatari capital Doha but almost immediately faltered over disagreements about the agenda, the basic framework of discussions and religious interpretations. However following days of sideline discussions, it appears negotiators have now cleared the way for full peace talks to get underway. Speaking on condition of anonymity, a senior Taliban leader told AFP that "sufficient progress" been made. "We are close to an announcement and initiation of formal talks," he said. "A joint statement will be issued soon," he added, saying the announcement could come in the next few days. - Agencies

## PDM, KP govt face-off over Peshawar rally

Jan said holding the rally is their fundamental right under the Constitution and law

BUREAU REPORT

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government on Friday denied permission to Pakistan Democratic Movement to hold a public gathering in Peshawar on November 22. The notification said the matter was considered by the district administration and capital city police under Section 14 of the KP Civil Administration Act 2020. The government officials did a field assessment and held a meeting with the jalsa organisers.

But, citing a November 2 notification issued by the KP government banning large public gatherings owing to the rising coronavirus positivity rate in the community, the deputy commissioner denied permission to hold the jalsa "after con-

## PTI set to form govt in GB

BUREAU REPORT

GILGIT: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to form the government in Gilgit-Baltistan as five victorious independent candidates from the Baltistan Division and district Nagar joined the party.

considering all aspects, and to safeguard human lives due to potential spread of COVID-19." PDM, however, is not read to back down. Its media coordinator, Abdul Jalil Jan, says the PDM rally will be held as planned on November 22.

## State institutions fail to do duties



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said Friday while talking to media that the state institutions have lost their credibility to continue politicization. To counteract the politicization menace which has affected people's confidence in the institutions, the incumbent government is ensuring recruitments on merit strictly, said federal information minister. He underscored that these institutions are often not found doing what they are supposed to do.

## Pak donates 50,000 PPEs to Afghanistan

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has donated fifty thousand sets of personal protection equipment to Afghanistan to deal with coronavirus pandemic. According to National Disaster Management Authority, the equipment includes protective suits, surgical gowns, gloves, N-95 masks, face masks, glasses and disposable shoe covers. Meanwhile, a second-wave novel coronavirus outbreak has hit Afghanistan with a surge in daily cases on Thursday, officials confirmed. Fresh figures from the Health Ministry indicated that 253 new cases of COVID-19 and five deaths had emerged across the country in the past 24 hours. With 44 more recoveries, the total number of nationwide cases surged to 44,177.

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The Tashkent Conference on children rights - Page 05

WAPDA wins National Senior Hockey Championship 2020 - Page 06

IMF urges action as recovery loses steam - Page 07

China provides Rs 17m assistance to PRCS - Page 08

## \$150 mln for purchase of COVID-19 vaccine

The Ministry of Health briefed the ECC that this would be the first phase of procurement and the amount of vaccine would suffice for the most vulnerable 5% of the population

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee of the Cabinet (ECC) Friday approved in principle, the provision of technical supplementary grant of US \$150 million for the purchase of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Ministry of Health briefed the ECC that this would be the first phase of procurement and the amount of vaccine would suffice for the most vulnerable 5% of the population such as health workers and the population above the age of 65 years and around 10 million people would be provided a vaccine cover under the above arrangement. Adviser to the Prime Minister on

Finance and Revenue Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh chaired the meeting of the ECC here.

The ECC further directed the Ministry of National Health Services to discuss the proposal with the World Bank and other donors in coordination with Economic Affairs Division so that they could assist in providing financial facility for the procurement of the vaccine during the first phase and for the procurement of additional quantities in future as needed.

The forum also directed the Ministry of NHS to draw a holistic proposal regarding the pricing and risk mitigation mechanism for the procurement of the COVID-19 vaccine for provision on a wider scale, in consultation with the relevant stake

## 2,738 virus cases recorded in one day

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 2,738 new cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours, highest since July 11 when the daily infection figure crossed the 2,700-mark, taking the current tally of patients with the disease in the nation to 3,68,655, a media report said on Friday. - APP

holders. Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar, Minister for Economic Affairs Khuro Bakhtiar, Adviser to the PM on Institutional Reforms and Austerity Ishrat Hussain, SAPM on Petrole-

um Nadeem Babar and SAPM on Revenue Dr. Waqar Masood, also participated in the meeting.

The ECC also approved the request of the Economic Affairs Division to proceed with the formal request for availing the G-20 Debt Relief for the extended period i.e January-June 2021; approval of the Federal Cabinet would be required for signing of the bilateral debt service suspension agreements. The cabinet committee also approved two technical supplementary grants for "Initiating the Process of Retrenchment of Pakistan Steel Mills Employees (PSM)" for an amount of Rs 19.656 billion and "Prime Minister's Special Package to Implement "Skills For All" strat-

egy as catalyst for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Sector Development in Pakistan for Rs 500 million. Similarly Rs 689.3 million were also approved as budget re-appropriation for National Information Technology Board (NITB) for fulfilling its various requirements during the meeting. The ECC also approved the proposal by the Ministry of Energy/Petroleum Division for the allocation of 2.25 MMCFD gas from Umair-1 to M/s OGDCL for sale to M/s Engro at a mutually agreed and negotiated price, under a Gas Sale and Purchase Agreement subject to initiation of Field Development Plan and Development and Production Lease.

## Briefs

## Online expos playing key role for business

DNA

LAHORE: Online expos are playing an important role in the current business situation, SM Imran said Lahore (Commerce Reporter) Online expos are playing an important role in the business situation faced by Corona. These views were expressed by Vice Chairman Lahore Development Authority SM Imran in a meeting with Naeem Saqib, Chief Executive of Virtual Expo. SM Imran said that Corona has dealt a severe blow to the economy and especially the heart of Pakistan, Lahore. Activities are badly affected. Although the construction and development projects of Lahore have been temporarily slowed down, they should be completed as soon as possible and insha'Allah, economic activities will see growth in the days to come. He said that Virtual Expo was playing an important role in promoting real estate business across the country, especially in Lahore. On the occasion, Naeem Saqib, Chief Executive of Virtual Expo, Pakistan's first online exhibition, assured the Vice Chairman LDA of his full support for the construction and development of Lahore.

## PHMA asks govt to abolish duties on cotton yarn

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PHMA) has demanded the government to abolish customs and regulatory duties on import of cotton yarn, as the apparel and home textile sectors in country's local market is facing shortage of basic raw material, which may lead to a drastic decline in overall textile exports. PHMA zonal chairman Faisal Mehboob Sheikh and chief coordinator Adil Butt, in a joint statement issued here on Friday, observed that a huge export orders are available with the value-added knitwear industry but the exporters are unable to take orders due to unavailability of cotton yarn in the country on competitive prices. Faisal Mehboob Sheikh asked the government to remove restriction from duty-free import of cotton yarn from all neighbouring countries to enable the exporters to compete the international market. He said that our value-added knitwear sector is reeling under immense pressure of high costs of doing business, rising utility rates and several other problems. Faisal Mehboob Sheikh said that huge number of weaving industries has already closed down and this spiralling prices and unavailability of cotton yarn will crucify exports of value-added textile, which will lead to further closures of large number of export-oriented units. He stressed the need for amending rules, simplifying tax laws and automating the business processes to bring transparency in the system, so that the SME sector of the value-added knitwear industry could be facilitated and exports could be enhanced.

## Ban imposed on ceremonies inside marriage halls

LAHORE: The Punjab government has imposed a ban on gatherings inside the marriage halls for protection of citizens from coronavirus. According to a spokesperson, Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) Friday imposed a ban under the Punjab Infectious Diseases (Prevention and Control) Ordinance 2020 which would remain in place till January 31, 2021. Marriage ceremonies and other events could be held at open places with not more than 300 persons in the gathering. He said that the participants would ensure implementation of the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and face-mask would be mandatory at the public places. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Ali Alizada and Palestinian ambassador Ahmad Rabaie offer condolences to Senator Siraj ul Haq, Ameer Jamaat e Islami on death of his mother. - DNA

## Pakistan ready to assist Afghanistan: President

President Alvi said Pakistan, for last 40 years, had been hosting a sizeable number of Afghan refugees on its soil and offered that it could further help Afghans in learning skills required to rebuild their country

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday said Pakistan was ready to assist Afghanistan in its rebuilding and also help reintegration of millions of refugees into their society through skill learning. The president, in his virtual address to the High-Level Consultation on return and reintegration of the Afghan refugees held in Geneva, said on-ground development plans in Afghanistan were important for incorporation of the Afghan refugees.

The consultation, on subject of 'Return and reintegration: Building a future for all Afghans' was organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the lead-up to the Af-

ghanistan Conference 2020, being held in Geneva on November 23-24. President Alvi said Pakistan, for last 40 years, had been hosting a sizeable number of Afghan refugees on its soil and offered that it could further help Afghans in learning skills required to rebuild their country. He expressed satisfaction that the Afghan refugees, who stayed in Pakistan for two or three generations, would be returning to their homeland with a lot of skills, including entrepreneurship expertise learnt in Pakistan.

He said Pakistan had set aside almost a billion dollars to help transition of Afghanistan for a prosperous future, which could prove beneficial to both the countries.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Afghanistan had the potential to become a 'geo-economic and geo-strategic hub' allowing goods to move from Central Asia through Afghanistan into Pakistan and towards the sea, and vice versa.

He said the people of Afghanistan had the final authority to decide about their political and economic governance. The president commended the work done by the UNHCR for the rehabilitation of Afghan refugees, including by its incumbent head Filippo Grandi and his predecessor Antonio Guterres. President Alvi congratulated the Afghans, their government and the Taliban for coming together and moving towards a

peace process, which he said "had its own dynamism of dividends for the people of Afghanistan". He said Pakistan played an important role in resumption of peace process in Afghanistan.

Calling it a "very important and golden period", he said opportunities were coming across in the shape of prospects for peace and security in Afghanistan. After Afghanistan, he said, Pakistan was the second most-affected country that suffered the devastation of Afghan war for four decades. "Similarly, the benefits of peace in Afghanistan would also be benefiting Pakistan," he added. He recalled that all circles in Pakistan, whether political or general

masses, never opposed the hosting of Afghan refugees. "Never has been any voice within Pakistan that the Afghan refugees should be sent back, but with dignity," he said. He expressed confidence that the conference would prove as a peace-building effort "beyond the ending of war and entrenching of peace within the Afghan society". The main objective of the high-level consultation was to ensure that the return and reintegration of Afghan refugees was included in the Afghan peace process as well as in Afghanistan's development plans. The event highlighted the need for continued support to the Afghan refugees and the host communities.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan Androulla Kaminara was guest of honour at the Agahi Awards 2020 & presented the award for innovation in journalism. - DNA

## 'Solutions to our problems lie on Uswa e Hasana'

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister for Public Prosecution Ch. Zaheer-ud-Din has said that the solution to our problems lies in sincere adherence to Uswa-e-Hasana of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). He said this while participating in the Ulama and Mashaikh Conference under Shaan Rematullah Alameen week celebrations here at Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Auditorium. RPO Raja Rifat Mukhtar, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, CPO Sohail Chaudhry, Additional Commissioner General Omar Maqbool, Director Arts Council Sofia Bedar, Administrative Officer Riaz Anjum, Mohammad Sadiq, Akhtar Butt, Maulana Mohammad Yousuf Anwar, Mufti Muhammad Zia Madani, Sahibzada Arif Hussain Bukhari and other scholars, teachers and members of civil society were also present. The Provincial Minister for

Public Prosecution said that the entire life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is in fact an interpretation of the Holy Quran by which we can improve our lives by getting enlightenment. He said that the guiding principles of trust and truthfulness for us. He strongly condemned the blasphemous sketches in France and said that in the glory of Holy Prophet (PBUH) week is being observed which has made it clear to the world that we cannot bear the act of France. The RPO, Deputy Commissioner and CPO said that deep love for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is required to include in our lives the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which are the guarantors of peace and security, mutual love and brotherhood and solidarity. They said that patience, forbearance, tolerance and respect for humanity is the hallmark of Islamic society which should learn lessons from Islamic teachings for its development.

