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Briefs

Self reliance in defense production vital: COAS

DNA

WAH: Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Bajwa has said that technological up-gradation / modernization and indigenous development to attain self-reliance in defence production is vital to meet the challenges of future battlefield. General Qamar Bajwa, COAS was visiting Pakistan Ordnance Factories (POF) Wah on Friday. Appreciating management & Staff of POF for their dedication to optimise the output, COAS termed POF a force behind the Armed Forces serving as backbone.

Aseefa to address PDM rally

DNA

MULTAN: PPP stalwart and former Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani said on Friday that former president Asif Ali Zardari's daughter Aseefa Bhutto-Zardari will address the Pakistan Democratic Movement's (PDM) Multan rally slated for November 30. Speaking to the media, he said PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto Zardari won't be able to attend the public meeting to be held in Multan to mark the party's foundation day after being diagnosed with the coronavirus. "The Multan rally will be held come what may," he declared.

PM has inferior mentality

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N Secretary Information Marriyum Aurangzeb on Friday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan and his accountability adviser Shahzad Akbar have "inferior mentality" as they keep politicising sensitive issues like health and death, media reported. "Sometimes they are politicising health issues and sometimes they are politicising the death of someone's mother," Aurangzeb said. "Their inferior thinking can be judged from the fact that they released Shahbaz Sharif and Hamza Sharif from jail on parole six days after the demise of their mother."

Facilitating industries top priority: PM

The Prime Minister directed to resolve problems being faced by the industrialists in exporting their goods

ANSAR BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan says it is responsibility of the government to provide utmost facilitation to the industrial and business activities as development and prosperity of Pakistan are linked with the progress of the industrial sector. Talking to Pakistan's leading industrialists in Islamabad on Friday, he said industrialists' suggestions are being incorporated in government's decision making process, which is producing positive impact. The Prime Minister directed to resolve problems being faced by the industrialists in exporting their goods. He also sought proposals from the industrialists to bring innovation to the agriculture sector and to start corporate farming to enhance yield of various crops. The delegation thanked the Prime Minister and said that the government patronage to business activities have started yielding positive results. They said foreign exchange reserves have reached to the highest level, which shows economic stability in Pakistan.

Govt launches Ehsaas Digital Program

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: The government has launched Ehsaas Digital Program to facilitate women beneficiaries and avoid fraudulent activities in disbursement of payment. This was briefed by Special Assistant on Poverty Alleviation Dr Sania Nishtar to Prime Minister Imran Khan, during his visit to an Ehsaas payment site in Islamabad today (Friday). The SAPM said this initiative will save women from visiting banks to get their amounts. She said digital vaults have been provided from where beneficiaries can receive their payments as well as keep their cash save in these digital accounts. She said a grievance system has been integrated with the banks to promptly address any complaint.

Tajik President hails Pak Army's sacrifices

NAVEED MIRAJ

RAWALPINDI: Chairman JCSC said that Pakistan is keen to expand its existing bilateral military to military cooperation with Tajikistan. General Nadeem Raza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, on official visit to Tajikistan, said this while meeting Emomali Rahmon, President of Tajikistan. The dignitaries lauded professionalism of Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their sacrifices in fight against terrorism. Chairman JCSC also had separate meetings with Colonel General Sherali Mirzo, Defence Minister, Colonel General Rakhi-



mozoda Ramazon Khamro, Minister of Internal Affairs, and Colonel General Yati-mov Saymumin Sattorovich, Chairman State Committee of National Security. During the meetings, both sides deliberated upon various areas of mutual interest & bilateral cooperation including security, counter-terrorism and prevailing regional

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran Ali Hosseini having an introductory and cordial meeting with Najibullah Ali Khel, the new Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to Pakistan. - DNA



NIAMEY: Foreign Minister Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi had a bilateral meeting with Saudi Counterpart Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud on the sidelines of the 47th CFM session in Niger. - APP

PSM sacks over 4,500 employees

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Steel Mill (PSM) sacked 4,544 of employees, including the Divisional and Assistant Managers, PSM spokesperson confirmed on Friday. Management confirmed that officials belonging to category 2,3, and 4 pay groups have been dismissed from their jobs. The spokesperson also notified that dismissal letters have been sent to sacked employees by post. However, he clarified that corporate secretaries of departments have been fired neither have the staff working in schools and colleges been let go. On the other hand, PSM Stakeholders Group Covenor Mamriz Khan lamented that the state has become indifferent to the employees of one of the largest public sectors of Pakistan. "There are reports that the department head was called today so that employees can be dismissed," he said.

More Pak players may test positive: NZ warns

WEB DESK

AUCKLAND: New Zealand's Director-General of Health Dr Ashley Bloomfield has said that more members of the Pakistan touring squad may return positive for Covid-19 in the tests, which will be conducted. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) confirmed on Thursday that six members of the Pakistan team, currently in managed isolation in Christchurch, have tested positive for Covid-19. "All six of the positive tests were players, not the other members of their squad. It's possible they could have infected other team members, but the key point is that everyone in the squad is treated as if they may have Covid."

Saudi Arabia lauds Pak peace efforts

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi apprised his Saudi counterpart on the latest grave situation in IIOJK

NEWS DESK

NIAMEY: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have agreed to further promote bilateral cooperation in diverse fields of economy and trade, including energy. The Saudi Foreign Minister also appreciated the efforts made by Pakistan for establishing peace in the region. The understanding was reached at a meeting between Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi

and his Saudi counterpart Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud on the sidelines of the 47th session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Niamey, Niger on Friday. They decided that the two sides will soon have exchange of delegations in this regard. The Saudi Foreign Minister said his country is committed to promote bilateral cooperation with Pakistan in various fields. He said his country gives high value to its historical, deep and

long-lasting relations with Pakistan. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi apprised his Saudi counterpart on the latest grave situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He also thanked the Saudi Foreign Minister for principled and permanent support to the Kashmir issue. The two Foreign Ministers also exchanged views on the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the role of the OIC.

Shahbaz, Hamza released on parole



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PML-N President Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz were released from Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail on parole Friday afternoon. The Punjab home department approved their request for parole on Thursday. They have been released for five days to attend the funeral of Shehbaz's mother Begum Shamim Akhtar. The PML-N leaders had asked the government to release them on parole for two weeks for the funeral. She passed away in London on November 22. Shehbaz and Hamza were

being held at Kot Lakhpat jail in Lahore in different NAB cases. Hamza, the leader of the Punjab Assembly, is being investigated by NAB in the Ramzan Sugar Mills, Saaf Pani, and assets beyond known means of income cases. He was arrested by NAB on June 11, 2019. Meanwhile, the funeral of Begum Shamim Akhtar was held in London on Friday. Former Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif, his sons, Ishaq Dar and other close relatives attended the funeral prayers. The body will now be flown to Pakistan from Heathrow Airport.

Virus cases decrease in Norway

DNA

OSLO: For the first time since the first half of October, fewer new infections were reported than the week before in Norway and the infection reproduction number (R) has fallen to 1.0. In epidemiology, the basic reproduction number (R) is the expected number of cases directly generated by one case. The data was revealed in the National Institute of Public Health's (FHI) latest weekly report. A total of 3,621 infection cases were reported in week 47, a decrease from 4,080 in week 46. "That is 11% less than the week before. That's promising news," FHI director Camilla Stoltenberg said when she presented the figures at the government's coronavirus press conference on Wednesday. Stoltenberg is still hesitant to make conclusions.

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ADB to provide \$300m for economic stability

ADB's program will help Pakistan recover its current account deficit in a sustained manner and continue to facilitate export diversification

SHUJAAT HAMZA / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$300 million policy-based loan to help promote macroeconomic stability in Pakistan by facilitating improved trade competitiveness and export diversification. "While COVID-19 hit Pakistan at a critical point in its macroeconomic recovery, the government's ongoing efforts to ensure stability have started showing encouraging results this fiscal year," said ADB Prin-

cipal Public Management Specialist Hiranya Mukhopadhyay in a statement issued on Friday. "ADB's program will support these efforts and help Pakistan to improve its export competitiveness—now more important than ever given the impacts of the pandemic." ADB's program will help Pakistan recover its current account deficit in a sustained manner and continue to facilitate export diversification. It will introduce important tariff and tax-related policy reforms to help improve Pakistan's internation-

al competitiveness and further strengthen key institutions, including accreditation bodies, the Export-Import Bank of Pakistan, and the Pakistan Single Window. The new financing falls un-

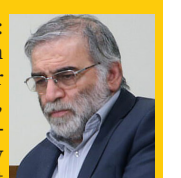


der Subprogram 2 of the Trade and Competitiveness Program. Under the first phase, ADB helped the government usher in key reforms, including reducing or abolishing tariffs and ad hoc duties on a large num-

ber of raw materials and intermediate goods. Several steps were also taken to introduce e-commerce, strengthen key institutions involved in facilitating trade, and enhance the export certification process. Since fiscal year 2004, Pakistan has registered a rise-and-fall pattern of export growth reflecting underperformance in its export industry and long-term decline in export competitiveness. This is compounded by lost export growth momentum from COVID-19, which has reduced high-income countries' demand for manufacturing goods and

Top Iranian nuclear scientist assassinated

TEHRAN: An Iranian nuclear scientist, long suspected by the West of masterminding a secret atomic weapons programme, was assassinated near Tehran on Friday, Iranian state media reported. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh died of injuries in hospital after armed assassins fired on his car, according to Iranian media. Fakhrizadeh has long been suspected by Western, Israeli and Iranian exile foes of the Islamic Republic to have masterminded what they said was a covert atomic bomb programme. - Agencies



Briefs

SHC dismisses petition to postpone MDCAT 2020

DNA

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Friday dismissed a petition seeking directives for the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to postpone the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT) 2020 due to a surge in coronavirus cases. A division of the SHC directed the PMC to ensure all SOPs in relation to the Covid-19 pandemic prescribed by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the federal as well as provincial health authorities are strictly followed in letter and spirit by students, invigilators and all persons/staff present at examination centres.

A number of students moved the petition in the SHC seeking to delay the MDCAT slated for November 29 due to the pandemic. While the entry test is scheduled to take place on November 29, the PMC announced to hold a special test for students afflicted with the deadly disease on December 15.

On November 26, PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz voiced support for the students demanding postponement of the test. She tweeted: "While all educational institutions are closed and exams are being postponed, MDCAT students are being forced to appear for MDCAT test by PMC. Isn't safety of medical students & safety of their families not as important? Why the discrimination? Why imperil them & their families?"

Sindh govt issues fresh Covid-19 restrictions

KARACHI: The Sindh government on Friday issued modified restrictions in exercise of powers under section 3 (1) of the Sindh Epidemic Diseases Act 2014 (Act VIII of 2015) throughout the province. According to the modified order here, the business timings shall be six days per week with one day off on Friday or Sunday as applicable to that area concerned.

The business or market timings will be from 6a.m. to 8p.m. and it has been directed that the restaurants will be bound of outdoor dining only until 10p.m. with the permission of takeaway or home delivery. The orders shall come into force immediately and will be effective till January 31, 2021 unless changed or amended. — APP

PML-N to form next govt in AJK: Farooq

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of the Election Cell of Muslim League (N) of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was held here on Friday strongly denounced the continued human rights violations by the Indian forces in occupied Kashmir and extra judicial killings of Kashmiri youth during siege and search operations by the Indian brute forces in occupied Kashmir. The meeting also condemned the Indian forces' indiscriminate firing from across the line of control in Azad Kashmir and violating the ceasefire agreement. The meeting reviewed the performance of the government of the Muslim League (N) particularly its performance in administrative, financial, constitutional and developmental sectors.

The meeting observed that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz will again form government in view of its performance in Azad Kashmir. The meeting decided to hold a fortnightly meeting of the Election Cell and parliamentary board will be established shortly. The meeting reaffirmed its commitment to hold free, fair and transparent elections in Azad Kashmir and all possible steps will be taken to ensure impartial election. The meeting was attended by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister and President PMLN-AJK Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, Secretary General Muslim League (N) Dr. Eshan Iqbal, Central Vice President Barjees Tahir Senior Vice President Ch. Tariq Farooq, Secretary General Shah Gulam Qaidar, Vice President Dr. Najeed Naqi and Chief Organizer Mushtaq Ahmed Minhas.



LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar in a group photo with children in CM office during anti-polio campaign. — DNA

PBM for transforming Pakistan into welfare state

PBM was running 156 Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) to impart vocational training among deserving women. PBM has spent Rs 638 million on imparting technical training among 30,000 women in 2019-20

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Economic productivity of a country could be enhanced manifold by empowering the penniless women folk and Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM) was doing exactly the same to help becoming resource less women self sustaining as promised in the manifesto of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

According to the World Bank's 2012 World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development, closing these gender gaps matters for development and policy making.

PBM was running 156 Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) to impart vocational training among deserving women. PBM has spent Rs 638 million on imparting technical training among 30,000 women in 2019-20.

The women trainees were being paid Rs 30 daily allowance on attendance basis. The trainees having workable business plan of Rs 25,000 to Rs 100,000 would

be provided personal loans in collaboration with Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund. The loan will be returnable in the time span of 18 months first six months as grace period.

As many as 13,322 trainees are currently getting training from these schools whereas some 135,220 trainees have been passed out. WECs plans to impart technical training among 62400 deserving women in the next four years.

Currently, the WECs are imparting 16 different trades including drafting, cutting, sewing, designing, interior decoration, beautician, cooking, tie and dye, glass painting, computer and current Micro-soft office applications to deserving women. A total of 33 senior citizens were residing in Great Home for Senior Citizens in Lahore. PBM has established Child Support Program (CSP) in five districts. A total of 28,462 children were benefitting from the CSP program. The objectives of establishing these schools

was to wean away children from the hazardous child labour environment, impart primary education and bring poor children into mainstream of social milieu. The enrolled children were being provided Rs 10 as daily stipend while parents receive Rs 300 per month as subsistence allowance. It is PBM initiative to pull out the children from bonded labor and imparting them education, in line with the UN & other International Organizations conventions. 159 SRCLs are functional all over the country. The children involved in child labor are enrolled in these schools are imparted free education upto primary level. They are provided free books, stationery, uniform / shoes and Rs.10/- daily stipend / parents subsistence allowance of Rs.300/- per month and Rs.4100/ year as passed out incentive. Out of 159 SRCL, 46 are in Punjab, 20 are in South Punjab, 37 are in Sindh, 24 are in KPK, 14 are in Baluchistan, 13 are

in ICT/AJK and 5 are in G.B. 18519 children were enrolled in these schools in F.Y.19-20. Till now 38059 students have been passed out. 712 millions were utilized during F.Y.19-20. A total of 5,683 scholarships and 18,519 education stipends had been given to deserving students during financial year 2019-20. Some 21,618 deserving persons had been provided medical assistance in last fiscal year. Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal is offering scholarships to deserving students admitted in any Government College or University. PBM has planned to establish Great Homes for senior citizens in many cities. Great Homes will provide basic necessities of life in a dignified manner and in a family like environment including boarding, lodging, food, clothing, medical case and recreation. PBM also providing grant in aid to registered non government organisation (NGOs). PBM has established Facilitation Centres at Pakistan Institute of

Medical Sciences (PIMS) and Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute (NORI) to promptly complete medical assistance case of the deserving. Some other Facilitation Centres would soon be established at provincial headquarters and at divisional levels to facilitate the beneficiaries. In the third phase, the facilitation centres will be established at district level.

The Facilitation Centres have already been working at PBM head office and it regional offices to provide speedy, hassle free medical services to the beneficiaries visiting the office and stream lining the process of providing medical assistance.

PBM was contributing in poverty reduction through various Individual Financial Assistance (IFA) programmes including general financial assistance, education stipend, individual rehabilitation programmes, etc. Likewise, PBM is planning to establish 15 more Women Empowerment Centres (WECs) by June 2021.

Vaccinating children against polio must for their health: CM

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that giving anti-polio vaccine to children under five years of age is a must for protecting their health. He was addressing a ceremony, held at the CM house here on Friday in connection with the upcoming 5-day anti-polio drive starting from Nov 30 in the province. He said that the government was fully aware of the health and safety of the Health Department officials, as the anti-polio drive was also affected due to coronavirus. He said that 100 per cent vaccination target would be achieved while observing corona standard operating procedures (SOPs). He said that ministers and parliamentarians would monitor the campaign in their respective areas.

"It is also imperative to ad-

minister anti-polio drops to children coming from other provinces as a polio-free society is a collective responsibility," he said. The CM ordered for arranging special vaccination for children deprived of the anti-polio drops. The polio workers performing their duties diligently were heroes, he said adding that parents should get their children immunized by administering anti-polio drops to them, he said. In the ceremony, Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, Special Assistant to Chief Minister (SACM) Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan, Chief Secretary, Secretary Primary and Secondary Health and DC Lahore administered anti-polio drops to children. More than 120,000 polio workers will administer anti-polio drops to 20 million children during the campaign ending on Dec 4. — APP

'Opposition trying to create impression of victimization'

LAHORE: Special Assistant to Punjab Chief Minister on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Friday said that the opposition was trying to create an impression of political victimization by the government.

The release of Shehbaz Sharif and Hamza Shehbaz on a five-day parole to participate in the last rites of his (Shehbaz's) mother was a goodwill gesture of the Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar.

Addressing a press conference here, she said those who were chanting hollow slogans today had emptied the national exchequer in the past and such corrupt elements could not hoodwink the nation any more as their incompetency and corrupt faces had been exposed to the public.

She said that the alliance of opposition parties was only to safeguard their personal interests and looted money and they had nothing to do with people's problem. The nefarious narrative of the opposition had been rejected by the people, she said and added that the lust for power had blinded the opposition. She said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf



(PTI) government would fulfill its promise of strengthening the institutions and Prime Minister Imran Khan was moving forward with the mission to hold the supremacy of law. She said the PTI government was making every possible effort to end the hereditary politics and that day was not far when the people of Pakistan would be free from political slavery. She said "We all have mothers. Mothers are blessings. I offer sincere condolence to the Sharif Family on the death of Begum Shamim Akhtar." The death of Begum Shamim Akhtar was not a good omen for the Sharif Family

ly as there was no one left behind to pray for them, she added.

While criticizing the Sharif Family, Firdous Ashiq Awan said that she felt pity that the dead body of Begum Shamim Akhtar had been sent through a cargo plane. She said that the Calibri Queen was not fully aware of the cultural values and family traditions. Maryam Safdar should stay at home and attend the last rites of her late grandmother instead of attending the processions, she stated. She said, "It's not the right time for political point-scoring as we have to fight corona virus." The opposition should refrain from putting the lives of people at stake just for their political interests, she said. The opposition rallies could lead spread of corona virus at a large scale in the country, she maintained. To a question, she said the government would ensure the supremacy of law and violation of SOPs would not be tolerated under any circumstances. The people had rejected the PDM's narrative at the Peshawar procession and all the opponents were blaming one another for the failure, she added. — APP

LAC organises folk music programme

LAHORE: The Lahore Art Council (LAC) Friday organised a special evening with renowned folk singer Shaukat Faqeer in connection with Sindh culture day, here at Alhambra. According to an LAC spokesperson, Shaukat Faqeer performed different songs in Urdu, Punjabi, Pashto, Balochi, Sindhi, Marwari and Sariki. "Ho Jamal" had been the reason for Shaukat Faqeer's popularity. The programme was broadcast on social media live, which appreciated by viewers. LAC Executive Director Saman Rai said that the mixture of traditional songs had made the programme unique which could become a good reason for promotion of folk-singing and national harmony. — APP

Minister for ending prejudice of AIDS patients

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid on Friday called for end of stigma and discrimination towards HIV/AIDS patients. Addressing the inauguration ceremony of National Guidelines for Management of STIs jointly organized by the King Edward Medical University and UNAIDS at a local hotel, she appreciated the organizers for holding an important event.

She said the government had introduced Insaf Medicine cards for patients of TB, Hepatitis and HIV/AIDS and around 180,000 cards were being distributed for free treatment. "The initiative will especially help patients of Co-infections," she added. The minister said that patients of HIV/AIDS had to take medicines throughout their lives and adherence to treatment was key to managing the disease. "Major source for spread of HIV/AIDS are quacks, re-use of infected syringes and lack of violation of SOPs during blood transfusions," she said.

Dr Yasmin Rashid said the Punjab AIDS Control Program was providing free of cost diagnostic, counseling and treatment services to HIV/AIDS patients across the province. She said behavior of doctors provided half the treatment to patients. She said that discrimination and stigma towards HIV/AIDS patients especially in healthcare setting was totally unacceptable. The Health Minister added that the key task of Medical Universities was to conduct research and said great efforts were already being made towards treatment of Thalassaemia patients.

Responding to questions of journalists, she said violation of SOPs at political gatherings was causing increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. She urged politicians to be especially careful in the wake of second wave of corona pandemic that had caused lockdowns around the world. — APP

Umerkot minor bride rescued

UMERKOT: The local police have taken a 13-year-old bride in custody after her father tried to send her on Friday off to her possible in-laws. According to the details of the incident, a father was trying to covertly send her minor daughter off to the family where she was married four days back. The 13-year-old girl said she was married against her consent and will of her mother but her father forcefully signed her off to her in-law family.

Police have booked five people in this case including the minor's father, the groom's brothers, and the marriage registrar. It may be noted that after four days of illegal and forced marriage when the father was seeing his minor daughter of the in-laws, it was then that police intercepted him and detained him while taking the minor in custody. It may be noted that after four days of illegal and forced marriage when the father was seeing his minor daughter of the in-laws, it was then that police intercepted him and detained him while taking the minor in custody. Child marriages continue unabated in the Sindh province despite a law outlawing such marriages put in place as police took an underage couple into custody in Sukkur's Thul town. — APP

'Vital to prepare, modify health guidelines'

Being doctors we must be capable enough to check facts and differentiate opinion and experimental evidences so that patients could be treated in the best manner

LAHORE: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination Dr Faisal Sultan has said that it is highly important to prepare and modify health guidelines keeping in view the national needs. He said this while addressing an inaugural ceremony of the National Guidelines for the Management of Sexual Transmitted Infections (STIs) at a local hotel on Friday. He said: "Adopting standardized procedures for diagnosis and treatment of any disease is a good approach." He said that medical care had become complex so it was very important to adopt guidelines and consult authentic text which ultimately helped in improving quality of care. Dr Faisal Sultan said that those preparing guidelines should keep it in mind that guidelines should be authentic and based on science and experimental evidences. He

said: "Being doctors we must be capable enough to check facts and differentiate opinion and experi-

mental evidences so that patients could be treated in the best manner." Regarding STIs, the SAPM

said that people suffering from STIs felt hesitation while discussing their health problems. Pun-

jab Health Minister Dr Yasmin Rashid, speaking on the occasion, also stressed the need to prepare health guidelines/manuals in light of the needs of the country. She said that it was necessary for doctors to develop the best communication skills which direly needed to address such health issues in an effective manner. She said that AIDS patients needed medicine for whole life and added that technical guidelines were being introduced for treatment of AIDS patients. She said that these guidelines would help in treating STIs caused due to AIDS. Later, a shield and guideline book was presented to SAPM Dr Faisal Sultan. King Edward Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Khalid Masood Gondal, Fatima Jinnah Medical University Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Amir Zaman Khan, UNAIDS Country Director for Pakistan Dr Maria Elena Filio and others were also present. — APP



Briefs

AIOU facilitating its students, faculty

IBRAR KHAN DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has been facilitating its faculty and students both financially and technologically to promote and strengthen research culture in the country. This was stated by the University's Vice Chancellor Professor Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum, while addressing the AIOU Research Grant 2020-21 Distribution Ceremony. The ceremony was organized by Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) in recognition of academia's contributions in the field of research. VC said that besides imparting education, universities are, primarily, responsible for creation of knowledge. Research not only adds to existing knowledge economy but is, also, one of the criteria for enhancing the ranking of universities at national as well as international level, he added.