## Emirates partners with FlySafair

KARACHI: Emirates airline and FlySafair today announced an interline agreement, opening up connections for customers to selected routes on FlySafair's network in South Africa. Through the arrangement, Emirates and FlySafair plan to offer the ease of single-ticket travel and through tagging of baggage for travellers transferring from Emirates' three gateways - Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban to FlySafair domestic points in South Africa, such as Port Elizabeth, East London and George. Customers can also take advantage of connecting to FlySafair's points, without backtracking to their initial destination when catching their flight back to Dubai. Customers can book their travel with EK offices and travel agencies. Badr Abbas, Senior Vice President Commercial Operations for Africa said: "We are pleased to begin our interline partnership with FlySafair. Their network complements our South African presence, providing an array of connections for our customers, which makes this a natural partnership. Together, we will open up new travel opportunities, and more choice for customers wishing to travel domestically. We look forward to working together and strengthening our relationship into the future." - DNA

## 'No civilised society without equality'

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Communications & Postal Services Murad Saeed has said that no country can claim to be part of civilised world without ensuring equality of law for all. He was addressing the passing-out ceremony patrol officers including 82 female officers at Motorway Police Training College, Sheikhupura on Friday. Inspector General of Police (IGP) National Highways & Motorway Police (NH&MP) Syed Kaleem Imam, Additional IG Khalid Mehmood, Secretary Communications Zafar Hassan, senior police officers and relatives of the passing-out officers attended the ceremony.

Before the ceremony, the federal minister, along with IGP NH&MP, laid wreath on the monument of Motorway Police Shuhada and prayed for the departed souls. At the beginning of the passing-out ceremony, the minister inspected the platoons included in the parade.

While addressing the passing-out officers, the federal minister said that they should feel pride that they were part of an organisation which had earned worldwide fame as an honest and professional force. He shared his expectations that the passing-out officers would uphold the core values of NH&MP, which were honesty, courtesy and help at all costs.

He said that if the government wanted to improve its departments, it would have to make wise selection of persons on merit and improve standards of professional training. - APP

## PM assigns governors to oversee PCP complaints

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Friday tasked the provincial governors to review the mechanism for disposal of complaints registered through the Pakistan Citizen Portal (PCP) pertaining to federal departments operating in their respective provinces. The governors would carry out periodic performance evaluation of the PCP-dashboards of the Federal Government's organizations and a senior level focal person would be nominated for regular liaison with the Prime Minister Delivery Unit (PMDU).

The decision was taken in view of lacking collective performance review of the Federal Government organizations functioning in the provinces.

The PMDU was also directed to create exclusive dashboards for the governors' offices and carry out orientation of the nominated focal persons.

The Citizen Portal has emerged as the most trusted medium for complaints resolution by providing common man a forum as well as voice to raise the issue.

The registration of around three million people at the portal manifested the people's confidence in the system.

The people have lodged 2.7 million complaints with 94% resolution and a total of 617,000 complainants have posted satisfactory feedback. - APP

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## Briefs

## Awareness session on Zainab Alert app

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights (MoHR) has conducted second awareness session on the Zainab Alert app for imparting training on app's mechanism to users through tutorials. The "Zainab Alert app" is aimed to train parents, guardians and administrations to take timely action in case of any mishap with any child.

It is our collective responsibility to work for well being of children and report without delay, if got the information of any missing child", an official of Ministry of Human Rights told APP here on Friday.

Zainab Alert app has been integrated with district police officers throughout the country. In Punjab it is inter-linked to 36 district police officers, in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to 33 and in Sindh to 50, he informed.

## Musical evening at TDCP resort today

ISLAMABAD: A musical evening titled "Live Jamming" will be held today at TDCP hill resort Murree. The evening will feature well known singer "Anosh Gohr" and others emerging artists to enthral the audience with their spell-binding performance.

The event would be a great recreation for residents of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad especially for music lovers to enjoy food of soul, an official of TDCP told APP.

It would be a family ambience event aimed to provide relaxation to visitors from their exotic and monotonous routine. - APP

## Online comedy event "Kuch To Corona" today

ISLAMABAD: An online comedy event "Kuch To Corona" blended with spark of humor will be held on Saturday night from 7 pm to 9 pm. Arranged by Face Foundation of Culture and Arts, the activity is aimed to enhance audience with the witty sense of performers in a unique style. The comedy night will feature the journey in quarantine during Corona Pandemic, an official told APP on Friday.

He said well known comedians would be performed at the moot, a complete package full of spontaneous jokes, witty performances and a lot more to entertain audience. - APP

## IRSA releases 83,800 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 83,800 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 48,300 cusecs.

According to the data released by Indus River System Authority, water level in the Indus River at Tarela Dam was 1502.67 feet, which was 114.67 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 27,300 cusecs and outflow as 40,000 cusecs.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1189.40 feet, which was 149.40 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 4,200 cusecs and 27,000 cusecs respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 54,500, 53,400 and 12,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 8,900 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 2,000 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President ICCI is presiding over a meeting of business community to discuss the issues being created by sealing of businesses. - DNA

## ICCI cautions against sealing of businesses

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, ICCI said that business community have to spent years for building the reputation and goodwill of a business, but normally FBR, local administration and other govt departments tended to seal businesses on small violations

FIAZ CHAUDHRY

ISLAMABAD: The business community in a meeting at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has called upon the government to discard the practice of sealing businesses for any violations of SOPs and give them warnings along with imposition of small fines as sealing businesses was affecting their credibility and was not the right solution to curb the spread of Covid-19 pandemic. They said that sealing of businesses would ultimately hurt the already weak economy and create

more problems for the future growth of the country.

Chairing the meeting, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that business community have to spent years for building the reputation and goodwill of a business, but normally FBR, local administration and other government departments tended to seal businesses on small violations, which badly damaged their reputation and caused great financial losses to them.

He said that the sealed businesses have to suffer for a long time and struggle hard to restore

their prestige in the local community, which puts extra financial burden on them.

He said that instead of sealing businesses, government departments should prefer giving warnings and imposing small fines on them for any violations, which would save businesses from unnecessary losses and also generate revenue for the government.

ICCI President said that government machinery should ensure strong enforcement of SOPs to control the outbreak of Covid-19 instead of sealing businesses. He said that the economy of Pakistan has already suffered huge losses

due to lengthy lockdowns during Covid-19 pandemic last year and it could not afford further closure of businesses as shutting down business activities would plunge the economy into deep troubles.

He emphasized that the government should go extra miles to save the businesses from any further problems in order to keep the wheel of the economy in running mode. He said that businesses in smart lockdown areas should be allowed to remain open with implementation of SOPs.

Ms. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President and Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said

that recently FBR had sealed the office of a telecom company due to tax issues, but it has sent a very negative message to the potential investors.

They said that Pakistan needed to promote maximum local and foreign investment to boost industrialization and strengthen the economy, but sealing of businesses on any violations would thwart such efforts of the government.

They stressed that the government should discard the practice of sealing businesses and should warn them before imposing fines for any violations in the larger economic interests of the country.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador-Designate of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal to Pakistan, Tapas Adhikari, paid a courtesy call on the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka. - DNA

## "Sallu Alaihi Wa Aalihi" exhibition starts

ISLAMABAD: A dazzling art show of Washi Shahid titled "Sallu Alaihi Wa Aalihi" was inaugurated here on Friday in an online ceremony at Gallery 6.

Washi Shahid, is an established calligrapher who has been working in this art form since last 17 years. He has special skills to work in classical Arabic calligraphy with gold leaf, a very delicate medium. He mainly uses Thuluth Jelli script, which is a large and elegant, cursive script, used in medieval times on mosque decorations. It has been used in most of the scripts work in Khana-e Kaaba and Masjid Nabvi. Dr. Arjumand Faisal, a curator said Wasil has shown his brilliant command over the medium and the script in five solo exhibitions and in several group shows held in Pakistan and abroad. - DNA

## Modern toilets to be constructed across city

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has started construction of modern toilets in major shopping malls, shops and public parks across the city, while existing toilets are also being upgraded.

According to a press release of CDA, 100 toilets in the first phase and 15 more toilets in the second phase would be constructed. More toilets would be constructed in each sector as per requirement later on. Upgraded and new toilets would be leased out to private companies for the period of 10 years, the PR added.



According to the details, as per the need and demand of the city and traders, the Sanitation Department of CDA has started construction of toilets in all major and small markets, shopping malls and shops of the city.

## Dr Zaman among the top 2% world scientists



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Zaman from the Department of Sociology, Quaid-i-Azam Islamabad is among the Top 2% Scientists of the World Ranking. This ranking is released by the Sandford University, USA based on the research, citation and publication input. He is a leading sociologist of the country and only sociologist from Pakistan in the world ranking. His research revolves around the childhood, youth, marriage and family, and road safety in Pakistan. His main scholarly contribution is "adequate social exchange"; "methodological gravitism"; road safety and cultural context of Pakistan. He is the author of two books and co-author on three books. He also published research articles in the world leading peer review journals of sociology. He was co-researcher on the street code research in Germany, Pakistan and South Africa and co-authored the book The Codes of the Street in Risky Neighborhoods.

## 'Faiz Ahmed Faiz' remembered

ISLAMABAD: Nation paid glowing tribute to the services of legendary Pakistani poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz, who is often dubbed as the voice of revolution on his 36th death anniversary on Friday (Nov 20). Whenever it comes to Urdu poetry or Urdu poets, Faiz Ahmed Faiz is always remembered in this talk. He was a legendary poet and has written many Urdu poetry in his life. He was awarded with a Nobel Prize in Literature. He was born on February 13, 1911 in Sialkot. He studied from Oriental College. He got his education from Molvi Shams-ul-Haq who was one of the teachers of Allama Muhammad Iqbal and learned a lot from him. He then joined British Indian Army and performed his duties very well. He was then awarded with British Empire medal due to his extraordinary performance in the armed forces.

At the time of independence, Faiz opted to shift in Pakistan. He then started working in Pakistan and joined The Pakistan Times, PTV news reported.

He then joined the Communist party. After some time he was arrested in an allegation of being a part of a conspiracy which was made to overthrow Liaquat's administration.

After passing 4 years in jail, he was then released. He did not stop his work and joined the Progressive Writers Movement where he showed his talent and became a notable person of the movement. - APP

## RCB's amnesty scheme extended till Dec 31

RAWALPINDI: The amnesty scheme for illegal domestic structures, launched by Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has been extended until December 31. According to a RCB spokesman, the board had launched an amnesty scheme for illegal residential buildings under which the owners had been asked to legalise their illegal structures without fines.

The amnesty scheme was announced for illegal structures of domestic units, constructed before 2015, he added. The owners of the illegal buildings would pay a fee of Rs 2500 to have their building map made by an approved architect which would be submitted to the Board for formal approval, he said and informed that three field offices had been set up in Allahabad for the residents of Ward Number 1 & 10, Valley Road for Ward Number 2,3,4,8 & 9 and 'Baraf Khana, Masrial Road' for Ward Number 5, 6 & 7. He said, special awareness campaign had also been launched through banners, posters and newspapers ads. To a question he informed that a special operation against illegal constructions in commercial areas would also be launched soon. - APP

## PARC develops two banana varieties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Agriculture Research Council (PARC) has developed two high yielding, disease resistant banana varieties that would help to achieve maximum output, besides enhancing farm income of small farmers holdings lands of the potential areas. The seed varieties have been developed in National Institute for Genomics and Advance Biotechnology (NIGAB) and registered first ever in the history of Pakistan, said Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali Member Plant Sciences of PARC.

He said that banana is cultivated over an area of 80,000 acres in Pakistan and as per Food and Agriculture Organization statistics it's per acre yield is less than India and China which produces more than 10 tons per acre. The reasons behind this low yield are unavailability of high yielding banana varieties and certified disease free planting materials, he said adding that PARC has developed two banana varieties NIGAB-1 and NIGAB-2, which have been approved for commercial cultivation by Sindh Seed Council. - APP

## Govt taking effective steps to deal with 2nd wave

Faisal Sultan said public safety was of utmost top priority of government and the success of efforts made against Covid-19 would not be allowed to go to waste

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the PM on Health Dr Faisal Sultan on Friday said that government has taken timely and proportionate steps to deal with the Second wave of coronavirus pandemic to protect people's health, as well as implemented measures to mitigate the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

Talking to a private news channel, he warned that the country could be at risk of a second wave of the Covid-19 outbreak if residents do

not adhere to the strict precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

He explained the further steps to control the disease that the National Command and Control Centre (NCCO) has proposed restrictions on large-scale public gatherings and issued fresh guidelines for marriage halls after the country saw a rise in Covid-19 infections in recent weeks.

He said public gatherings and marriage halls, which were reopened

on Sept 15, are hotspots for the spread of coronavirus, adding, these gatherings should ideally not take place at all, but if unavoidable, must be organized with strict compliance with the standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Faisal Sultan said public safety was of utmost top priority of government and the success of efforts made against Covid-19 would not be allowed to go to waste. He added that the restrictions would be tightened in the cities

where the positivity ratio of the virus was high.

"We cannot allow citizens to visit public places and offices without wearing masks and neglect other health guidelines," he mentioned. The government has also set up a hotline so that the citizens could inform the authorities about the violation of coronavirus SOPs. He said that lack of seriousness of the masses could further raised chances of dangerous wave of the infection as it has been witnessed

that no standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been followed at business centers, shopping malls and other public places.

Replying a Query about school closure, he replied no final decision on holidays or school closures was made yet but a next final meeting will be held on Monday 23rd November, 2020 for further review of the COVID 19 situation. All options are being discussed. No immediate decision for now. - APP

## Briefs

## CDA starts development work

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has started development work in sector I-15 and its sub sectors as it was neglected for a long time. Biddings have been invited for the infrastructure of Sector I-15/1 whereas the earth work and survey of streets and roads of the sector were continued, said a CDA Spokesperson.

Besides this, the tender for sector I-15/4 has also been opened. According to details, sector I-15 was opened for facilitating the low income citizens. Despite allotment of plots the sector lacked proper development, however, the current administration of CDA was committed for the developmental work in the neglected sectors.

CDA was implementing the policy of the betterment of infrastructure in sector I-15 and its sub sectors so that the issues being faced by the allottees may be resolved. Tender for I-15 has been issued which will be opened on December 17, 2020 whereas the development work will be started in January next year. The tender for sub sector I-15/4 has also been opened and development work will be started within two weeks. The developmental work in sub sector I-15/3 is already underway, the spokesperson added. - APP

## Pink Residency reference adjourned

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Friday adjourned hearing on Pink Residency reference till November 26, connected with fake accounts scam.

AC-II Judge Muhammad Azam Khan conducted hearing on grant reference filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against Omni Group's Abdul Ghani Majeed and others.

During the course of proceeding, a defense lawyer conducted cross examining with prosecution witness Munavar Alam. After this, the court ordered the counsels of all accused to ensure their attendance on next date of hearing.

Meanwhile, the accountability court once again postpone its decision on acquittal plea of accused in a reference against former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani and others pertaining to misuse of powers in award of an advertising campaign contract to a private firm. The court fixed November 27, to announce its decision which was reversed previously.

Similarly, the same court postponed its decision till November 27, on acquittal pleas of co-accused in a reference against former prime minister Shaukat Aziz regarding illegal appointments. The hearing was adjourned without further proceeding. - APP

## FJWU holds Mehfil-e-Milad

RAWALPINDI: A Mehfil-e-Milad was organized at Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) with religious zeal to mark the Eid Milad un Nabi (SAW). Vice Chancellor, (VC), FJWU, Dr Saima Hamid, the Chairpersons, Faculty members and the students attended the Milad.

The students from various departments of the university also participated through Facebook and YouTube live streaming in Mehfil-e-Milad with great reverence and enthusiasm to pay tribute to Hazrat Muhammad (SAW). The 'Mehfil-e-Milad' started with the recitation of Quranic verses by Hajra Ilyas, student of Islamic Studies Department.

The participants of the Mehfil-e-Milad included Sidra Tasawar, Sabrina Bukhari, Sehr Amjad, Hira Erjaj, Hadia Ibrar and Atiqah Jahangir. A group of participants presented bayan on the topic of "Patience" and also shed light on Seerat-un-Nabi (SAW). They briefed the audience on the importance of patience by highlighting various aspects of the life and teachings of Hazrat Muhammad (SAW). They stressed to practically follow the Quran and Sunnah which offered solution to all the problems. - APP



ISLAMABAD: A monkey presenting antics to attract customers' attention. Due to coronavirus parks in the Capital have been closed due to which business of such people has badly affected. - DNA

## Rising ultra-nationalism threatens co-existence

The last speaker on the panel was Michael Kugelman who shared his thoughts on the topic. While addressing the audience he said that nationalism is a term that has been with us for centuries

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Institute of Conflict Resolution (IICR) organized a One-day International Conference titled "Growing Ultra-nationalism in Contemporary World". The panelists included eminent speakers from various parts of the world.

Dr. Salma Malik, Assistant Professor Defense and Strategic Studies QAU, Islamabad moderated the session whereas other speakers included Prof. Dr. Nazir Hussain, Dean Social Sciences QAU, Prof. Dr. Hamit Erosy, Professor, Istanbul Zaim University, Turkey, Mr. Michael Kugelman, Deputy Director South Asia Program, Wilson Centre, Washington, USA and Dr. Waleed

Rasool, Director General at Institute of Multi-Track Dialogue, Development and Diplomatic Studies.

While commenting Dr. Nazir Hussain said that over the decade there has been a rise in Ultra-nationalism which has swept across many parts of the world including United States. Moreover, authoritarian civil rules in the United States, France, Spain, Russia, Turkey, China, and India manifested their brands of ultra-nationalist tendencies. Adding further he said that Donald Trump's 'America First' European 'protectionism' 'Brexit' and India's 'Hindutva' has created insecurities and uncertainties among the minorities in the majoritarian rules. However, Globalization,



Trans-national cooperation and peaceful coexistence were the major causalities of this rise.

While expressing his views Prof. Dr. Hamit Erosy's discussion encompassed the interaction between the ultra-nationalism's ideology, political movements, globalization and the implications of the first on the latter. He also touched upon the emer-

gence of ultra-nationalism, its root causes and how it has become a threat for the nation states with the collapse of bipolar system at the end of the cold war. While reflecting on the future he recommended that Muslim countries should draw consensus and invent their own concepts to read the global politics. Moreover, he also said that leaders of the Muslim world

should realize that nationalistic policies would lead to more division among them. The next speaker on the panel was Dr. Waleed Rasool who reflected upon the growing ultra-nationalism in India and how it is affecting the Muslims in India. He said that every aspect of Indian society has been hindered by Modi and BJP. Furthermore, he shared that it is not ultra-nationalism which Indian society is facing it is Modism which has been inflicted upon them. Adding further he said that the data of voters in the election of India from 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019, reveals an interplay of politics, religion, race, and science that has consolidated the new interpretation of hyper-nationalism

in the Modi regime. The last speaker on the panel was Michael Kugelman who shared his thoughts on the topic. While addressing the audience he said that nationalism is a term that has been with us for centuries. In earlier times, it was a principle that inspired hope and optimism—a force that unified people around shared ideals of nationhood and led to the formation of new countries. However, in more recent times, the term would take on a very different and more sinister connotation—one that conjured up thoughts of xenophobia, authoritarianism, and broader assaults on democracy. He further said that it has been visible and has impacted global politics and the world will have its lasting impacts.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden in Pakistan inaugurating Pakistan's first fast DC electrical vehicle charging unit in Islamabad's F 7 sector. - DNA

## COMSTech Int'l workshop kicks off on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD: Realizing the importance of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the healthcare systems, COMSTech is going to inaugurate a two-day workshop and exhibition on AI in healthcare in collaboration with Sir Syed CASE Institute of Technology. It will be inaugurated at the COMSTech headquarters, Islamabad on November 24, 2020.

Chaudhry Fawad Hussain, Federal Minister for Science and Technology, Pakistan will grace the occasion as guest of honor. This event is being organized under the kind patronage of Prof. Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman (FRS, N.I., H.I., S.I., T.I.), Chairman Prime Minister Task Force on Information Technology. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Chaudhary (H.I., S.I., T.I.), Coordinator General COMSTech and Prof. Dr. Shoaib A. Khan, founder CARE, Islamabad are the chair and co-chair of the event respectively. The objective of this International workshop and exhibition is to bring together the researchers, industrialists, and practitioners interested in the specification, design, and development of AI to cultivate smart healthcare systems that will improve personal healthcare in a better way.

Intelligent hospital management, health software architecture, framework, design & engineering, internet of things for healthcare, intelligent technologies for healthcare, programming paradigms and tools for health applications, automated diagnosis and prediction, and data discovery are the main themes of the workshop. Dr. Atif Mashkoor, Johannes Kepler University, Austria, and Professor Ashiq Anjum, University of Leicester, UK, are the resource persons among others. - DNA

## AIU postpones examinations in AJK

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has postponed ongoing examinations of spring 2020 semester including BS, B Ed, MA/ M Sc across Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The university has taken this decision keeping in view potential threat of lock down in AJK from November 22 - December 05 to restrict the spread of COVID-19 pandemic. According to the Controller of Examinations, AIU, revised schedule for these examinations would be announced later.

However, examinations in other parts of the country would be held as per already notified schedule.

Moreover, the university has announced the new schedule for an already cancelled paper of B Ed course code (6467). The examination for this course code will be held now on November 30, 2020. Previously, it was supposed to be held on November 06, however it was cancelled owing to some unforeseen reasons. Revised roll number slips are being dispatched to the students, however previously issued roll number slips would also be acceptable in the examination halls. No change has been made in timings and venue for this examination.

## Setting of fruit processing industry in GB is vital

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) on Friday said climate and fertile soil of Gilgit-Baltistan offer ideal environment for producing fruits like apples, peach, cherries, almonds, apricot, etc. As farmers in Gilgit-Baltistan produce over 100,000 tonnes of fresh apricots a year. "Setting up the fruit processing industry in the region would help boost the country's fruit exports".

While talking to delegation of Gilgit Chamber of Commerce, PBF Vice President Ahmad Jawad said low volume of trade between Pakistan and China is not reflective of the economic size of two neighbouring countries. This indicates there is a huge untapped trade potential in both countries, which can be utilised mainly to enhance welfare of the masses and Gilgit Baltistan would be key gateway to strengthen bilateral trade.

Initially the CPEC plan does not really benefit GB in the short-term, since no direct industrial projects are being established. However, if we take a look at the long term perspective, with the establishment of businesses, telecommunication networks and infrastructure projects, GB will start to benefit economically. Therefore, 'there's a dire need for the policy makers in the government to develop plans in GB of think-tanks to focus on the core issues directly'. Jawad said.

## NAVTC Initiates online verification system

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Considering importance and swiftness in the process of verification of certificates, NAVTC has initiated work on the development of Online Verification System of TVET sector certificates/Diplomas. All chairpersons of Approved Qualification Awarding Bodies (QABs), including provincial Boards of Technical Education (BTEs), Trade Testing Boards (TTBs), other approved QABs in TVET sector across Pakistan and Regional Director Generals of NAVTC, participated the meeting.