Deans of all faculties, heads of administrative and academic departments, and faculty members participated in the ceremony. Sixty-eight faculty members were awarded certificates and research grant during the ceremony.

One Pakistan varsity in top 100 QS Asia ranking

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Only one university from Pakistan has made it to the top 100 QS (Quaquarelli Symonds) Asia University Ranking for 2021. The National University of Science and Technology (NUST) secured a spot on the list at 76.

This year's ranking of the top Asian universities features 650 institutions, making it the biggest Asia ranking ever published. As many as 39 other universities from Pakistan also have made it to the ranking.

This year's ranking has been formulated using 11 indicators - academic reputation (30pc), employer reputation (20pc), faculty/student ratio (10pc), international research network (10pc), citations per paper (10pc) and papers per faculty (5pc), staff with a PhD (5pc), proportion of international faculty (2.5pc) and proportion of international students (2.5pc), proportion of inbound exchange students (2.5pc) and proportion of outbound exchange students (2.5pc). Quaid-i-Azam University, Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), COMSAT University Islamabad, University of Engineering and Technology, Lahore, Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences, University of the Punjab, University of Peshawar, Aga Khan University, University of Agriculture Faisalabad and University of Karachi have been ranked in the 100-300 group.

HEC forms transition committee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The HEC Pakistan has constituted a Transition Committee with representation of relevant stakeholders for a smooth transition to the regulatory framework governing medical and dental education under the Pakistan PMC Act 2020.

Pursuant to the promulgation of PMC Act 2020, the uniform minimum standards of basic and higher medical education, training and recognition of qualifications in medicine and dentistry will be formulated and implemented. PMC and the HEC will work together and closely coordinate to define the regulatory scope. The Transition Committee has been constituted to ensure that there will be gradual transition in terms of setting standards, devising mechanisms/policies regarding curriculum, faculty and inspection of medical and dental colleges.



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas, President ICCI presenting insignia to Emir Han Demir, Head of operations, Hashim Group of Turkey during their visit to ICCI. Abdul Rehman Khan VP ICCI and others are also present. - DNA

Hashim Group keen to start joint ventures in Pakistan

Emir Han Demir said that Hashim Group has business interests in many fields including real estate, mining, tourism, car designing and education in Turkey and they were now exploring Pakistani market for JVs and investment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the Hashim Group of Turkey led by Emir Han Demir, Head of Operations visited Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry to hold a meeting with Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President and showed interest to set up joint ventures in Pakistan. Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Malik Jahangir Jan, Country Director Pakistan, Hashim Group, Tasleem Khan Legend Hotel Islamabad and M. Aslam Khokhar Executive

Member ICCI were also present at the occasion. Emir Han Demir said that Hashim Group has business interests in many fields including real estate, mining, tourism, car designing and education in Turkey and they were now exploring Pakistani market for JVs and investment. They said that Pakistan's economy has great potential to grow and they wanted to bring construction technology and investment to Pakistan to capitalize on the potential business opportunities. They said that the educa-

tion sector was another area of interest for them and they were looking at the prospects of bringing partners to Pakistan to invest in education, mining and other sectors. They said that they were setting up an office in Pakistan so that they could take benefit of emerging business and investment opportunities here. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that Pakistan and Turkey enjoyed exemplary strong relations that should be transformed into thriving

trade relations as the existing volume of bilateral trade between the two countries was not reflective of their actual potential. He said that Pakistan and Turkey have shown interest to sign an agreement to provide dual nationality to their citizens and stressed that this process should be expedited that would help in increasing bilateral trade and investment between the two countries. He said that Pakistan and Turkey should also finalize FTA that would give a significant boost to bilateral trade. Briefing the Turkish delega-

tion about the prospective areas of JVs and investment in Pakistan, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that Pakistan offered great investment opportunities in construction, mining, tourism, automobile, housing and other sectors and urged that Turkish investors should capitalize on these opportunities through JVs and investment. He said that Pakistan's economy was now showing good prospects and time was ripe for Turkish investors to increase their presence in Pakistani market. He said that by investing in Pakistan, Turkish compa-

nies could get easy access to Central Asia and many other markets for exports. He said that Turkish companies should transfer technology to Pakistan and help in accelerating the pace of industrialization in our country. He assured that ICCI would fully cooperate with Turkish investors in finding right partners in Pakistan. He said that ICCI was actively working to attract FDI towards Pakistan by encouraging the foreign investors to take benefit of the emerging opportunities for business and investment in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: Group Leader RCCI Sohai Altaf and ICCI President Sardar Yasir Ilyas performing ribbon cutting at the opening of a business center in Sadar Rawalpindi here on Friday. - DNA

'Kavan' to be shifted to Cambodia on Nov 29

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) was told on Friday that 'Kavan' elephant of Muragzar Zoo Islamabad would be shifted to Cambodia on November 29, in compliance of court orders pertaining to shifting of animals to sanctuaries. However, the two bears would be shifted to Jordan on December 6. Chief Justice Athar Minallah conducted hearing on a case pertaining to shifting of animals to sanctuaries due to their poor look after arrangements in zoo. During the course of proceedings, Dr. Amir Khalil and German expert Frank Gortz, who came from Austria to transfer Kavan, appeared before the court and told that Kavan would be sent to Cambodia on November 29. After which both bears would be transferred to Jordan on December 6.

'Digital divide a major obstacle in digital trade'

This was stated in a virtual workshop 'Toward achieving a sustainable regional integration in Pakistan: Digital trade and health integration' organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), In collaboration with UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To address the existing digital divide and to promote digital trade in Pakistan, tax rationalization for ICT sector and development of telecom infrastructure in Pakistan has a vital role to play. All stakeholders need to put collaborative efforts to provide an enabling environment with the focus on information technology and telecommunication in the country. Member Prime Minister's Taskforce on IT and Telecommunication, Mr. Pervez Iftikhar said this while sharing his views at virtual workshop 'Toward achieving a sustainable regional integration in

Pakistan, Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority, and Unilever, amongst others. While introducing the ESCAP's initiative to measure the digital regional integration, Dr Yann Duval, UNESCAP, informed the participants that the country study on with SDPI on digital exports aims to play facilitating role to support decision-makers prioritizing different areas of regional integration. Dr Vaqar Ahmed, Joint Executive Director, SDPI, highlighted 8 main areas where policy interventions are required to boost Pakistan's digital exports. The areas he identified included addressing any gaps in the legal framework and regulations, investment poli-

cy for technology sector; making tax regime consistent across the federation, enabling commercial banks to understand the digital business ecosystem, improving data protection as well as strengthening consumer rights, relaxation in foreign exchange movement for foreign investors, and addressing overall skills and digital literacy. "Promotion of digital trade products and services should be an integral part of any free trade agreements signed by Pakistan," Dr Ahmed concluded. Dr Adil Nakhuda, representing Institute of Business Administration (IBA), presented that exports for Pakistan medical-related products are concentrated on three products

and imports tend to be more diversified. "Pakistan is competitive in limited number of products which limits the level of diversification in exports basket" Dr Adil explained and recommended that regular meetings of health ministers must be organized to exchange knowledge on tackling health challenges among neighboring countries. Ms Aisha Moriani, JS WTO at Ministry of Commerce (MoC), informed the participants that the government has taken some key initiatives such as e-Commerce Policy of Pakistan, National e-Commerce Council, mutual recognition agreements related to the manpower export, food products and medical supplies.

and imports tend to be more diversified. "Pakistan is competitive in limited number of products which limits the level of diversification in exports basket" Dr Adil explained and recommended that regular meetings of health ministers must be organized to exchange knowledge on tackling health challenges among neighboring countries. Ms Aisha Moriani, JS WTO at Ministry of Commerce (MoC), informed the participants that the government has taken some key initiatives such as e-Commerce Policy of Pakistan, National e-Commerce Council, mutual recognition agreements related to the manpower export, food products and medical supplies.

Hospitals seeing surge in virus patients

ISLAMABAD: Joint Executive Director of PIMS Dr Minhaj us Siraj Friday said that the capital hospitals witnessed a 'significant spike' in COVID patients during past week owing to the increasing chilled weather conditions in the country. Talking to PTV news channel, he said that second wave of the pandemic, which has already hit the country, was more lethal compared to the first surge. "The coming weeks are more critical and our situation is going to worsen, said Minhaj, adding, the pandemic is fast spreading and we should all be concern". Half of all the patients coming to the hospital were experiencing breathing difficulties, which was the most common complication, he added. He said that utmost precaution was needed to remain safe from the harsh second wave of the virus as the numbers of patients were increasing rapidly in the city, adding, the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences hospital has earmarked 115-beds for Covid-19 patients which would ensure to combat COVID-19 patients far more efficaciously. He said hospital has a state-of-the-art infrastructure which would assist the administration further tackling this pandemic effectively. Dr Siraj said that the patients admitted in PIMS were being provided all possible facilities while health-care workers were also working day and night to cope with the challenge of COVID-19 and their protection was top priority of the government. He also called upon the youth, media and religious scholars to play an active role in raising awareness amongst the masses about the dangerous aspects of novel coronavirus. - APP

Gold imports decline 58.54% in 4 months

ISLAMABAD: The imports of gold witnessed decline of 58.54 percent during the first four months of the current fiscal year as compared to the corresponding period of last year. The gold imports during July-October (2020-21) were recorded at \$2.341 million against the imports of \$5.647 million during July-October (2019-20), showing a decline of 58.54 percent, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). In terms of quantity, the gold imports shrunk by 72.34 percent by falling from 141 kilograms last year to the imports of 39 kilograms during the period under review. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the gold imports witnessed slight decrease of 0.31 percent in October 2020 when compared to the imports of October 2019. The gold imports during October 2020 were recorded at \$1.285 million against the imports of \$1.173 million in October 2019. On month-on-month basis, the gold imports witnessed 21.69 percent increase as compared to the imports of \$1.056 recorded in September 2020, the PBS data revealed. It is pertinent to mention here that the country's trade deficit witnessed reduction of 1.88 percent during the first four months of current fiscal year as compared to the deficit of the corresponding period of last year. The deficit during the current year was recorded at \$7.577 billion as compared to the deficit of \$7.722 billion last year. - APP

Sheesha center raided; 10 arrested

RAWALPINDI: Rawat Police have raided at 'Sheesha Center' in a housing society and arrested 10 sheesha smokers, a police spokesman said on Friday. Following the information, Rawat Police carried out an operation and arrested Usman Afaq, Sulman Afaq, Aqib Nawaz, Hamad Ahmed, Asad Tanveer, Muhammad Faizan, Muhammad Tanveer, Sameer Gulifam, Amir Hamza and Ibraheem. Police team recovered 10 'Huqqas', 20 flavors and other items from their possession. - APP

Briefs

Govt striving hard for economic betterment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri, while assuring the All Pakistan Business Forum of his full support, stated that the government was striving hard for economic betterment of the country and soon the economic progress would be witnessed. He said this while talking to a delegation of the All Pakistan Business Forum, who called on him here in his office in the lead of its president Syed Maaz Mahmood. The meeting was also attended by Khurram Niaz Khan, Secretary General and Ilyas Khalil. On this occasion, APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood apprised him of APBF's upcoming business moot being held to promote country's soft image and invited him. Talking to the delegation, the Deputy Speaker emphasized that revival of economy is the top priority of the government. He added the business community has an important role to play in this regard and underscored that government is taking steps to ensure business and investment friendly environment in the country. Qasim Khan Suri stated that Pakistan has faced numerous challenges during past few years due to which business community has also suffered a lot. He appreciated the services of the APBF towards the development of the country and hoped that it would continue to play proactive role in this regard. Qasim Khan Suri suggested the business team to participate in the standing committees of the parliament on trade, finance and economy.