Dr. Faheem Mohammad, Executive Director, NAVTC chaired the meeting and highlighted that this long-awaited initiative is very important to enhance the quality and credibility of TVET sector in Pakistan and improving employment opportunities for Pakistani youth at home and abroad. The system will facilitate Pakistani youth for attestation process and employer in Pakistan and abroad. It will increase confidence of the employer of foreign countries on Pakistani certification system, which will help in raising foreign remittances.

## 'Pak is near to announce cybersecurity policy'

"The cyber policy for the country is being finalized. It is (there) in one form or the other in practical shapes, but a formal cybersecurity policy is under finalization. I am sure we will be having this policy very soon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is all set to announce a formal cybersecurity policy to better protect businesses, peoples' privacy and their fundamental rights, and secure private information and data against online harm, as work on the guidelines has entered into the final phase.

"The cyber policy for the country is being finalized. It is (there) in one form or the other in practical shapes, but a formal cybersecurity policy is under finalization. I am sure we will be having this policy very soon," Shoaib Ahmad Siddiqui, Federal Secretary, Ministry of IT & Telecommunication, said while speaking on the third international conference on 'Cyber Threat Intelligence {2020}' or-

ganized by Total Communications held in Islamabad. A number of cyberattacks have taken place on state and private entities in Pakistan. Besides, people have lost lives due to non-serious approach and attitude on social media. "Much has to be done, not much has been done," he said. President Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan are giving utmost importance to what is required for IT, information security and cybersecurity and Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque is leading it in a very vibrant manner, he said. Speakers have very rightly pointed out that IT departments at public and private entities are not responsible for the cybersecurity, information security and cyber threats, "but this is virtually state level matter and permeate

throughout the society at all levels...to all organizations whether they are in financial sector, information services or any other technical work," he said. Ensuring cybersecurity is a highly challenging job. "It is a 360 degree effort. It is a 24 hours' work. It is not just you do excellent in 23 hours and 59 minutes and one minute is the gap where you are hit. So this is the level of alertness and the visual that is required for," he said. Ammar Jaffri, Director General, Center of Information Technology (CIT), expressed disappointment that Pakistan has remained stuck in discussing basic policy issues for cybersecurity for over one-and-half decades. "We have started discussions to safeguard the nation against cyberattacks 16 years ago...and today we are again dis-

cussing cybersecurity. It is very serious to me. These 16 years is a big time for me," he said. Jaffri, who is Former Additional Director General, Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), said that corporate sector and individuals are waiting for legal protection against cybersecurity breaches. "This is high time for the government to act now." Sagheer Mufti, Chief Operating Officer, HBL, said that cybercrime has become more profitable than narcotics globally. This is a wakeup call for public and private entities in Pakistan. Azhar Zia ur Rehman, Head of the Advisory Committee on Cyber/Information Security, Ministry of IT & Telecommunication, said that they have developed a generic framework for a national information security policy. "What we are trying to protect is not the cy-

ber, but the information through strengthening cybersecurity that is our valuable asset." Speakers in panel discussions said that Covid-19 is the gateway to the future of digital Pakistan. The landscape of cyber-attacks and threats has drastically changed especially during the pandemic, as criminals are now using artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning to attack public and private sector entities. They said the entities should not stop doing projects for digital Pakistan in wait for cybersecurity policy and other related legislations, but they should go ahead. The projects and policymaking can be done simultaneously, they said. International speakers from Russia, UK, Turkey, USA, KSA and Singapore also spoke in the conference.

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## Ambitious changes

**P**RIME Minister Imran Khan has recently commented upon drastically changing two election procedures. Firstly, he seems determined to change the structure of the Senate elections. PTI in October introduced the Election (Amendment) Act, 2020 which proposes a larger set of electoral reforms, including an overhaul change in the electoral process of electing senators, seeking to end the use of secret ballots in the elections for the upper chamber of parliament. Building on the same bill, PM Khan said that the government had decided to move a constitutional amendment in the parliament to elect new senators through 'show of hands' instead of a secret ballot. The second suggestion by PM Khan is more ambitious—he wants to introduce e-voting and voting rights to overseas Pakistanis. The first initiative by the government is not a new or unilateral sentiment—there have been deliberations of changing Senate procedure for years. There was particular uproar in the 2018 Senate elections, where many instances of surprising switches across the aisle were noted. The outrage seemed bipartisan—both PTI and PML-N claimed foul play and called for investigation into vote-purchase and horse-trading allegations. Both steps are not unreasonable, yet come with their own challenges. The extent of vote switching in the last Senate elections that came about because of horse-trading, or because of internal party disputes or weak candidates is disputed. While having open elections will clearly bring about more transparency, they bring into question the point of having elections in the first place if all will vote according to the party line. With the second step, the government will have to tread extremely cautiously. E-voting across the world has proven to be vulnerable to online attacks—technologically advanced countries have rolled back online voting, even with iron-clad security. While the reasoning behind introducing e-voting is democratic, the process towards better online security will be a long one, and should not be steamrolled for convenience.



## Peace in Afghanistan

**A**DDRESSING the process of bringing about peace in war torn Afghanistan through delegation level talks with Ashraf Ghani, Imran Khan is aiming to usher Pakistan into a new era of deepened friendship with its neighbour. Through this visit to Kabul, we have sent out a strong and undisputable message of trust and commitment to inspire harmony within the region in times when violence seems to be uncontainable. The hope now is for consistent progress to be made in a timely fashion so that mutual benefits can be secured for both countries. The aim of all bilateral talks with Afghanistan is to strengthen ties with regards to resolving conflict and enhancing economic development within the region as a whole. With Afghanistan on our side, not only do economic prospects, particularly those concerning CPEC and the BRI, become more promising but any attempts by India to use their land for the purpose of destabilising Pakistan are neutralised. These are some aspects that could become the centre of discussion during Imran Khan's stay in Afghanistan. It is undeniable that a country with a similar culture, history, faith and values provides ample opportunities for cooperation and it is up to us to make the most of the situation. With such laser focus on progress comes the issue of irrefutability; Afghanistan might never be able to say that Pakistan never extended a friendly hand during trying times, to help navigate the country towards prosperity, and is not interested in maintaining friendly ties with the country. Our intention is clear as our authorities go above and beyond to ensure that Pakistan remains an essential part of the stabilisation of Afghanistan as a whole. Our talks with Afghanistan were kicked off by the incumbent government back in September and since then, the matter has only been getting more serious. Surely, the confidence with which we take the next step forward is going to go a long way in nurturing ties between the two countries and create a foundation for a multifaceted partnership. Perhaps the Prime Minister can also raise the issue of India using Afghan territory to foment terror here at home. Eradicating that issue would go a long way in cementing friendly ties with the country.

# The Tashkent Conference on children rights

Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan



The web forum was highlighting the principles of the convention of 1959 which entered into force on 2nd September, 1990. Emphasis was also laid in protecting the rights of the child's to life, health, education and leisure. It asked for protection of children from violence and discrimination. It envisages developing a child friendly environment around the world through dialogue and action

**T**HE Tashkent Conference on Children Rights. Justice Ali Nawaz Chowhan In collaboration with UN specialized agencies and supported by the "ZAMIN" international public foundation the government of Uzbekistan held web forum dedicated to world children day and resolved to celebrate this day annually on 20th November.

I take this opportunity of congratulating the progressive president of Uzbekistan, its government, the sponsors and the UN agencies for taking this initiative. The conference was highly successful. Where speeches were made by the first deputy secretary general of UN, Amina Muhammad, UN deputy secretary general Tatyana Valovaya, UN secretary general special representative Natalia Gherman. The other institutions, NGOs and organizations and I myself attended the web forum through video conference in view of COVID-19.

The Geneva declaration of the Rights of the child of 1924 is the starting point in the matter of children Rights. In line was the convention on 20th Nov 1959. Besides, the welfare of Children was recognized in the universal declaration of Human Rights in the two international covenants of 1966 pertaining to civil, political, social and cultural Rights. Reference may also be made in this connection to the Beijing rules dec-

laration on the protection of children in emergency and Armed Conflict. The web forum was highlighting the principles of the convention of 1959 which entered into force on 2nd September, 1990. Emphasis was also laid in protecting the rights of the child's to life, health, education and leisure. It asked for protection of children from violence and discrimination. It envisages developing a child friendly environment around the world through dialogue and action.

Uzbekistan has taken a lead in these times of conflicts around the globe where children are victims. They are also being used as child soldiers, their trafficking goes on and many were killed as refugees while trying to cross the Atlantic.

There is also a need for providing justice to the juveniles and protecting the

children from the rampant, sex abuse. The dedication of 20th November as world children day by the Tashkent web forum is a laudable objective. Now every year there will be a focus on children and their Rights as guaranteed by various conventions as aforementioned.

I once more congratulate the organizers of the web forum and the government of Uzbekistan in setting the ball rolling in the interest of the welfare of the suffering children and for advocating the Rights guaranteed by the conventions.

— The Author is a former International Judge of the UN at The Hague, Chief Justice of the Gambia, First Chairman of National Commission for the Human Rights Pakistan, Judge of the superior judiciary, Co-Chair Person UNESCO, Professor of International Law etc.



## Missed vaccinations leave children vulnerable

Ranvir S. Nayar



The WHO-CDC report says that, even though the reported cases of measles this year are lower, efforts to control the pandemic have resulted in disruptions to vaccination programs and crippled efforts to prevent and minimize measles outbreaks. The report said that, by the beginning of this month, more than 94 million children were at risk of missing out on vaccination

**V**ACCINATORS get their temperatures checked, during an anti-polio campaign, in a low-income neighborhood in Karachi, Pakistan, July 20, 2020. An alarming report was published last week by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The report said that measles cases surged globally in 2019, reaching their highest level in 23 years, while deaths caused by the highly contagious disease that mainly impacts children had risen 50 percent since 2016.

The report said that almost 870,000 fresh cases of measles were reported in 2019, with 207,500 deaths, thus erasing almost two decades of efforts by governments and children's organizations to eliminate the disease. It blamed a failure to vaccinate children on time as the main reason for the slippage. The WHO and CDC highlighted the need for governments to increase their efforts to eliminate the deadly viral infection. Scientists say that current vaccination rates are far below the minimum threshold of 95 percent that is needed to curb the risk of infection spreading. The report's findings are extremely worrying, as they report data from last year, when the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was unheard of in most parts of the world and when life had not been disrupted like it has been since the global spread of the pandemic. The pandemic-enforced lockdowns we have seen this year are bound to have seriously impacted immunization programs around the world. This is due to several reasons. First is that lockdowns disrupt transportation, leading to challenges for medical personnel to get to work, at least in the initial period. Moreover, while hospitals may have been able to continue their operations, vaccinations all over the world are mainly carried out by nongovernmental organizations and most of them were very severely hampered. Several were forced to suspend their regular operations, while others worked with a skeleton staff, but even they were mainly deployed to help governments and hospi-

tals fight the pandemic. The transport issue also disrupted the distribution of vaccines to the places where immunization can take place.

Another significant challenge for NGOs has been funding. Most are dependent on government money for their immunization programs, but the pandemic has seen state budgets shrink. And these shrunken budgets have almost entirely been diverted to boosting each country's limited capacity for dealing with the massive and unprecedented rush of COVID-19 patients. For several months now, NGOs working in the domain of immunization or fighting deadly infections like tuberculosis or polio have been calling on governments to ensure that, while they battle COVID-19, they should not ignore vaccinations. However, with their entire focus on fighting the pandemic, practically all other major healthcare programs in every country have either been suspended or vastly reduced.