Sheesha center raided in housing society

DNA

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2 Pakistanis also elected to ACCA's Council

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A long-serving champion of public health and the hospice movement, Mark Millar has been appointed president of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). Mark Millar, from Suffolk, England, was named to the global role at ACCA's Annual General Meeting (AGM) which was held online, said a press release. Two Pakistanis have also been elected to ACCA's global Council. Nauman Asif Mian who is currently the CFO at Bayt.com Inc, will be serving as Council Member for the first time. Ayla Majid, Managing Director Financial Advisory at Khalid Majid Rehman, has been re-elected. She's been serving on the Council since 2014. Ayla Majid was the first female to sit on the board of any stock exchange in Pakistan; she is a Young Global Leader of the World Economic Forum (WEF). At the Global Future Council for Energy at the WEF, she is working on important initiatives to accelerate energy transition and to define potential actions to positively shape related developments. Nauman Asif Mian is a leading figure in UAE's tech sector. He has been nominated for multiple awards, such as the "Young Accountant of the Year", and "Chartered Accountant of the Year" at the Finance & Accountancy Middle East Awards.



ISLAMABAD; Guest enjoying Italian cuisines during Italian Food Day at Islamabad Marriott Hotel. – DNA

Ideas Conclave 2020 ends with Afghan discussions

The third session of the Conclave titled, "Realigning the Region" brought together former ambassadors Maleeha Lodhi and Janan Mosazai of Afghanistan, Professor Marvin Weinbaum from the US, and Indian journalist Siddharth Varadarajan together to discuss challenges in Afghanistan's peace process

DNA

ISLAMABAD: On the day of Jinnah Institute's Ideas Conclave 2020, sessions were held with leading international diplomats, journalists and economic experts discussing issues in both the South Asian region and beyond. The third session of the Conclave titled, "Realigning the Region" brought together former ambassadors Maleeha Lodhi and Janan Mosazai of Afghanistan, Professor Marvin Weinbaum from the US, and Indian journalist Siddharth Varadarajan together to discuss challenges in Afghanistan's peace process. Speakers saw that this is a question affecting those within the

country as well as the entire region. "There are deep divisions that still exist in the region; any agreement made in Doha can be jeopardised by continued differences between countries in the region whose results will be disastrous for all countries beyond Afghanistan," observed Ambassador Janan Mosazai. Ambassador Lodhi explained that the changing face of geopolitics in the world was a significant factor beyond the Covid crisis, leading to greater uncertainty for the future of the Afghanistan. "The world is passing through an unsettled phase not just because of Covid but because of international power shifts in flux, a rules-based international order framed under the weight of

so-called 'strong men' acting unilaterally, trying to re-write the rules of the game," stated Ambassador Maleeha Lodhi. Moderated by Ammara Durrani, Senior Fellow Jinnah Institute, the session saw all participants agree that international powers should not leave Afghanistan to its own means after a hasty pullout. "(The) US will not walk away from Afghanistan as it did in the 90s, which created a host of challenges for everyone. Back then, China and Iran were different entities to what they are now, and the US is attentive to this. But its commitment is certainly reduced, and the international community takes its lead from that stance. As for Indo-Pak relations, the BJP government led by Modi has made things more difficult for resolving the Kashmir issue," said Professor Marvin Weinbaum. The third and final day of 'Jinnah Institute's Ideas Conclave 2020' commenced with a conversation on 'Inequities in Wealth and Development' where experts discussed the current state of the economy in Pakistan, the impact of Covid-19, and what path of recovery should be adopted considering the rising levels of inequality. Speakers of the session included former Provincial Minister of Finance, Aisha Ghaus Pasha, General Secretary PMLN Sindh, Miftah Ismail, Executive Direc-

tor IBA, S. Akbar Zaidi, and Associate Professor of Political Economy at QAU, Aasim Sajjad Akhtar. The session was moderated by Assistant Editor at Dawn Newspaper, Khurram Husain. Akbar Zaidi explained that despite poverty levels going down in South Asia, inequality continues to be on the rise because it is far more difficult to remedy due to structural issues. "Poverty can be addressed with simple transfers of wealth. But inequality needs looking at ownership of assets and networks; the continued conflation of 'poverty' and 'inequality' as terms by official decision makers has prevented an examination of factors that cause inequality", he added.

CDA begins work on infrastructure development

The developmental work and fencing of the site of Park Enclave 3 is underway

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) started work on infrastructure Development on residential project Park Enclave 2 and 3. Survey work for Park enclave has been completed whereas earthwork for roads and street lights is underway. The developmental work and fencing of the site of Park Enclave 3 is underway. According to detail, upon the special directions of the Chairman CDA, Aamir Ali Ahmed the developmental work on a neglected housing project, park enclave,

has been started. In this regard, Rs 96 million were approved few months back for establishing gas supply network in Park enclave 1. On the other hand the developmental work and restoration of infrastructure in Park enclave 2 is also underway. The survey work of the project has been completed whereas the earthwork of roads and streets is underway. The survey for tube wells to meet the facility of water has also been completed. The developmental work in Park Enclave 3 is also underway. The PC1 of the project has also been approved.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of leading businessmen met with Prime Minister Imran Khan in Islamabad. – DNA

'Conclusion of mega cases top priority'

During the meeting, it was informed that on the directions of the Chairman NAB, the Prosecution Division has been revamped by inducting experienced legal consultants/special prosecutors

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB chaired a meeting to review performance of Operations and Prosecution Division of NAB at NAB Headquarters. During the meeting, it was informed that Prosecution Division of NAB is working closely with Operations Division of NAB HQ in order to have legal assistance to NAB's Operations Division and all Regional Bureaus of NAB in conduct of complaint verifications, inquiries, investigations and are pleading cases of NAB vigorously on the basis of solid evidence in the respected Courts as per law. During the meeting, it was informed that on the directions of the Chairman NAB, the Prosecution Division has been revamped by inducting experienced legal consultants/special prosecutors. A mechanism of handling of witnesses has been introduced and the result of this intervention is very encouraging. Due to constant deliberations, monitoring and performance analysis of the Prosecution Division, the overall

conviction ratio is approximately 68.8 percent in the respected Accountability Courts which is a record achievement. During the meeting, it was informed that respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced judgment in Reference No. 50/2014, 51/2014, 52/2014, 53/2014, 54/2014 whereby the principal accused Nazeer Ahmed

Khan was sentenced for 5 x years R.I along with fines of total liabilities in each case. According to the details the accused Nazeer Ahmed was convicted for 5 years along with the fine of Rs. 5,118,740 in reference No 50/2014 5 years along with the fine of Rs. 7,287,692 in reference No 51/2014 5 years along with the fine of Rs. 24,706,125 in reference

No. 52/2014 5 years along with the fine of Rs. 23,412,459 in reference No 53/2014 5 years along with the fine of Rs. 28,059,300 in reference No 54/2014. It was further informed that the respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced judgment in Reference No. 07/2007 whereby the accused person Ghulam Mustafa Randhawa was sentenced for 6x years R.I

and Ghulam Murtaza Randhawa was sentenced for 4 x years R.I along with the fine of Rs. 50 million each. In case of default, further 6 months of SI will be served by both accused. During the meeting, it was informed that the respected Accountability Court Lahore has announced verdict in reference No 29/2019 whereby the accused Zaheer Nasir, Maqsood Ahmed and Zeeshan Ahmed were awarded sentence of 7x years R.I along with the fine of Rs 5 Million each. It was further informed that the respected Accountability Court Lahore has approved a plea bargain of the accused Rauf Arshad an amount of Rs. 1.843831 Million. The Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB said that logical conclusion of mega corruption white collar crime cases is the top priority of NAB. NAB is committed to eradication of corruption by adopting the "Accountability for All" policy. Chairman NAB directed all Regional Bureaus of NAB to put in their best efforts in vigorously pursuance of under trial cases of NAB with complete preparation on the basis of solid evidence in accordance with law.



Prime suspect in Mehr case arrested

ISLAMABAD: The Inspector General of Police Sindh on Friday informed the Supreme Court that the police had arrested main accused Zulfiqar Chandio involved in the murder of three family members of Advocate Umme Rubab Chandio at Mehr, Sindh. A three-member bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Munib Akhtar heard the case. During the course of proceedings, the Chief Justice asked whether the Sindh police could not arrest two fugitives? IG Sindh Mushtaq Maher said that Zulfiqar Chandio, one of the two fugitives, was arrested. Petitioner Umme Rubab said that the accused was handed over to the police under the deal. She said that no action was taken against the landlords for facilitating the accused. She said that her life was in danger due to local landlords who usually block her way on court hearings. The IG Sindh said that full security was being provided to Umme Rubab. The petitioner said that two provincial assembly members of the PPP were accused and no action had been taken against them. She said that Sardar Khan Chandio and Burhan Chandio were assured no action would be taken against them. The court ordered the arrest of another fugitive accused Murtaza Chandio and adjourned hearing of the case for four weeks. The court sought a report from DIG Hyderabad within four weeks. – APP

CPO holds 'Khuli Kutchery' at CPO office

DNA

RAWALPINDI: City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi, DIG, Muhammad Ahsan Younas on Friday held a 'Khuli Kutchery' here at CPO office. The 'Khuli Kutchery' was attended among others by a large number of citizens, while on this occasion, Police officers concerned were also present. 35 citizens on this occasion recorded their complaints and presented applications to the CPO. The CPO also listened to the complaints of the citizens and issued orders on phone to the police officers concerned. According to a police spokesman, the CPO is holding Khuli Kutchery on daily basis to provide relief to the citizens. The police officers had also been warned of strict action on negligence and directed to address complaints of the citizens particularly marked by the CPO within shortest possible time frame, he added.