As early as April, experts said that, within a period of three weeks, up to 13.5 million children had missed out on vaccinations for diseases like polio, tuberculosis and measles. They warned that missed vaccinations could have disastrous results and cause significant setbacks in the battle to eradicate these illnesses. By April, as many as 23 nations had suspended their measles campaigns due to the COVID-19 pandemic and, as a result, nearly 78 million children were expected to have missed their vaccines during 2020. The numbers have now risen even further. The WHO-CDC report says that, even though the reported cases of measles this year are lower, efforts to control the pandemic have resulted in disruptions to vaccination programs and crippled efforts to prevent and minimize measles outbreaks. The report said that, by the beginning of this month, more than 94 million children were at risk of missing out on vaccination as programs had been stopped in 26 countries. This has already led to fresh outbreaks of measles in several countries and, even now, only eight of these 26 nations have managed to resume

their vaccination programs. Within a period of three weeks, up to 13.5 million children had missed out on vaccinations for diseases like polio, TB and measles. Though similar data is not yet available on other communicable illnesses like polio or TB, the situation is hardly likely to be encouraging. Each of these illnesses is a major killer by itself and millions could either die or become seriously ill. Also, as most of the affected nations are poor, outbreaks impose an extremely heavy burden on their already weak and overburdened healthcare systems.

Moreover, in these countries, children and especially infants in poorer families are highly susceptible to other diseases, such as dysentery, which often turn fatal even though they are easily treated. Even if the world manages to get a grip on the COVID-19 pandemic next year, it is almost certain to be left struggling to cope with unexpected side-effects in the form of TB or measles.

Overstretched healthcare systems, especially in the developing world, may not be able to cope with a rush of infections. Outbreaks are also a good indicator of the poor coverage of healthcare systems that may not be reaching the most vulnerable sections of society. Unlike COVID-19, which has afflicted rich and poor alike, illnesses like polio and TB mainly strike the poorer sections of society. Already, the poor are paying a hefty price for COVID-19, at least in terms of the economic fallout, as hundreds of millions have lost their jobs and find themselves pushed back years, if not decades, in economic development. Fresh outbreaks of other illnesses will undoubtedly exact a very heavy price. It may not be too late just yet, but governments and international organizations need to act fast and in a concerted manner to ensure that vaccination programs not only restart and catch up with their yearly targets, but also plug the gaps that have stubbornly remained in their coverage. Only then can the world avoid another year of dramatic horror stories.

— Courtesy: Arab News

## Briefs

## EU urges caution about lifting restrictions

## FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: Top European Union (EU) officials have underscored the need to be more cautious about lifting restrictions amid the second wave of COVID-19 infections. "We need to learn past lessons and be cautious when we lift restrictions," European Council President Charles Michel said at a press conference following the EU leaders' videoconference on Thursday.

Lifting restrictions should be "gradual and regressive," he added. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen stressed the importance of managing expectations. The "impact of lifting measures too hastily has had a very bad impact on the epidemiological situation in summer and fall," she said. "We will make a proposal for a gradual and coordinated approach to lifting containment measures," von der Leyen said, adding that it will be very important to avoid another wave.

The EU leaders on Thursday held a regular video conference to coordinate actions against the pandemic. Apart from lifting restrictions, issues like forging a common approach to the use of rapid antigen tests and vaccinations were also discussed.

## Armenia appoints new defence minister

YEREVAN: Armenia on Friday appointed a new defence minister as protests raged after it lost a week-long war with traditional foe Azerbaijan over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region.

The presidency said in a statement that the new defence minister was Vagharshak Harutunyan, an advisor to Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on defence issues, who previously served as defence minister from 1999-2000.

Pashinyan on November 9 announced a Russian-brokered peace accord that ended a brutal six-week war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh that left thousands dead and tens of thousands displaced. - APP

## California imposes curfew as COVID-19 cases spike

LOS ANGELES: California on Thursday imposed a curfew across much of the state to stem the rapid rise of coronavirus cases. Governor Gavin Newsom said the 10:00 pm to 5:00 am stay-at-home order will take effect Saturday evening and remain in force through December 21. "The virus is spreading at a pace we haven't seen since the start of this pandemic and the next several days and weeks will be critical to stop the surge. We are sounding the alarm," he said in a statement.

"It is crucial that we act to decrease transmission and slow hospitalizations before the death count surges. We've done it before and we must do it again." The order will be effective in counties in the state's most restrictive purple tier, which applies to 94 percent of the state's population including in Los Angeles and San Diego. - APP

## Could approve two vaccines this year: EU

BRUSSELS: The European Union could approve two coronavirus vaccines being tested by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna before the end of next month, EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen said Thursday. Von der Leyen said the European Medicines Agency could give "conditional marketing authorisation... as early as the second half of December if all proceeds now without any problem". Working together, US giant Pfizer and Germany's BioNTech have developed a vaccine the firms say has had successful clinical trials and have sent data to the EMA. - APP



RAWALPINDI: Team WAPDA after winning the 66th National senior hockey championship 2020 against National bank of Pakistan (NBP). - DNA

## WAPDA wins National Senior Hockey Championship 2020

Penalty-corner specialist Muhammad Aleem Bilal scored the first goal for WAPDA, throwing the ball into the nets through a powerful angular strike

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) executed their plans well to win the 66th National Senior Hockey Championship 2020, outclassing defending champions National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) in the final on penalty shootouts at Ayub Park Mari Petroleum Hockey Ground Rawalpindi on Friday. WAPDA adopted an aggressive approach right from the outset as they obtained three penalty corners in the first two quarters besides making five open attempts to score the goal.

Penalty-corner specialist Muham-

mad Aleem Bilal scored the first goal for WAPDA, throwing the ball into the nets through a powerful angular strike. NBP, which had the expertise of several national players and were looking to lift the title for the third consecutive time were unable to match the class of WAPDA players. Less than four minutes into the third quarter WAPDA got a chance to increase their lead when they obtained a penalty stroke. But NBP goalkeeper Mazhar Abbas thwarted the attempt as he anticipated well Aleem Bilal's intention and stopped his powerful push

while diving on the left side. A few minutes later, WAPDA missed another opportunity to score when Ijaz Ahmed, who was alone in the NBP circle remained unable to throw the ball in the goal. At the end of the third quarter, the score remained 1-0. NBP made a comeback in the fourth quarter and made several attacking moves to score the goal. Dilbar Hussain smacked the ball in for a goal to equalize the match. WAPDA showed aggression in the dying moments of the match but NBP packed their circle area well with the defenders, marking every

attacker. At the end of the fourth quarter, the match remained tied at 1-1. Ultimately, the match was decided on penalty shootouts, which was won by WAPDA 2-0. Earlier, in a third and fourth position match, Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) edged passed Pakistan Navy 4-1. SSGC's Mubashar Ali scored two goals, while one goal each was scored by Ghazanfar and Ahmed Nadeem. The lone goal for the Navy was netted by Shehbaz Ahmed. Speaking at the presentation ceremony Secretary Pakistan Hockey Federation Asif Bajwa thanked

Mari Petroleum for cooperating to hold the event in a befitting manner. He expressed the hope that Pakistan soon would regain its lost glory in hockey.

Chief guest MNA Amir Kiyani and President of PHF Brig (ret) Khalid Sajjad Khokhar gave away prizes to the winning teams. The event winners WAPDA pocketed Rs 300000 along with the glittering trophy. The NBP outfit, being runner-up NBP got Rs 200000, while SSGC took Rs 100000. A cash reward of Rs 50000 was given away to the player of the tournament Rana Wahid. - APP

## Azerbaijan reclaims disputed land in Karabakh peace deal

## DNA

AGHDAM: Armenia was due to hand over disputed territory to Azerbaijan on Friday as part of a contentious Russian-brokered peace accord that ended weeks of brutal fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The Armenian residents of Azerbaijan's Aghdam district hurriedly picked pomegranates and persimmons from trees surrounding their homes and packed vans with furniture, AFP journalists said, before fleeing before the official deadline to cede the mountainous province.

"We wanted to build a sauna, kitchen. But now I had to dismantle everything.

And I'll burn down the house with everything I own when I leave," Gagik Grigoryan, a 40-year-old electrical worker, told AFP before abandoning his home. Columns of tanks and troop transporters filled with waving Armenian fighters rolled out of the territory through dense fog ahead of Friday's deadline to vacate the region. Fierce clashes between Azerbaijan's forces and Armenian separatists broke out in late September in the Nagorno-Karabakh region. The brutal war lasted six weeks, leaving thousands dead and displacing many more.

The long-standing ex-Soviet rivals finally agreed to end hostilities last week under the framework of a Rus-

sian-brokered accord that sees Moscow deploy peacekeepers to the region and requires Armenia to cede swathes of territory. Separatists in Nagorno-Karabakh and several surrounding districts captured the territory and claimed independence that has not been recognised internationally, even by Armenia, following a post-Soviet 1990s war that left some 30,000 dead. As part of last week's peace deal, Armenia agreed to return some 15 to 20 percent of the Nagorno-Karabakh territory captured by Azerbaijan in recent fighting, including the historical town of Shusha. The exchange of territory was originally due to begin Sunday, with Armenians in

the Kalbajar district fleeing en masse before the official deadline for Azerbaijan's takeover. But Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev postponed the deadline by one week over "humanitarian" considerations. In addition to Friday's deadline to cede Aghdam, Armenia will hand over the Kalbajar district wedged between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia on November 25 and the Lachin district by December 1. The Russian peacekeeping force of some 2,000 troops has deployed to the administrative centre of the region, Stepanakert, and set up checkpoints and observation posts along the strategic Lachin corridor connecting Nagorno-Karabakh with Armenia.

## 3,000 Palestinian killed by Israel since Second Intifada

## FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Ministry of Information has pointed to the deliberate targeting of Palestinian children by Israeli military, stating that more than 3,000 minors have lost their lives at the hands of Israeli troops since the Second Intifada (uprising).

The ministry said in a statement on Thursday that at least 3,097 Palestinian children have been killed, while tens of thousands of others sustained

injuries between the Second Intifada, which broke out on September 28, 2000 against Tel Aviv regime's occupation of Palestinian territory, until the end of October 2019.

The statement added that 123 Palestinian minors have been killed and many more injured ever since US President Donald Trump sparked controversy by officially recognizing Jerusalem as the Israeli capital in December 2017. More than 17,000 Palestinian children were rounded up and detained during the mentioned period as well.

The Palestinian Ministry of Information highlighted that seven children have been killed in the occupied West Bank and besieged Gaza Strip since the beginning of the current year as a result of the Israeli military assaults. According to statistics from the Palestinian Prisoners Club and the Palestinian Prisoners' Affairs Authority Israeli forces have arrested 304 children between the start of the current year and the end of June, and the number of Palestinian minors currently being held bars at Israeli jails stands at 155.

## Aliyev seeks cooperation with sober-minded forces

All the work we have done in this region so far has given impetus to cooperation. All our projects - energy, transport and humanitarian projects - have deepened cooperation. We have not taken a single wrong step," he said

## FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has said that Azerbaijan is ready to cooperate with sober-minded forces in Armenia. Aliyev made the remarks in his address to the nation on November 20, the day when Azerbaijan gets its control back over Aghdam region under a trilateral agreement signed by Baku, Moscow and Yerevan to end the Nagorno-Karabakh war. "If sober-minded forces come to power in Armenia now, after the crisis, we are ready to establish normal relations with such sound forces. But we have nothing to do with the executioners, those who shed the blood of the Azerbaijani people. Let

everyone know that!" he said. The president added that regional cooperation opportunities will expand only after this.

"All the work we have done in this region so far has given impetus to cooperation. All our projects - energy, transport and humanitarian projects - have deepened cooperation. We have not taken a single wrong step," he said. Aliyev added that Azerbaijan is interested in establishing normal and businesslike relations with Armenia in the South Caucasus region.