QAU ranked 106th among best Asian universities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Quaid-I-Azam University's (QAU's) excellence in research and teaching placed at 106th among the best Asian Universities according to recently announced prestigious Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Rankings. Quaid-I-Azam University has strengthened and improved its international position by moving up to five places from its last year's ranking based on the quality of teaching, reputation and increase in academic citations. QAU has achieved 43.24 points in the overall score while 94.09 in paper per faculty, 88.59 in international research network, and 80.81 in citation per paper. QS has already ranked QAU at 454th among the top 500 universities of the world. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice-Chancellor Quaid-I-Azam University congratulated the faculty staff and students for achieving another milestone. In his message, he said the continuous improvement in QAU ranking for the last two years reflects our resolve to be Pakistan's top-ranked university and to excel among the best universities in global rankings. Quaid-I-Azam University has already ranked 67th in the Golden Age university rankings and 75th among leading universities of Asia by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

A new platform

AS the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) reunites, Shah Mehmood Qureshi looks all set to discuss the Kashmir issue for the first time since India repealed the region's special status and has been occupying the region illegally at the Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting. The OIC has always been one of the major platforms through which Pakistan has attempted to incur change, especially in regards to Kashmir, and this time is no different. Throughout the course of decades, the IOC has been debating on Kashmir, ultimately settling on the decision that it would be best to follow the directive on the UN Security Council. However, this year, Pakistan's aim is to highlight the atrocities being committed in a region that has been subjugated by Indian forces that have stripped it of its identity as well. If those who are closest to our foreign policy trajectory are aligned with our views, then the case for the Kashmiri people becomes that much stronger. As such, it is imperative for our Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi, to the support of the Middle Eastern and Muslim countries that are in attendance for the meeting. The commitment of the IOC to keep the Kashmir dispute on a global radar is evident through the creation of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, which met in June of this year. The outcome of the meeting was a united call for India to withdraw from the region and abstain from committing any more human rights violations as well. If the same kind of support is extended to Pakistan in this OIC meeting as well, there is no doubt that India will be subjected to immense pressure. Considering that we have been demanding a meeting of the OIC, we must make the most out of this opportunity. This is the perfect platform to address the plight of the Kashmiri population amongst those who are the closest to the conflict.

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The opposition's neglect

AS the pandemic gets worse across the country, reaching the highest daily toll reported since July, its effects do not escape politicians either. It appears holding mass country-wide rallies in a pandemic might have been a mistake, as now one of its ringleaders, Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has confirmed that he has tested positive for COVID-19 and is self-isolating. We wish Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari well and a speedy recovery. Yet the reach of the pandemic should alarm those who have so far been neglecting social distancing and have been advocating rallies and events with mass gatherings. It is unfortunate also that the PDM is still insisting on holding large public gatherings. The government and the opposition have previously been having a war of words on the issue of rallies—with Prime Minister Imran Khan accusing the opposition of “playing reckless politics with people's safety”, with PDM president Maulana Fazlur Rehman replying that the government was making desperate attempts to foil the rally on the pretext of COVID-19. The opposition has vowed to continue with its rallies despite bans by the district government on outdoor gatherings which exceed a certain size. The government may have political reasons to oppose the rallies—yet the opposition at this point cannot deny the disastrous impact that its campaigning through open rallies will have on the country, the hospitals and indeed, their own followers who will be put most at risk. Like Bhutto contracted the virus, hundreds of thousands of people who gather at the rally will also be put at risk. Experts and doctors have warned that intensive care units at major hospitals in the country are running out of beds. The daily toll has exceeded 3000 in the last two days. The opposition can no longer pretend that the contentions against their current approach towards campaigning are only political, and the government needs to take responsibility in negotiating with the opposition to tone down the rallies. If the country means to control the pandemic without a strict economic lockdown, it desperately requires unity of all factions.

Pervasive public, private violence: Face of Indian polity

Iqbal Khan

The world is also familiar with “saffron terror” orchestrated and unleashed by the RSS-BJP zealots against Muslims in India and against Pakistan. Masterminds of Mecca Masjid, Ajmer Dargah, and Samjhota Express terrorist cases, like Swami Aseemanand, have been granted full state protection and acquitted in complete travesty of justice after having confessed to India's National Investigation Agency (NIA). Open threats to Pakistan by Indian civilian and military leaders, India's sinister design to subvert China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and public statements by noted Indian politicians

AKISTAN'S Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram handed over the dossier on Indian state-sponsored terrorism to UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres, on November 24. UNSG has assured that he would review evidences against India. Ambassador Akram told the UN chief that Indian is involved in orchestrating terrorist attacks in Pakistan and demanded him to take note of this. Akram conveyed to UNSG that the dossier containing evidences against India should be presented before the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee. UNSG has assured that he would review evidences against India. Envoys of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, stationed in Islamabad, were briefed by Pakistan's Foreign Secretary on November 16 regarding the “Dossier on Indian State Sponsorship of Terrorism”. The Dossiers containing irrefutable evidence of India's state sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan were handed over to them. The Dossier presented by Pakistan extensively documents India's active planning, promoting, aiding, abetting, financing and execution of terrorist activities against Pakistan. Since 2001, Pakistan has faced more than 19,000 terrorist attacks on its soil and suffered 83,000 casualties. The direct economic losses have been upward of US \$ 126 billion. Meanwhile, India has mischievously masqueraded as a ‘victim’ of terrorism and sought to mislead the international community by hypocritically levelling terrorism-related allegations against Pakistan. It has also conducted false flag operations in IIOJK and inside India to malign Pakistan. That façade has now been removed and the world can see the real face of India. The most familiar and undeniable face of India's state-sponsorship of terrorism against Pakistan is active service Indian Navy Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav, who was caught red-handed in March 2016. His complicity in subversion, sabotage and terrorism in Pakistan is part of the incontrovertible evidence against India. The world is also familiar with “saffron terror” orchestrated and unleashed by the RSS-BJP zealots against Muslims in India and against Pakistan. Masterminds of Mecca Masjid, Ajmer Dargah, and Samjhota Express terrorist cases, like Swami Aseemanand, have been granted full state protection and acquitted in complete travesty of justice after having confessed to India's National Investigation Agency (NIA). Open threats to Pakistan by Indian civilian and military leaders, India's sinister design to subvert China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and public statements by

noted Indian politicians and senior security officials on ‘teaching Pakistan’ a lesson through use of terrorism constitute further incriminating evidence. The rising foot print of Daesh and Al-Qaida in India has been pointed out in recent UN reports, this indicates that India is emerging as a hotbed of UN designated international terrorist organizations and posing a great risk to the region. Recent revelations by the Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) files illustrate how India uses its financial system for money laundering and other illegal activities such as terror financing – brazenly and with impunity. FinCEN is a bureau of the US Department of the Treasury. Use of terrorism as an instrument of state policy by India makes it culpable under international law, UN sanctions regime, and international counter-terrorism conventions. It is the collective responsibility of the world community to hold India to account and take practical steps to proceed against the Indian nationals involved in patronage of terrorist entities. Speaking at a joint news conference, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Director General Inter-Services Public Relations Major General Babar Iftikhar said that India's sole agenda was to damage Pakistan economically, diplomatically and politically. They said that India was sponsoring terrorism designed to destabilise Pakistan and targeting its economic partnership with China. “India is allowing its land to be used against Pakistan for terrorism,” said FM Qureshi, adding New Delhi was also planning attacks from neighbouring countries. The military spokesperson accused India of sponsoring banned organizations including UN-designated terrorist groups like Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, and Allah Nazar's Baluch Liberation Army. He said that Pakistan expected the international community to play its role for peace and stability by compelling India to immediately halt its state sponsorship of terrorism in Pakistan and bring to justice all those involved in financing and supporting terrorism inside Pakistan according to domestic and international laws. The DG ISPR showed documents proving Indian intelligence agencies' links with the terrorists involved in subversive activities in Pakistan. India has established multi-purpose terrorist base camps for training, harbouring and launching of terrorists into Pakistan. Indian intelligence agencies are managing 87 such terrorists' camps out of which 66 are located in Afghanistan whereas 21 were located in India. The DG ISPR said it had been revealed that Indian intelligence agencies are trying to establish Pakistan's

linkage with ISIS by creating Daesh-e-Pakistan'. The DG ISPR said Indian intelligence agencies were also trying to establish Daesh-e-Pakistan. “Recently, 20 Indian Daesh militants have been relocated from India to camps along the Pak-Afghan border. These militants were handed over to Daesh Commander Sheikh Abdul Rahim, alias Abdul Rehman Muslim Dost,” he said. New Delhi has three objectives in derailing Pakistan's journey towards peace, upending economic growth and fostering political stability. “Their first objective is to create hindrance in Pakistan's move towards peace. India cannot accept that Pakistan has defeated terrorism and is moving towards peace and is promoting nationalism and sub-nationalism in Gilgit Baltistan, the tribal districts, and Balochistan,” he said. The second objective, Qureshi said, was “to ensure Pakistan does not become economically stable. Citing India's push for Pakistan to be blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force. The foreign minister said India was creating obstacles in Pakistan's path towards prosperity. “Their third objective is political instability aimed at destabilising the country.” As usual India went into a denial-cum-victimhood mode. Pakistan has rejected the Indian Ministry of External Affairs' denial of the irrefutable evidence provided by Pakistan on Indian state sponsorship of terrorism. Fully exposed, India has typically resorted to sophistry, obfuscation and re-fabrication. However, bland denials and spewing of old litany of charges, however, will not change facts. In an interesting coincidence, in his new book, “A Promised Land” former US president Barack Obama made very pertinent comments about the utility of sustaining anti-Pakistan sentiment in India. The quickest route to national unity in India is “expressing hostility toward Pakistan,” stated Obama. “Former Indian premier, Dr Manmohan Singh had told Obama, in November 2010 that he feared ‘rising anti-Muslim sentiment had strengthened the influence of Hindu nationalist BJP’.” Obama quoted Singh as saying that the “call of religious and ethnic solidarity can be intoxicating” for politicians, particularly in a country like India. “Violence, both public and private, remained an all-too-pervasive part of Indian life. “Despite its genuine economic progress, ... India remained a chaotic and impoverished place: largely divided by religion and caste, captive to the whims of corrupt local officials and power brokers, hamstrung by a parochial bureaucracy,” Obama added. — The writer is a freelance columnist; e-mail: Iqbal.khan9999@yahoo.com

Gilgit-Baltistan is going to grow

Mehr Ispahani



The Maharaja of Kashmir claimed that the whole Gilgit Agency formed his state, but the Indian government was very clear that this was not the case. After the Kashmir darbar submitted a long note to the Indian government, New Delhi concisely and clearly put an end to the confusion. Colonel Fraser, a resident in Kashmir, wrote to Maharaja Sir Hari Singh on March 5, 1941, the final decision of the viceroy

HISTORICALLY, what we used to call the ‘Gilgit Agency’ was made up of the princely states of Hunza and Nagar, the smaller entities of Chilas, Koh Ghizr, Ishkoman, Yasin and Puniyal, and the Gilgit Wazarat. Out of these territories, only the Gilgit Wazarat formed a part of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, while the other areas were under the paramountcy of the British government. The British had been instrumental in pacifying this area, and even helped the Kashmir darbar establish its writ in parts of its own territory. In order to consolidate its control in the area, especially as the Great Game was still on, the British Government of India established the Gilgit Agency in 1889. Since its inception, the Agency controlled the defence, foreign affairs and communications of the region, with the help of a political agent in the Gilgit city and an assistant political agent in Chilas. The Maharaja of Kashmir claimed that the whole Gilgit Agency formed his state, but the Indian government was very clear that this was not the case. After the Kashmir darbar submitted a long note to the Indian government, New Delhi concisely and clearly put an end to the confusion. Colonel Fraser, a resident in Kashmir, wrote to Maharaja Sir Hari Singh on March 5, 1941, the final decision of the viceroy on the status of the constituent units of the Agency: “a) Hunza and Nagar: though these are under the suzerainty of the Kashmir State, they are not part of Kashmir but are separate states; b) Chilas, Koh Ghizr, Ishkoman, and Yasin: though these are under the suzerainty of Kashmir State they are not part of Kashmir but tribal areas. What happened even in Gilgit Wazarat in the aftermath of the transfer of power, it is clear that the entire population was pro-Pakistan. Gilgit-Baltistan is six times the size of Azad Kashmir. The territory also borders the Indian