"We [Azerbaijan and Armenia] live in this region and in this neighbourhood, whether we like it or not. As President and Commander-in-Chief, I am interested



in ending hostilities in our region, in the South Caucasus, and establishing normal and businesslike relations. At least this is what we want," he said. He said that Azerbaijan had no problems with the Armenian people. "We did not destroy their cities, although we could have done that. It wasn't too difficult to destroy Khankandi after taking Shusha. We

could have destroyed it in a day. Did we do that? No! But what did they do to our cities? Therefore, we have no problems with the Armenian people. I want to say again that all peoples living in a single Azerbaijani state have equal rights, including the Armenian people," he said. The president said that the "Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh will

one day realize that the only way for them is to live side by side with the people of Azerbaijan, to live in the neighbourhood and to give up all these ugly deeds". Congratulating to Aghdam residents in his speech, Aliyev congratulated all Aghdam residents on the liberation of the region from Armenian occupation. "I sincerely congratulate you on the liberation of Aghdam region. I cordially congratulate all the people of Aghdam. Dear people of Aghdam, you are no longer IDPs. You will return to your ancestral land," he stressed. Aliyev noted that Aghdam's liberation was the result of the trilateral peace agreement signed on November 10.

He described Aghdam's liberation as a "historic event". "I can say that Aghdam is the largest of the occupied districts in terms of population. Before the occupation, 143,000 people lived in Aghdam district. At present, the population of Aghdam district is 204,000 people. 73 percent of the district was occupied, and in the remaining areas, the areas under our control, we have carried out major construction and landscaping work in recent years," the head of state noted. Aliyev added that due to the work done and major investments, 45 percent of the population of Aghdam region lives there. The president said that a new era begins for Aghdam.

## China town dedicated to online literature

## WEB DESK

CHANGSHA: A central Chinese city on Thursday set up a town for online literature creation in an effort to tap into the booming cultural industry. The town is located in a cultural industrial park in Changsha, capital of Hunan Province and a city known for its vibrant cultural and entertainment sector. Yu Yan, who heads the town, said the town has dedicated spaces for writing and displaying works as well as business incubation. It will bring in companies and personnel to form a complete industrial chain from literary creation to publication, and the adaptation of movies, games and animations. "Chinese online literature used to follow a wild path of development," Yu said, adding that a small number of top-rated writers used to occupy most of the market share. The town is thus meant to offer more writers a chance at securing a piece of this promising market. Online literature has a huge fan base in China. According to the China Statistical Report on Internet Development, the literature genre had 455 million readers in China by March 2020, representing half of the country's netizen population. The establishment of the town was part of the 2020 China New Media Conference, an event, which concluded on Friday in Changsha, that discussed the latest trends in China's new media sector.

## US, Canada and Mexico borders to stay closed

WASHINGTON: The border closure between the United States and its two neighbors, Canada and Mexico, will be extended until December 21 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the US secretary of homeland security announced Thursday.

"In order to continue to prevent the spread of COVID, the US, Mexico, & Canada will extend the restrictions on non-essential travel through Dec 21," Chad Wolf tweeted. "We are working closely with Mexico & Canada to keep essential trade & travel open while also protecting our citizens from the virus," he added.

"Our decisions will continue to be based on the best public health advice available to keep Canadians safe," wrote Canada's public safety minister Bill Blair on Twitter, confirming the decision. The US-Canada border, the longest land border in the world, was closed in March. The closure has been renewed monthly since then. Only trade in goods and merchandise and essential travel are allowed.

Covid-19 is surging exponentially in the US, which has exceeded 250,000 deaths attributed to the disease and more than 11.6 million recorded cases - both the worst terms in absolute terms globally. The virus has caused more than 99,000 deaths in Mexico and more than 11,000 in Canada. - APP

## Global tax evasion costs \$427 billion

LONDON: Tax evasion is costing the world about \$427 billion (362 billion euros) per year with cash funnelled via murky tax havens, according to data published Friday by the Tax Justice Network. The TJN said in a statement that it has sifted through records worldwide in the first global study of its kind - and urged global action over shadowy tax havens that have diverted billions of dollars from nations currently fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. The network, which is an umbrella grouping of non-governmental organisations, examined multinationals' tax declarations and figures gathered by the Paris-based Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) from 2016. It also assessed individuals' 2018 data from the Bank for International Settlements. "Countries are losing a total of over \$427 billion in tax each year to international corporate tax abuse and private tax evasion," the TJN concluded in its study. This amounted to the equivalent of almost 34 million nurses' annual salaries per year, it said. - APP

## Belarus: Thousands mourn protester

Church bell-ringer Alexei, who asked that his last name be withheld, said Bondarenko's "sacrifice was not in vain." Bondarenko was pronounced dead on November 12 after suffering brain damage

MINSK: About 5,000 people gathered in the Belarus capital Minsk Friday for the funeral of an opposition activist who died of brain trauma after being arrested by police. Roman Bondarenko, a 31-year-old soldier, died last week in Minsk after police arrested him following a dispute in a city square that has become a regular meeting place for the opposition. Mourners carried red and white flowers - the colours of the opposition - to a church on the outskirts of Minsk. For more than three months Belarus has been gripped by historic protests after a disputed presidential vote that saw strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko re-elected for a sixth term. Protesters demand that Lukashenko, 66, resign and hand over power to political novice Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who they believe won the election. "It is not in our power to bring back Roman, but we can try to ensure that such crimes are never repeated," Tikhanovskaya, 38, wrote on her Telegram channel from exile in EU member Lithuania. An AFP journalist at the funeral saw people applauding and chanting "Roma you are a hero" - using a diminutive for Roman. They also chanted "I am going out", referring to the last words Bondarenko wrote in a family group chat. Church bell-ringer Alexei, who asked that his last name be withheld, said Bondarenko's "sacrifice was not in vain." Bondarenko was pronounced dead on November 12 after suffering brain damage. Investigators said he had "signs of intoxication" when he was arrested by police but medical records published by independent news website Tut.by indicated no signs of alcohol in his system. Prosecutors on Thursday launched a criminal case against a doctor of the hospital where Bondarenko was treated citing the "disclosure of medical secrets" and "providing false information". Police have detained thousands of demonstrators who have reported torture and abuse in custody, prompting international condemnation and Western sanctions. - DNA

## Briefs

## India's virus cases surpass 9 million

## FOREIGN DESK

DELHI: India's coronavirus cases crossed the nine million mark early on Friday after it recorded more than 45,000 new infections, health ministry figures show. According to the health ministry update, in addition to exceeding nine million confirmed cases, some 584 deaths were registered in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 132,162. India is currently witnessing a steady decline in cases from its peak in September, with the country reporting fewer than 50,000 daily new infections during the last 13 days. The capital New Delhi is, however, witnessing an enormous increase in new cases. Officials in New Delhi on Thursday quadrupled the fines to 2,000 rupees (\$27) for people not wearing face masks, as the government came under an increased pressure to impose another lockdown. "At times when words alone don't do the trick, we have to get a bit tougher," chief minister Arvind Kejriwal told a news conference, also tweeting that the city of 20 million was on a "war footing". The federal government has also constituted a high-level team to control COVID-19 in Haryana, Gujarat, Manipur and Rajasthan states.

## Ice storms in Russia's east prompts state of emergency

VLADIVOSTOK: Freak ice storms following an abnormal weather phenomenon has left 150,000 people without water and electricity in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok and prompted a state of emergency. The exceptional weather brought down cables and trees with the government of the Primorsky region declaring a state of emergency.

"The situation with the electricity supply remains very difficult - the destruction is widespread," the regional administration's deputy head Elena Parkhomenko said. She said it could take "several days" to restore power. Freezing rain began pummeling the city of some 600,000 people overnight Thursday after a cyclone carrying hot air met an anticyclone carrying cold air, Boris Kubay, a local weather service official said. He said in some places the resulting ice was 12 millimetres thick - something not observed in the region in 30 years. Photos and videos published by local authorities and on social media showed everything from apartment buildings to road signs to public transport covered in ice.

Video footage from a security camera showed a man moving away from his car at the last second as he was cleaning ice from its windshield before a block came crashing down from the side of a building. - APP

## Turkey slams Afghans' murder

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: Turkey's presidential spokesman on Friday slammed the killing of at least 39 Afghan civilians by Australian forces, a fact that has been revealed in a recent report. "This is modern barbarism. It has been understood that 39 captive civilians were deliberately killed in Afghanistan in order to get the recruits of the Australian army to be used to murder," Ibrahim Kalin said on Twitter.

Widespread protests are expected in the country in the coming days as details of the report reach the public through local media. Australian authorities on Thursday finally released the probe details into at least 39 incidents of civilian killings by their special forces in Afghanistan. Chief of the Australian Defense Forces Gen. Angus Campbell sought an apology from the Afghans as he shared the horrifying details of the probe. "To the people of Afghanistan, on behalf of the Australian Defence Force, I sincerely and unreservedly apologize for any wrongdoing by Australian soldiers.



ISLAMABAD: Chinese ambassador Nong Rong called on Adviser to the PM on commerce and investment Abdul Razak Dawood. - DNA

## IMF urges action as recovery loses steam

Governments must respond to the continued economic and public health uncertainty from the COVID-19 crisis with strong, concerted policy action to keep the pandemic from leaving indelible economic scars, the fund's MD

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: The global economy's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic is losing steam even as vaccine breakthroughs offer hope and "the economic path ahead remains difficult and prone to setbacks," the managing director of the International Monetary Fund warned before this week's virtual Group of 20 (G20) summit. Governments must respond to the continued economic and public health uncertainty from the COVID-19 crisis with strong, concerted policy action to keep the pandemic from leaving indelible economic scars, the fund's managing director, Kristalina Geor-

gieva, wrote in an IMFblog post. A deep toll is already evident: The IMF has projected global GDP will contract by 4.4 percent in 2020 - and growth will remain at a modest 5.2 percent next year as countries experience a "partial and uneven recovery".

The outlook has worsened for developing countries, and the fall-out from COVID-19 is expected to leave global GDP more than 6 percentage points below pre-pandemic projections for 2021. Georgieva urged cooperation from IMF members states on three key priorities: ending the coronavirus health crisis, shoring up the economic bridge to recovery and laying down the foundations for a more just and inclusive economy for the

coming decade. The IMF is an organisation made up of 190 countries focused on global monetary policy, trade and poverty reduction.

Countries must increase public spending on treatment, testing and contact tracing for COVID-19, remove trade restrictions on medical goods and services, and increase "multilateral efforts on the manufacturing, purchase and distribution" of vaccines, treatments and tests, especially for low-income nations, Georgieva wrote. The IMF's managing director also urged countries to renew their fiscal support for hard-hit workers and businesses, including "cash transfers to households, job retention support, and augmented unemployment benefits", many

of which have already expired or are set to expire at the end of this year. Investment in infrastructure that addresses climate goals is also key, said Georgieva, adding that a multilateral approach would actually save countries money over time and double the boost to global GDP. An "unsynchronised approach" would lead to just under 1.2 percent in global GDP growth by 2025, compared with 2 percent if countries were to work together, she argued.

Environmental sustainability and support for workers as they transition to new industries after the global disruption of the coronavirus crisis is also key, Georgieva wrote, urging G20 leaders to remember who is not at the table

during this weekend's summit and pledge their support for helping poorer nations through the economic recovery.

G20 leaders are slated to gather on November 21. But unlike in previous years, world leaders will not be standing together for a big group photo. Due to the pandemic, the summit will be held virtually and hosted by Saudi Arabia. Some US and European Union legislators have urged their countries to boycott or downgrade their attendance at the summit unless Saudi authorities address serious human rights abuses, including the kingdom's continuing war in Yemen, the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi and the jailing of activists in Riyadh.