Illegal Occupied Jammu & Kashmir which is separated by the Line of Control. The territory of present-day Gilgit-Baltistan became a separate administrative unit in 1970 under the name “Northern Areas”. It was formed by the amalgamation of former Gilgit Agency, the Baltistan district and several small former princely states, the larger of which being Hunza and Nagar. G-B covers mostly a highly mountainous area of over 72,971 sq km. It had an estimated population of 1.249 million in 2013 (1.8 million in 2015). Its capital city is Gilgit with 216,760 estimated population. It is home to five of the “eight-thousanders” and more than 50 peaks above 7,000 metres. The main ranges are the Karakoram and the western Himalayas. The Pamir Mountains are to the north, and the Hindu Kush lies to the west. Amongst the highest mountains are K2 (Mount Godwin-Austen) and Nanga Parbat, the latter being one of the most feared mountains in the world. Three of the world's longest glaciers outside the polar regions are found in G-B. The main tourism activities are trekking and mountaineering, and this industry is growing in importance. The present-day G-B territory became a separate unit in 1970 as Northern Areas. It was formed by the amalgamation of Gilgit Agency, Baltistan district of the Ladakh wazarat and the hill states of Hunza and Nagar. It now consists of 14 districts, has a population one million and an area of 73,000 sq km. It shares borders with Pakistan, China, India and Afghanistan: with Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa province to the west, a small portion of Wakhan trip of Afghanistan to the north, the Chinese Xinjiang Uyghur region to the northeast, the Indian-Occupied Jammu & Kashmir to the southeast, and the state of Azad Jammu & Kashmir to the south. Three of the world's longest glaciers outside the polar regions are found in G-B: the Biafo Glacier, the Baltoro Glacier and the Batura Glacier. There are, in addition, several high-altitude lakes in G-B: The economy of the region is primarily based on

a traditional route of trade, the historic Silk Road. The China Trade Organization forum led the people of the area to actively invest and learn modern trade knowhow from Xinjiang. Later, the establishment of a chamber of commerce and the Sust dry port (in Gojal Hunza) became a milestone. In early September 2009, Pakistan signed an agreement with China for a major energy project in G-B which includes the construction of a 7,000-MW dam at Bunji in the Astore district. Pakistan gave G-B the status of its fifth legal provisional province. The region is not disputed as it is part of Pakistan. Understanding G-B's strategic position is important. We can do that by revisiting the centrality of G-B in the 19th century Great Game between Russia and British India, and then throw light on the contemporary strategic importance of the region for China and Pakistan on one hand, and the opponents of the BRI, including the US and India. This contest makes the region a critical strategic prize. Gilgit-Baltistan being a province will grow in strength and develop further with its huge potentials. Recently an Indian plot came to limelight, including a plan that was aimed at poisoning the minds of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan through elements of hate. A dirty propaganda campaign has been launched to distort the history and prove that G-B was a disputed territory. But above mentioned facts reveal that G-B never was an integral part of Jammu & Kashmir. It is on record that in 1935, the British Raj leased the area from J&K state's autocratic Maharaja for a period of 60 years. People of G-B acceded to Pakistan willingly after an arduous struggle. They acceded to Pakistan on November 1, 1947 after getting independence from the Dogra army. Similarly, the liberation forces emancipated Skardu after a year. The brave people of G-B defeated a well-equipped and trained army. They are not ready to accept anyone's claim over the region. — The writer is freelance columnist based in Peshawar

Briefs

Navalny urges EU to target Putin's oligarch backers

BRUSSELS: Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny urged the EU on Friday to put targeted economic sanctions on the oligarchs surrounding President Vladimir Putin.

"There is no sense in sanctioning colonels or generals or some people who are definitely not travelling a lot," Navalny told MEPs by videolink. Addressing the European Parliament's foreign affairs committee, Navalny, who is recovering in Germany after a poisoning allegedly ordered by the Kremlin, argued for a new strategy. He said the Russian officials and military officers who are traditionally targeted "definitely do not have a lot of estate or bank accounts in Europe".

Instead, he argued, Brussels should go after what he said was Putin's true inner circle of wealthy moguls with yachts and investments in the EU. Western government have concluded that Navalny was poisoned by Novichok, a military-grade poison that would be hard for non-state assassins to procure. He is recovering after treatment in a Berlin hospital, but his case has increased tensions between Moscow and European capitals, especially Berlin. The EU has imposed entry bans and bank account freezes on six people suspected of being responsible, including the head of Russia's FSB intelligence agency. But Navalny said it was a mistake to look for a political motive in Moscow's actions, arguing that the Moscow elite is simply interested in money. "The Russian state must be treated like a bunch of criminals who have temporarily seized power," he said, urging Europe to support the Russian people. He warned Brussels to reject the result of next year's Russian parliamentary elections which he said would certainly be rigged.

Tajik President hails Pak Army's sacrifices

From Page 01

environment particularly with reference to Afghanistan. They also dilated upon measures to enhance the level and scope of military engagements between both countries and reaffirmed to continue to forge deeper ties. Earlier, upon arrival at Ministry of Defence, Chairman JCSC was presented Guard of Honour by contingent of Tajikistan's Armed Forces.

UN flies aid into Sudan for Ethiopian refugees

GENEVA: The United Nations said 32 tons of emergency aid were flown into Khartoum on Friday to help the growing number of refugees fleeing into Sudan from Ethiopia. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, said a second airlift from Dubai was due to arrive on Monday, with more than 43,300 registered refugees now having crossed the border to escape the military offensive. Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed ordered troops into Tigray on November 4 following alleged attacks by Tigray People's Liberation Front forces on federal military camps in the northern region. UNHCR chief Filippo Grandi visited the Sudanese capital Khartoum to review operations, and went to the border river to meet refugees crossing on small boats from Ethiopia. "I want to express my solidarity and my thanks to Sudan for opening the borders to the refugees," he said. Grandi visited registration, medical and food distribution centres at the border.

In Geneva, UNHCR spokesman Babar Baloch told reporters: "Aid is being mobilised to help refugees, almost half of whom are children. Humanitarian agencies continue to provide shelter and other facilities to help refugees but more resources are required and Sudan needs international support urgently." He said the UNHCR had helped to relocate nearly 10,000 refugees to Um Raquba, some 70 kilometres (40 miles) further inside Sudanese territory.



ISLAMABAD: Ms Cher, American singer calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. Malik Amin Aslam, special assistant to Prime Minister on climate change is also present. — DNA

Xi calls for closer China-ASEAN community relationship

Xi made the remarks via video when addressing the opening ceremony of the 17th China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit held in Nanning, capital city of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping on Friday called for cultivating a closer community with a shared future for China and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Xi made the remarks via video when addressing the opening ceremony of the 17th China-ASEAN Expo and China-ASEAN Business and Investment Summit held in Nanning, capital city of south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region. Xi said seven years after he announced an initiative for China to work with ASEAN countries for a 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and for a closer China-ASEAN community with a shared future, "the China-ASEAN relationship has grown into the most successful and vibrant model for cooperation in the Asia-Pacific and an exemplary effort in building a

community with a shared future for mankind." When confronted by the sudden onslaught of COVID-19 this year, China and ASEAN have helped each other and took on the challenge in solidarity. "Never before have the destinies of people in different countries been so closely connected," as the world is undergoing momentous changes unseen in a century, Xi said. China continues to regard ASEAN as a priority in its neighborhood diplomacy and a key region in high-quality Belt and Road cooperation, he said, adding that China will work with ASEAN to advance all-round cooperation and maintain the good momentum for development and prosperity in the region. Xi suggested that the two sides need to enhance strategic mutual trust and further synergize their development plans. More efforts will be made to build the New International Land-Sea Trade Corridor,

strengthen cooperation on infrastructure connectivity, speed up the development of existing economic corridors and key projects, and continue to develop the China-ASEAN Multimodal Transport Alliance. Xi said as next year will mark the 30th anniversary of China-ASEAN dialogue relations, China will work with ASEAN to take their strategic partnership to a higher level. He said the two sides also need to elevate economic and trade cooperation and facilitate an early and full recovery of the regional economy. China welcomes the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and looks forward to its early entry into force, he said. China will work with ASEAN countries to sustain the smooth flow of trade, promote mutual investment, open up markets wider to each other, and foster deeply integrated

industrial, supply and value chains, Xi said. Provided that all necessary COVID-19 containment protocols are duly observed, steps should be taken to facilitate the movement of people and goods, he added. Stressing the need to deepen cooperation on the digital economy, Xi said China and ASEAN could create more highlights of cooperation in such areas as smart city, 5G, artificial intelligence, e-commerce, big data, blockchain and telemedicine, and strengthen the protection of data security and policy communication and coordination. China will work with ASEAN on the China-ASEAN Information Harbor to advance digital connectivity and build a digital Silk Road, he added. The two sides also need to strengthen cooperation against COVID-19 and enhance capacity building in public health, according to the president.

Xi said China stands ready to work with ASEAN to enhance policy dialogue on public health, information sharing and cooperation on the production, development, and deployment of vaccines. When its COVID-19 vaccines are available for use, China will actively consider the needs of ASEAN countries, he said. China will provide financial support to the COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund, train 1,000 administrative and specialized personnel in the health sector for ASEAN countries, and work with ASEAN countries to develop the regional reserve of medical supplies for public health emergencies and launch a liaison mechanism for public health emergencies. Xi said China will embark on a new journey next year toward fully building a modern socialist country and the country will stay as committed as ever to further opening-up.

Japan may call new state of emergency

WEB DESK

TOKYO: Japan may have no choice but to declare a state of emergency if the nationwide surge of COVID-19 infections isn't subdued within three weeks, said Yasutoshi Nishimura, the Cabinet minister leading the country's pandemic response, during a news conference Wednesday evening. "The next three weeks are critical," Nishimura said after a meeting of the government's coronavirus subcommittee, adding that the declaration of a state of emergency will "enter the field of view" if the virus doesn't show signs of abating during that period of time. Top officials are beginning

to sound the alarm as the virus continues to spread throughout the country, an upward trend they fear could overwhelm the health care system and prevent hospitals from providing basic medical treatment. A sustained increase in new infections has already forced officials to roll back or suspend campaigns intended to reboot the economy through subsidies to the tourism and food industries. Hokkaido was the first prefecture in Japan to declare a state of emergency — though it didn't have a legal basis to do so — in late February, weeks before the central government declared an emergency in seven prefectures in early April. The order was extended nationwide 10 days later and lifted completely on May 25.



Lahore: Players struggling to get hold on the ball during 2nd semifinal between Diamond Paints FG Polo and Remounts polo teams played at Aibak Ground Polo Club as part of Happy Cow Polo for Peace-II for Pakistan Polo Cup 2020. — DNA

'Pakistan players breached Covid protocols'

Six of the 34 players in Pakistan's combined seniors and Shaheens squads tested positive in the first Covid-19 test they took upon landing in New Zealand. They were identified as Sarfaraz Ahmed, Rohail Nazir, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Abbas, Abid Ali and Danish Aziz.

SPORTS DESK

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's director-general of health, Dr Ashley Bloomfield, has given details of how Pakistan players violated Covid-19 protocols at their hotels and given the starkest of warnings that how seriously their offence was taken by the authorities. Six of the 34 players in Pakistan's combined seniors and Shaheens squads tested positive in the first Covid-19 test they took upon landing in New Zealand. They were identified as Sarfaraz

Ahmed, Rohail Nazir, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Abbas, Abid Ali and Danish Aziz. All had cleared multiple tests in Pakistan before the team's departure. "Rather than being in their own rooms, which is a requirement for the first three days, there was some mingling in the hallways, chatting, sharing food and not wearing masks," Dr Bloomfield is quoted as telling RNZ. "I don't know how many times they did that, but it only needs once for us to take a dim view of it. These players signed up to the arrangements in an undertaking that made what was expected of them

very clear. At the moment, they are all required to be in their rooms, which was the requirement anyway. The training exemption would not have kicked in until after we had the results of the day-three testing, if we were happy with the results." Dr Bloomfield, who is credited for being the person responsible for New Zealand's successful tackling of the virus, explained that the protocols devised for the Pakistani contingent were already lenient compared to other incoming travellers. "Not being able to train is not a punishment, that was a requirement anyway for the first three days," he said. "Looking at Day 3 test

results and CCTV footage, we will have to take a judgment on if or when they may be allowed to be exempt from the arrangement everyone else has to undertake, so they're allowed to break off in bubbles and train. I take a dim view of what we've seen already and we'll take it really seriously. The health official, did, however, state that the violations were limited to within the squad and that the Pakistani touring party had not come into contact with others. "There's no evidence of interaction with people other than the squad, but the mingling amongst team members was not allowed, and it occurred," he said.

Eng-Nether ODI series postponed over virus

LONDON: England's one-day series against the Netherlands scheduled for 2021 has been postponed for a year due to continuing uncertainty over the coronavirus pandemic, it was announced on Friday. Eoin Morgan's 50-over world champions were set to play the three-match series as part of the International Cricket Council's (ICC's) World Cup Super League. The Royal Dutch Cricket Association said it was not viable to play the games with few or no fans. Ashley Giles, managing director of England men's cricket, said: "It is disappointing that we are unable to play the Netherlands in May in what would be England's first visit to Holland. "Hopefully, with the prospect of crowds returning to sport soon, we can rearrange the three matches in 2022 and showcase international cricket to capacity crowds." Dutch high performance manager Roland Lefebvre said: "The prospect of playing the world champions in a full house is exciting, and we look forward to welcoming the team back in 2022." The Super League will determine qualification for the 2023 World Cup in India. The Netherlands, an associate member, are taking part along with the 12 full members of the ICC. — APP

Pakistan's female match referee starts her duties

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's first-ever female cricket match referee Saman Zulfqar has started performing her duties in the ongoing National Triangular T20 Women's Cricket Championship. Saman is the only female match referee on the Pakistan Cricket Board's (PCB) development panel. She was the match referee in the fourth match of the tournament between PCB Dynamites and PCB Blasters. While talking to a local newspaper, Saman said that she is happy to officiate as the first female match referee. Saman has aimed to seek more experience and her message for girls is to come in this field as PCB has provided a good platform. She hails from Allahabad, a town in the Kasur district of Punjab. She has chosen to become a cricket match referee to pursue her passion for sports. Zulfqar is the mother of a daughter and lives with her family in Kasur.

EU to approve first vaccine by end of year

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The EU's drugs watchdog Friday said it expects the first application for approval of the COVID-19 vaccine by the end of this year. Officials from the European Medicines Agency (EMA) told Anadolu Agency that none of the companies working to develop the COVID-19 vaccine has yet applied to EMA for market approval. The EMA is conducting a rapid evaluation process about the vaccines that three companies are working on, although there are no applications yet. The vaccines are BioNTech and Pfizer's "BNT162b2", Oxford University and AstraZeneca's "ChAdOx1-SARS-CoV-2" vaccine, and "mRNA-1273" from Moderna Biotech Spain. Normally, all data on the efficacy, safety, and quality of a vaccine or a drug should be provided at the beginning of the evaluation process by the EMA. However, in emergency situations, the agency can start the assessment using information obtained from ongoing studies before the official application is filed in order to speed up the process. In order for a drug or vaccine to be placed on the market in the EU, the EU Commission's approval is also needed after the EMA's approval. The EMA officials have evaluated many data from large-scale clinical trials so far in the rapid evaluation process. At this stage, data from several clinical studies continue to pour in. That's why the EMA officials avoid specifying a precise timetable for approval.

Briefs

UNRWA runs out of money for first time

FOREIGN DESK

JARUSALEM: The United Nations agency for Palestinian refugees said that, for the first time in its history, it has run out of money until the end of the year. The UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) relies on funds from UN member states and the European Union, but said it has been chronically underfunded for years. "But I still believe we can avoid falling. We can avoid falling if the solidarity of the international community is expressed now," he added. The agency said earlier this month it needed to raise \$70m by the end of November or it will not be able to pay the full salaries of thousands of employees through the end of the year. UNRWA had notified its entire workforce of 28,000 people that it will be forced to defer their salaries for the rest of the year. Lazzarini said UNRWA had received this year the lowest level of contributions since 2012, at a time when the needs of refugees are compounded by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. UNRWA is also warning the health system in Gaza is about to collapse due to the coronavirus pandemic. The agency said most of the workers affected are refugees themselves and the cuts will affect employees in countries across the Middle East. UNRWA was established to aid the 700,000 Palestinians who fled or were forced from their homes during the war surrounding Israel's establishment in 1948.

Nigeria Sharia police ban 'Black Friday' promotion

KANO: Islamic police in northern Nigeria's biggest city Kano have warned against using the "Black Friday" sales term, saying it hurts the sensibilities of Muslims. In a letter sent out on Friday, the Hisbah agency told private radio station Cool FM radio to stop advertising a "Black Friday" promotion. "We wish to express our concern on the tagging of the Friday as 'Black Friday' and further inform you that, the majority of the inhabitants of Kano state are Muslims that consider Friday a Holy Day," the letter stated. "You are requested to stop calling the day as Black Friday with immediate effect." According to the letter, the Hisbah got wind of the sales promotion following a complaint from residents. The radio station has in the last few days advertised a promotion involving sales at local shopping centres and a concert which was expected to draw major crowds. The Hisbah informed the organisers that it has deployed its personnel to the venues for surveillance to avoid "any immoral activities". The radio station has not responded to the letter. Kano is a conservative Muslim city where religious clerics commonly preach against western culture.

Nigeria gets back 600-year-old artefact

WEB DESK

ABUJA: Nigeria has received a "priceless" terracotta head believed to be at least 600 years old which was smuggled to the Netherlands, the information minister said. It was taken from the southwestern city of Ile-Ife and smuggled through Ghana. Dutch ambassador to Nigeria Harry Van Dijk on Thursday returned it to Information Minister Lai Mohammed in a ceremony in the Nigerian capital, Abuja. "The smuggler had obtained forged documents" to take it out of the country, Mohammed was quoted as saying in a statement. Dutch customs intercepted it at Amsterdam airport and "alerted the ... Information and Heritage Inspectorate of the Netherlands to give an opinion," the statement said. Dutch officials then contacted their Nigerian counterparts, leading to the return of the "priceless and timeless" artefact, Mohammed said.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain Manuel Duran being presented a shield during a visit to Yan association office. – DNA

European Union adopts tough resolution on Belarus

The European Union has slapped sanctions on Lukashenko and a number of his allies citing election rigging and a violent police crackdown on demonstrators

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: Sergei Lavrov held talks with Lukashenko and other top officials in the capital Minsk, in the latest show of Russia's support for authorities in its ex-Soviet neighbour. Thousands of protesters demanding Lukashenko's resignation have taken to the streets of Minsk every weekend since the 9 August election that saw the 66-year-old claim a sixth term in office. Protesters believe political novice Svetlana Tikhonovskaya, 38, who took her jailed husband's place in the presidential race, was the true winner. Moscow has continued to back Lukashenko since the protests erupted, with several meetings between senior officials from both sides in recent months. Speaking at a press conference with his Belarusian counterpart

Vladimir Makei, Lavrov accused the United States and several European countries of "gross interference" in the domestic affairs of Belarus. Western countries are employing technologies of organizing mass riots in Russia and Belarus, while their officials set ultimatums against Moscow and Minsk, Lavrov said, as quoted by the Russian agency TASS. "Russia and Belarus are under pressure aimed at changing our stance and limiting our countries' development. The Western media and officials voice nearly ultimatums against us. There have been too many facts of meddling in domestic affairs. They are using the technology of organizing mass riots, and the opposition gets financial and other support," Lavrov went further. In this situation the West is playing "a game without rules" style, Lav-

rov noted. "Without giving any evidence they are slapping unilateral sanctions. The work of cooperation formats, which had been built for years, is frozen," Russia's top diplomat said. Several Western leaders have refused to recognise the results of the election and voiced support for Tikhonovskaya, who fled to EU member Lithuania shortly after the vote. The European Union has slapped sanctions on Lukashenko and a number of his allies citing election rigging and a violent police crackdown on demonstrators. The European Parliament passed on Thursday a tough resolution on Belarus, in which MEPs rejected the results of the 9 August election and asked for new, free and fair elections in accordance with international standards. Parliament condemned in the strongest possible terms the murder of Raman Bandarenka in Belarus, and expressed

its condolences to his family and to all families who have lost loved ones as a result of the repression of Lukashenko's regime. Bandarenka, a 31-year-old art teacher, was brutally beaten on the evening of 11 November by a group of plain-clothed men in masks who reportedly had close ties to the regime. He was taken into detention where he was subjected to further beatings. He later died as a result of his injuries. MEPs demand prompt, thorough, and independent investigations into his death, and more generally, for the EU to lend support to an international investigation of crimes perpetrated by the Lukashenko regime against the people of Belarus. They also called on the Commission to increase its assistance to independent media in Belarus. The resolution highlights that actions taken so far by the EU and the member states against the Lukashenko

regime "are insufficient" and welcomed the Council's decision to work on a third package of sanctions aimed at firms and oligarchs with ties to the regime. MEPs also call for the EU and the member states to increase assistance to Belarusian civil society and to increase EU engagement with and support for independent civil society organisations, human rights defenders and independent journalists. The text was adopted by 613 votes in favour, 41 against and 35 abstentions. The European Parliament is often adopting tough texts, on the initiative of individual MEPs or of party groups, but it is more than obvious that key member states have no stomach to rock the boat in Belarus. France keeps on advocating good relations with Moscow, while traditionally anti-Russian Poland is losing its clout as it is vetoing the EU budget.