## WHO warns against remdesivir usage

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The antiviral drug remdesivir should not be used to treat COVID-19 patients no matter how ill they are as there is no evidence it works, the World Health Organization (WHO) said on Friday. "The ... panel found a lack of evidence that remdesivir improved outcomes that matter to patients such as reduced mortality, need for mechanical ventilation,

time to clinical improvement, and others," said the WHO's Guideline Development Group (GDG) panel. "Any beneficial effects of remdesivir, if they do exist, are likely to be small and the possibility of important harm remains," said the panel.

The WHO recommendation, published in the British Medical Journal, was based on an evidence review that included data from four international randomized trials among

more than 7,000 hospitalised patients.

After reviewing the evidence, the panel concluded that remdesivir has no meaningful effect on death rates or other important outcomes for patients. "Especially given the costs and resource implications associated with remdesivir ... the panel felt the responsibility should be on demonstrating evidence of efficacy, which is not established by the currently available data," it said.

## N.Ireland, Scotland set for more virus curbs

## DNA

DUBLIN: Northern Ireland shops, pubs and restaurants will shut for two weeks in efforts to curb the coronavirus, the British province announced, on the eve of Friday's partial reopening of businesses. Cafes, hairdressers and beauty salons were permitted to unlock their doors on Friday as five weeks of limited "circuit-breaker" restrictions in the province expired.

## 'Sino-Pak agri resource endowments mutually complementary'

BEIJING: Pak-China agricultural resource endowments mutually complementary, said Zhai Xueling, Director of Market and Trade Research Office, Research Center for Rural Economy under Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of China. She was addressing a webinar on great potential of Sino-Pak agricultural cooperation. "The natural resource endowments between Pakistan and China are mutually complementary, which lays a solid basis for expanding cooperation," Zhai said.

Pakistan's per capita arable land area and annual fresh water availability are about twice and 1.5 times separately those of China. Moreover, Pakistan's labor force is abundant at comparably low cost. According to Zhai, compared with China, at present, the overall development of the agriculture sector in Pakistan is relatively low, particularly lacking improved varieties and advanced technologies.

For instance, the yields of major agricultural products including grain, cotton, oil and sugar are less than 50% of China's. In this respect, China has advantages in agricultural science and technology, mechanization and water conservancy facility construction. From 2010 to 2019, China's agricultural imports from Pakistan increased by 1.3 times, and China's agricultural exports to Pakistan increased by 29% during the same period. China mainly exports vegetables, nuts, grains and oil-seeds to Pakistan and imports rice, aquatic products, drinks and livestock products from Pakistan. It's noted that China-Pakistan Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Phase II will give new impetus to the bilateral agricultural trade. In the medium and long term, Pakistan's overall economic environment is improving with great development potential, and investment policies and regulations are being increasingly perfected.

"The future cooperation between China and Pakistan in agricultural science and technology, agricultural products processing, agricultural products trade and agricultural infrastructure construction is promising," Zhai said. The webinar on China-Pakistan Agricultural Cooperation and Prospects was held by China Economic Net, in collaboration with the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies (IPDS) amunder the guidance of the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan and the Pakistani Embassy in China. - DNA



TOKYO: To evaluate possibility of supporting agriculture & food sector in Pakistan in Pakistan through technology transfer, the Ambassador of Pakistan to Japan Imtiaz Ahmad & Trade Counselor visited a model Japanese facility ZeroKara, using patented method to frost fresh & cooked food ensuring a longer shelf life more efficiently. - DNA

## Japan aims to expand major trade pact

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga made the announcement via video link at an APEC summit in Malaysia on Friday, while commenting on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) that excludes the US and links 11 countries, including Canada, Australia and Japan

## FOREIGN DESK

TOKYO: Japan says it plans to expand a major free trade pact that would also serve the interests of China and Britain in joining the deal, as part of efforts aimed at countering the US protectionist policy and enhancing regional convergence in economic relations. Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga made the announcement via video link at an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Malaysia on Friday, while

commenting on the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) that excludes the US and links 11 countries, including Canada, Australia and Japan. "Japan will aspire for the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific through the early conclusion of the RCEP agreement and the steady implementation and expansion of the CPTPP as next year's chair," Suga said, referring to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. A spokesman for the Chinese commerce ministry announced

on Thursday that Beijing was open to the idea of joining the CPTPP, while Britain earlier this year expressed willingness to pursue accession to the pact. The 11 countries are set to form a trading bloc that represents 495 million consumers and 13.5% of global GDP, providing Canada with preferential access to key markets in Asia and Latin America. Moreover, the China-backed RCEP has been hailed as the world's largest free trade deal signed by 15 economies this month, while the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pac-

ific (FTAAP) is potentially an even larger pact that the 21-member APEC has been aspiring to. The RCEP agreement consists of ten Southeast Asian countries, as well as China, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand. Described by experts as a major win for multilateralism and free trade, despite America's withdrawal from many international agreements, the RCEP is often compared to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) deal that US President Donald Trump defiantly tore up soon after he took office. The RCEP agreement, signed on

Sunday on the sidelines of the annual meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations after nearly a decade of negotiations, is very important because of its sheer size, which covers nearly a third of global economy. The deal is a further blow to the United States, which is excluded from both RCEP and the TPP, in the midst of a trade war with China. Trump pulled the US out of TPP in 2017. The other 11 countries, including Japan, Canada, Mexico and Australia, went ahead without Washington and signed a lower-impact version of the deal in 2018.

## Turkey to bring about new era for economy'

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: The Turkish government is determined to bring about a new boom era for Turkey's economy and democracy, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said on Friday. "We are working on both strengthening our economic policies and raising the bar of democracy and freedoms while easing daily life for our citizens," Erdogan said in his speech at a trade fair in Istanbul.

Noting that the support of the business circle and citizens is crucial to achieve the economic goals, Erdogan said: "First of all, we must bring overseas savings to our country."

He urged the business circle to put money in investment, employment, production and exports. Investments that spur production and employment will be accelerated by mobilizing domestic and international entrepreneurs, Erdogan added.

"We should enhance the trust of our nation and investors in our national currency, Turkish liras, thus reduce the weight of foreign exchange currency in deposits," he noted.

## Mercenaries still being deployed to Libya: official

## WEB DESK

TRIPOLI: Libya's permanent representative to the UN said Thursday that mercenaries are still being deployed to Libya and those who have committed war crimes must be brought to justice. Speaking in a teleconference organized by the UN Security Council on the latest developments in Libya, Taher al-Sunni said his country was still dealing with warlord Khalifa Haftar's attacks.

According to Al-Sunni, people were losing their lives due to mines placed in the capital Tripoli and mass graves were being unearthed on a regular basis.

He said military activity in regions under Haftar's control continues, adding weapons and mercenaries are still being sent to Sirte and Jufra. He noted that those who have committed war crimes since 2011 must be held accountable and said the establishment of a constitutional basis for holding elections at the end of next year needs to be speeded up.

Libya has been torn by a civil war since the ouster of Muammar Gaddafi in 2011. A new government was founded in 2015 under a UN-led agreement, but efforts for a long-term political settlement failed because of a military offensive by Haftar's forces. With Turkey's help, the UN-recognized Government of National Accord, headed by Fayez al-Sarraj, has made significant gains against Haftar's forces in recent months.

## Japan reports record-high daily corona cases

## WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan on Friday reported 2,414 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, renewing the daily infection record for a third consecutive day. According to the latest figures from the health ministry and local authorities, Japan's total tally rose to 128,344, not including those connected to the Diamond Princess cruise ship that was quarantined near Tokyo earlier in the year. In the capital of Tokyo, the epicenter of the country's outbreak, 522 new COVID-19 cases were reported on Friday, exceeding the 500-mark for a second consecutive day, bringing its cumulative total to 36,778, the highest among the country's 47 prefectures. The Tokyo Metropolitan government on Thursday raised its virus alert by one notch to the highest level, meaning "infections are spreading."

Meanwhile, Japan's northernmost main island of Hokkaido logged a record-high 304 new cases, topping 300 for the first time. Currently, the national death toll from the COVID-19 pandemic stands at 1,976, with eight new fatalities announced Friday. The death toll includes 13 from the Diamond Princess cruise ship. The health ministry also said there are currently 291 patients considered severely ill with the use of ventilators or being held in intensive care units.

**Briefs**

**Shehbaz' policies destroyed institutions**

DNA

LAHORE: University of Gujrat's Medical Final Year students met Speaker Punjab Assembly Ch Parvez Elahi at his residence here today (Friday) and apprised him about their problems. Students' delegation included Shadab Aslam, Anwarul Haq, Mariya Nagi and Tehreem Humayun. After listening to the students' problems, Ch Parvez Elahi said that Insha-Allah Gujrat University problems will be solved very soon, due to wrong policies of Shehbaz Sharif, students of Gujrat and Sargodha Universities have got problems and there is no one to care about them, in order to putting on plaques Shehbaz Sharif did not complete homework because of which educational institutions are on the verge of destructions, presently medical section's 500 girls and boys students are cursing Shehbaz Sharif. He said that we have got our home work completed for solving the students' problems immediately, students should not be worried, their problems will be solved on priority basis.

**3 Pakistani businesses win shell accolade**

DNA

KARACHI: Three Shell Tameer entrepreneurs from Pakistan have each taken home one of the 2020 Shell LiveWIRE Top Ten Innovators Awards, a global competition that rewards businesses that demonstrate excellence in innovation and gives entrepreneurs a chance to shine on a global platform. This year, Shell LiveWIRE has partnered again with Shell Global Commercial to deliver a competition focused on Creating a More Liveable World. Three separate award categories within this theme have been identified: Energy Transition, Environment & Circular Economy, and Local Prosperity. The winner of each category took home a top prize of \$20,000, and the two runners-up from each category received a prize of \$10,000. In addition, the judges awarded an Outstanding Achievement Award of \$10,000 to an enterprise that has significantly contributed to combatting the socio-economic impacts of Covid-19, as part of Shell's commitment to respond to changing global needs. The award package for all ten winners also included mentoring support from a Shell expert, the opportunity to benefit from Shell market linkages and the possibility to be considered as a vendor to Shell or Shell's customers.

**36 restaurants sealed for violating SOPs**

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration Friday sealed over 36 restaurants across the city in a massive crackdown against violations of coronavirus Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The ICT staff along with health teams were ensuring the implementation of SOPs at restaurants to curtail the spread of virus. Deputy Commissioner, Islamabad, Hamza Shafiqat told APP that five restaurants were sealed in Barakahu area for violation of coronavirus SOPs. The massive crackdown would be in process in various areas of the province to ensure the implementation of protective measures. "We are vigilant to protect our people and the public's cooperation was crucial to battle the second wave of coronavirus," he said. "We must fight back the second wave of Covid-19," he said and urged the restaurants management to strictly implement the guidelines in this regard. Giving update on the latest Covid situation in the city, he said the cases were skyrocketed during the last two weeks. - APP

**China provides Rs 17m assistance to PRCS**

An MoU in this regard was signed between PRCS and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China, PRCS Secretary General Khalid bin Majeed and Chinese Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Mrs Pang Chunxue signed the agreement

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: China has provided an emergency grant of Rs 17 million to the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for medical and livelihood assistance of the people severely hit by the Covid-19 pandemic. An MoU in this regard was signed between PRCS and the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Islamabad here on Friday. PRCS Secretary General Khalid bin Majeed and Chinese Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Mrs Pang Chunxue signed the agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. PRCS Chairman Abrar ul Haq also attended the MoU signing ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, he thanked the Chinese Embassy for the much-needed support. He said the donation will help alleviate sufferings of the people affected by Covid-19 pandemic. Abrar ul Haq said keeping in view the challenges in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak, the PRCS not only launched special programmes to provide cash and livelihood assistance to the worst-hit segments of

the society but also spared no effort to augment the government's endeavors to contain the pandemic. He said the Red Crescent Corona Care Hospital in Rawalpindi has been in the forefront of providing much-needed free-of-cost screening and treatment facilities to the Covid-19 patients. PRCS Secretary General Khalid bin Majeed said the Red Cross Society of China has always been at the forefront in provision of relief items to the PRCS in the time of need, especially during major disasters like floods and earthquakes. He said the RCSC has extended huge support to the PRCS in the ongoing fight against coronavirus through provision of funding as well as medical supplies and hygiene kits. He said the relationship between Pakistan Red Crescent Society and the Red Cross Society of China is a role model for other Movement Partners. Chinese Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission Mrs Pang Chunxue appreciated the services of the PRCS for humanity and pledged to continue extending all-out support to the Society for provision of humanitarian services to the downtrodden segments.



**Barack Obama's memoir exposes India's true face**

DNA

WASHINGTON: Former US president Barack Obama on Friday said that hostility towards Pakistan is the best way to highlight national unity in India. In his new book, "A Promised Land", the former US president said, "many Indians (took) great pride in the knowledge that their country had developed a nuclear weapons programme to match Pakistan's, untroubled by the fact that a single miscalculation by either side could risk regional annihilation." "Violence, both public and private, remained an all-too-pervasive part of Indian life. Expressing hostility towards Pakistan was still the quickest route to national unity," Obama wrote. "Most of all, India's politics still revolved around religion, clan, and caste." Obama while exposing the Indian democracy has uncovered some important facts



about anti-Muslim extremism and anti-Pakistan sentiments. When Obama met Manmohan Singh during his visit to India in November 2010, Singh told him that he feared "rising anti-Muslim sentiment had strengthened the influence of Hindu nationalist BJP", the main opposition party at the time. He described Singh as "a gentle, soft-spoken economist" who engineered the modernisation of his nation's economy. The ex-US president wrote in his book that today Indian society as a whole is focused on racism and nationalism, adding that despite economic development, India is a fragmented and destitute country and India is in the grip of corrupt political officials, narrow-minded government officials and politicians.

**US Women's Business Initiative helps Pak women**

ISLAMABAD: Women-owned businesses in Pakistan that are ready to grow by becoming part of global supply chains will now have access to world-class training, networks, and information thanks to the launch of the Women's Business Opportunity Initiative, an effort led by non-profit WEConnect International in coordination with Vital Voices Global Partnership and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council. The initiative was announced at "Advancing Women's Entrepreneurship and Supplier Diversity," a virtual event taking place during the Global Entrepreneurship Week hosted

by U.S. Embassy Islamabad and the U.S.-Pakistan Women's Council, a unique public-private partnership between the U.S. government, Texas A&M University, and private companies and organizations in the United States and Pakistan. The Women's Business Opportunity Initiative is designed to increase the inclusiveness and competitiveness of supply chains globally and to help women entrepreneurs in Pakistan access opportunities to grow their businesses and thrive. "Through this initiative, there is great potential to strengthen women entrepreneurs' foothold in Pakistan's economy, as well as across borders with multinational corporations. Boosting revenues of women-owned businesses benefits their employees, families, and communities," said U.S. Embassy Islamabad Chargé d'affaires Angela P. Aggeler. According to research presented during the event, approximately one-third of buyers in Pakistan procure from women-owned businesses, and one in four have a policy that encourages inclusive sourcing. While promising, there remains room for improvement. - APP

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**Effective cooperation strategy needed**

DNA

BEIJING: Agriculture sector forms an important theme of CPEC whereby an effective cooperation strategy between Pakistan and China can prove to be greatly beneficial for both countries. This was stated by Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam in his remarks at a webinar on November 19, says a report published by China Economic Net. Agriculture sector in Pakistan is also an untapped potential market and industry where investment and partnership potentials are existing. For Pakistan specifically, dividends could come in the form of new export opportunities, improved technology, private investment flows and growth for local enterprises within the agri-business sector, Syed added.

**FBR notifies tax exemption for 61 items**

DNA

KARACHI: The FBR has issued a notification for tax exemption on imports of 61 items used in the preparation of COVID-19 vaccines. The federal cabinet had earlier given approval to exempt imports of 61 items used in the preparation of COVID-19 vaccine from taxes and duties on November 17. Sources told that the FBR took three days to issue the notification in this regards. The tax exemption will ensure availability of necessary medical equipment to the hospitals besides expediting the preparation of the coronavirus vaccine.

**UNICEF calls for safeguarding children rights**

ISLAMABAD: On World Children's Day (WCD), 30 iconic monuments and landmarks across Pakistan turned blue as the country celebrated, from the Khyber Pass to Mazare-Quaid in Karachi, from Lahore Fort to Quaid-e-Azam residency in Ziarat, and through Pakistan Monument in Islamabad. This initiative, implemented by UNICEF together with the Federal Ministry of Human Rights, marked a commitment to help every girl and boy fulfill their rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). It is the third year in a row that buildings in Pakistan and across the world go blue to call for a world in which the vision of the Convention of the Rights of the Child becomes a reality for every child. Released on World Children's Day, a new UNICEF report warned of significant and growing consequences for children as the COVID-19 pandemic lurches toward a second year, jeopardizing their rights. 'Averting a Lost COVID Generation' is the first UNICEF report to comprehensively outline the dire and growing consequences for children as the pandemic drags on. It shows that while symptoms among infected children remain mild, infections are rising and the longer-term impact on the education, nutrition and well-being of an entire generation of children and young people can be life-altering. "Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a persistent myth that children are barely affected by the disease. Nothing could be further from the truth," said Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director. "While children can get sick and can spread the disease, this is just the tip of the pandemic iceberg. Disruptions to key services and soaring poverty rates pose the biggest threat to children. The longer the crisis persists, the deeper its impact on children's education, health, nutrition and well-being. The future of an entire generation is at risk." - DNA

**UK will likely follow US in reducing troops in Afghanistan**

KABUL: UK Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace said that Britain will likely follow the United States in reducing troop levels in Afghanistan. In a statement, he said that Britain will continue to work with the Afghan government and the U.S. to protect the country's security. This week US acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller announced that the US troop presence in Afghanistan and Iraq will be reduced to 2,500 in each country by mid-January. "By Jan. 15, 2021, our forces, their size in Afghanistan, will be 2,500 troops. Our force size in Iraq will also be 2,500 by that same date," Miller said. Wallace said the Americans were not totally pulling out at this stage, and neither was Britain. "I expect if they (the U.S.) are reducing at some stage, we will come down," Wallace said. This comes after NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg on Tuesday warned against a hasty withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and said the price for leaving too soon could "be very high". NATO currently has less than 12,000 troops from dozens of countries in Afghanistan, while the US is now down to around 4,500. - DNA

**Karachi: Smart lockdown to be imposed**

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The city administration on Friday decided to impose smart and micro lockdown across Karachi after a sharp increase in the COVID-19 cases. The decision was taken in a meeting chaired by Commissioner Karachi Iftekhar Shalwani, attended by DCs and DHOs in the city. The meeting decided to slap smart lockdown in the South, Central, East and West districts of the city. Meanwhile, micro smart lockdown to be imposed in Korangi and Malir districts of Karachi. Shalwani said notification in this context will be issued today or tomorrow. The number of coronavirus cases in Karachi is rapidly increasing and the people are frequently found violating the SOPs. In view of the prevailing situation, the Sindh government has set up an emergency control room in the health department building to deal with the Covid-19 second wave. A notification had been issued in this regard. Four doctors and nine health officials would perform duties in the 24/7 emergency control room established on the sixth floor of the Sindh health department building. On the other, keeping in view the second wave of the coronavirus, the provincial government has canceled the vacations of Sindh health department employees.

**PIA halts meal service; bans serving hot beverages**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has taken special measures during the second wave of coronavirus pandemic by halting meal service on domestic flights and banned serving hot beverages in all flights. Sources told that pre-packaged box with cold beverages will be served to the passengers on domestic flights. Moreover, the PIA chief executive officer (CEO) approved changing meal service for international flights which will be implemented immediately. The management of the national carrier banned serving hot beverages on all flights as a pre-packaged box with cold beverages will be served in order to limit interaction between passengers and crew following the reviewed standard operating procedures (SOPs). Following the changes in meal service, snacks, club sandwiches, check patties, one banana and muffin will be served to the passengers to Saudi Arabia sector, whereas, club sandwiches, check patties, one banana and biscuit will be served on return flights. Only snacks will be served on flights of Kabul and Gulf countries.

**Inquiry against Nawaz Sharif in LDA case completed**

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has concluded its inquiry against former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore Development Authority (LDA) plots allotment case. Sources said that the combined investigation team (CIT) forwarded the inquiry report to the director-general of the anti-corruption watchdog. The prosecution wing will give its legal opinion over the CIT's inquiry report in the forthcoming regional board meeting. The complaint of misappropriation in allotment of LDA plots had been reported on April 3 - 2000 against then chief minister Nawaz Sharif as he allegedly provided an exemption for the plots with the nexus of LDA director general, sources told. The complaint stated that Nawaz Sharif allotted the plots among blue-eyed persons after ending the quota under 1986's LDA policy which allows chairman for allotment of plots. The complaint against the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) supremo was pending since 20 years.

**Biden urged to keep Zalmay Khalilzad: Report**

Afghan-born Khalilzad, a veteran diplomat from the George W Bush administration, has a deep relationship with Afghan leaders such as President Ashraf Ghani dating back decades and command of the major languages of the region

NEW YORK: The United States (US) experts on Afghanistan are urging President-elect Joe Biden's transition team to consider asking President Donald Trump's Afghan peace envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, to remain on the job as a transitional negotiator after Biden's inauguration on January 20, Foreign Policy, a prestigious American magazine, reported. A report on the magazine's website said the effort reflects a belief that the ultimate end game sought by Trump and Biden— withdrawal of the US forces from Afghanistan—is largely the same and that a move to immediately replace Khalilzad at a sensitive stage in the US peace negotiations with the Taliban could complicate that effort.

Afghan-born Khalilzad, a veteran diplomat from the George W Bush administration, has a deep relationship with Afghan leaders such as President Ashraf Ghani dating back decades and command of the major languages of the region, the report pointed out. While Biden shares Trump's goal of ultimately withdrawing troops from Afghanistan, Trump has drastically accelerated the timeline of the withdrawal in the past week, announcing a further reduction of troop levels in the country, to about 2,500. The move has rattled NATO allies and angered Trump's allies in Capitol Hill, who warn a sudden drawdown could destabilize the country and undercut the US leverage in peace talks



with the Taliban—thereby leaving a Biden administration with an even more precarious situation in Afghanistan, Foreign Policy said. Biden's top foreign-policy advisors, including Antony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, and Michele

Flournoy, are said to be open to considering a possible extension for Khalilzad but are by no means committed, the report said. "I think there are scenarios in which the new administration may seek to build on what Zalmay has done, and there are scenarios in which they may opt for something different," one former US official was quoted as saying. "If there is progress over the next few months and Zalmay is in a good position to continue that progress, I can certainly see a scenario where they would ask him to stay for some period of time. But I don't think anyone should expect they are indispensable in a circumstance like this." Officials close to the campaign

told the magazine they do not expect the Biden administration to make any major policy or personnel decisions on Afghanistan during the transition and that any final decision will be formed by a cold-hearted assessment of what approach would best serve the US interests—and how Trump's rushed troop drawdown will alter the prospects for peace talks with the Taliban once Biden inherits the matter in January. For now, the campaign's top foreign-policy advisors are essentially soliciting recommendations from a wide range of foreign-policy experts, including some who have called for Khalilzad to stay and others who say it is time for a new approach. - APP