Occupied West Bank enters lockdown

FOREIGN DESK

RAMALLAH: The occupied West Bank has entered a 48-hour lockdown to limit the spread of the coronavirus pandemic as cases continue to rise. The lockdown started on Friday and will continue until Sunday morning. The territory, which the Palestinian Authority (PA) government has limited control over, will also implement a 14-day partial night-time curfew. Under the general lockdown, travel is prohibited on weekends, as well as from 7pm to 6am on weekdays in and between all the governorates. Only pharmacies and bakeries will be allowed to remain open. There are more than 91,000 cases of the coronavirus in the occupied Palestinian territories, including the

West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. "Movement in the streets will be prevented unless absolutely necessary," interior ministry spokesman Ghassan Nimer said. He said PA security services will conduct patrols in the streets and place barriers at the entrances to some cities, adding that the violators will be punished. Meanwhile, Gaza's ministry of health on Friday announced the highest number of cases in the besieged territory since March. The ministry recorded 922 new cases and two deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the total number of deaths in the Gaza Strip from the virus to 86. The coastal enclave is struggling to contain the number of cases amid a breakdown of health services and limited medical supplies.



BAGHDAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjarani arrived in Iraq on a short visit. Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjarani attended the Urs of Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani. The Chairman Senate was accompanied by Senators Dilawar Khan, Sajjad Hussain Turi and Joint Secretaries to the Senate Muhammad Zubair Theme and Hamad Murree. – DNA

Thai protesters practise 'coup prevention'

The country has for months been rocked by youth-led protests demanding a new constitution, reform of the untouchable monarchy, and for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha to resign

BANGKOK: Thousands of democracy activists blocked a major junction in Bangkok Friday to rehearse "coup prevention" strategies in the latest round of Thailand's anti-government protests. The country has for months been rocked by youth-led protests demanding a new constitution, reform of the untouchable monarchy, and for Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha to resign. Prayut, who came to power in a 2014 coup, this week played down the prospects of being overthrown or

introducing martial law. Inflatable Santa Claus figures joined the bright yellow rubber ducks that have become a symbol of the movement as some 5,000 demonstrators massed in the shadow of a motorway flyover in the north of the capital. Natalie, a 32-year-old Bangkok office worker, said the last coup was disastrous for Thailand and warned the country shouldn't go down that path again. "Now is a crisis time in Bangkok and Thailand. I want new elections and to change the prime minister and for a new govern-

ment to actually listen to the people," she told AFP. As part of what they called "coup prevention" drills, protesters passed an armada of the pool toy ducks over their heads, to represent the military passing over the people to take the front row of Thai politics. Another group paraded portraits of generals who had led past coups before ritually burning them. Army Chief Narongphan Jittkaewtae has rejected coup rumours saying the chance of another putsch was "less than zero".

Political scientist Titipol Phakdeewanich from Ubon Ratchathani University believes another coup is unlikely at present. "I don't think he will be ousted because he still has strong support from conservatives... and big businesses," he told AFP. But in a country that has seen a dozen coups since it became a democracy in 1932, the current round of protests, which began in July, has fuelled rumours another could be looming. The movement has broken new ground for Thai political ac-

tivism by demanding changes to the monarchy, a once-revered institution which some in the kingdom are beginning to question. A major rally on Wednesday targeted King Maha Vajiralongkorn's huge wealth, demanding more transparency about his financial arrangements. Next week a constitutional court in Bangkok will rule on whether Prayut has broken rules by living in an army house, despite the fact the former general is no longer in the military's top brass. Losing the case could see Prayut forced out of office. – APP

Indian capital faces shortage of ICU beds

WEB DESK

New Delhi: "I wouldn't have ventured out from home until this pandemic is over," says 50-year-old Ishrat Hussain. "But I've to feed my family." Hussain, a father of four, sells vegetables from a cart in the Indian capital, New Delhi, where daily COVID-19 infections have seen a spike in the recent weeks. "Before leaving home in the morning, I strictly tell my children not to go out unnecessarily," he said, adding that he fears every day while at work. "I don't take off my mask for a minute while I'm at work because I do not want to get this infection and spread it to my family. After months, we thought things will get normal now but they are getting worse." On Thursday, the authorities said New Delhi has recorded 5,475 fresh COVID-19 cases and 91 deaths, pushing the city's death toll to 8,811. The city government led by Arvind Kejriwal of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) told the Delhi High Court on Thursday it was "actively considering" night-time curfew among other steps to tackle the surge in the cases.

Thousands of farmers march to Indian capital

WEB DESK

NEW DELHI: Thousands of farmers have entered the capital New Delhi for a planned protest against new farm laws hours after the police fired several rounds of tear gas and used water cannon to stop the Dilli Chalo (Go to Delhi) march. Protesting Indian farmers scuffled with police earlier on Friday during the march to the capital, against new laws, which will make it easier for farmers to sell their produce directly to private buyers and enter into a contract with private companies. But farmers demand the bills, passed by India's parliament in September, be scrapped fearing the laws will leave them vulnerable to big corporates. A Delhi Police spokesman confirmed to media the farmers have been given permission to enter the national capital and hold a peaceful protest at the Nirankari Samagam Ground in the Burari area. "The farmers have been granted permission to enter Delhi. They can protest peacefully in a ground in Burari area" Anil Mittal, Additional PRO (Delhi Police), told media. However, farmers from several states and trade unions, who wanted to stage protest in the Ramlila ground in the heart of the city, have yet to comment if they would agree to the new venue. Television footage showed plumes of smoke and some people throwing stones at police as thousands pressed against barricades, waving flags and sticks. Some road tractors near the barriers.

UK to impose tougher rules on Google, Facebook

WEB DESK

LONDON: The United Kingdom will impose a new competition regime next year to prevent Google and Facebook using their dominance to push out smaller firms and disadvantage consumers. The code will be enforced by a dedicated unit within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), which this year said it needed new laws to keep the tech giants in check. Small number of companies was curtailing growth, reducing innovation and having negative effects on the people and businesses that rely on them. It's time to address that and unleash a new age of tech growth," Dowden said on Friday. The growing power of big tech is attracting intense antitrust scrutiny across the globe with the United States stepping up enforcement and the European Union planning to give itself new powers to crack down on so-called "gatekeepers" that can control access to online stores or apps. The CMA will emerge from the shadow of the European Commission, the region's main antitrust watchdog, when the UK leaves the EU's internal market at the end of the year.

Briefs

Fascist regime continues arrests

DNA

KARACHI: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Friday said that fascist government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) continues to arrest Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) activists in Multan. In a post on social-networking website Twitter, Bilawal Bhutto said, "These puppets are scared of jiyalas. Try as they might they cannot stop PPP from marking our foundation day along with PDM leaders on 30th November." The reaction came after the local administration sealed Multan's Qilla Kohna Qasim Bagh with containers as PDM started preparations to hold rally on November 30 despite government's ban on public gatherings due to coronavirus outbreak. 30 containers were placed around the venue to bar the opposition parties from conducting the rally. PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto also decided to address the rally via videolink as he was gone into isolation after contracting coronavirus.

Adv Khalid Khursheed to be next GB CM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday finalized Advocate Khalid Khursheed's name for the position of the chief minister for Gilgit Baltistan. On Thursday, PTI candidate Amjad Ali Zaidi had been elected Speaker of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly. Polling was held for the post of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, in which Amjad Ali Zaidi of PTI and Ghulam Muhammad of Opposition contested for Speaker. The PTI candidate won the election with a total of 18 votes. In the polling, 4 votes for PTI candidate Amjad Ali Zaidi were rejected while one vote for opposition candidate Ghulam Muhammad was also rejected. The opposition's candidate managed to get 8 votes against Amjad Ali Zaidi's 18.

SBP approves Rs 238.2 bn under Rozgar scheme

ISLAMABAD: State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) under its Rozgar scheme for protecting businesses and employees, working with them, from the impact of COVID-19 has so far approved Rs 238.2 billion for 2,958 businesses. Similarly, under its refinancing scheme for protecting businesses from the impact of COVID-19, the central bank has so far deferred Rs 659.5 billion principal repayments of loans up to one year. The bank also allowed restructuring or rescheduling of around Rs207.5 billion so far, according to the updated data of the central bank. The number of borrowers that would benefit from this rescheduling relief has risen to 1,572,428, with outstanding amount of Rs 2.514 billion, it said. Meanwhile, the bank under this refinancing scheme for hospitals to combat Covid-19, approved financing of Rs7.77 billion for 39 hospitals so far. As many as 45 hospitals had requested for the financing amounting to Rs13.23 billion. With respect to progress on refinance scheme for setting up new projects or expansion, the central bank approved 243 projects with an amount of Rs 193.25 billion for which it received requests for 425 projects with amount of Rs 437.15 billion. Furthermore, from March 20, 2020 to November 20, the Bank had issued fresh currency notes to the commercial banks worth of Rs 1.136 trillion. Similarly an amount of Rs 32.3 billion was quarantined during the period that was received from hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies, while overall the bank received cash worth of Rs 995 billion which was quarantined for 14 days. - APP

President for Pak, China & ASEAN's 'trade triangle'

The four-day CAEXPO themed 'Building the Belt and Road, Strengthening Digital Economy Cooperation' kicked off in the capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Friday proposed establishing a 'trade triangle' among Pakistan, China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to maximize the quantum of intra-regional business opportunities. In his virtual address to the 17th China-ASEAN Expo (CAEXPO) held in China's Nanning city, the President said Pakistan's stable macro-economic policies and ease of doing business offered an attractive market to both China and the ASEAN countries for trade cooperation in diverse areas. The four-day CAEXPO themed 'Building the Belt and Road, Strengthening Digital Economy Cooperation' kicked off in the capital of South China's Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Friday. The expo hosted 11 high-level

forums, over 160 trade promotion activities and 229 booths for participants from 22 countries including Pakistan. President Alvi said despite the challenge of the coronavirus pandemic, Pakistan's economy strengthened and its online businesses grew due to implementation of far-reaching economic reforms. The President mentioned that Pakistan greatly learned from the experiences of China in establishing Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and invited the investors from ASEAN and China to explore Pakistan's business potential. "We encourage the ASEAN countries and the Chinese businessmen to invest in SEZs as Pakistan's macro-economic policies have changed tremendously with an improved state of ease of

doing business," he said. Dr Alvi said Pakistan was making great progress after moving on from the original course of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, i.e. energy and infrastructure, to other areas of cooperation including agriculture, industries and socio-economic reforms. He mentioned that the second phase of Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and China was in place since January this year, while Pakistan had a sectoral dialogue partnership with ASEAN with increased mutual cooperation. "We want to do a feasibility study where Pakistan, China and ASEAN trade triangle can come up as well as feasibility into a Free Trade Agreement between Pakistan and ASEAN," he said, stressing that such intra-regional arrangement

could lead to prosperity. On exports to ASEAN and China, he said, textiles, food produce including meat and vegetables, surgical goods, minerals and Information Technology could be the prospective areas. Also, Pakistan produced best sports goods with its footballs used in several FIFA world cups, he added. President Alvi recalled that China recently signed the world's largest trade agreement - Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership - with a number of countries and emerged as a reliable trading partner and economic hub. On Pakistan-China relationship, he said the trusted bond was based on a friendship which was "deeper than oceans and higher than skies". He said CPEC had done wonders by turning Pakistan

into an economic and strategic hub that provided an easy and fast route for transportation of goods from China and Central Asia to the sea. President Alvi lauded the 14 enterprises from Pakistan participating in CAEXPO and expressed confidence that the activity would support an increased trade activity among Pakistan, China and the ASEAN countries. "This expo symbolically shows that China, beyond COVID-19, has provided leadership to the world in the area of trade," he said. The CAEXPO being held at Nanning International Convention and Exhibition Centre has been co-sponsored by China's Ministry of Commerce and its counterparts in the 10 ASEAN member states as well as the ASEAN Secretariat. - Agencies

Bakhtawar engaged to Mahmood Chaudhry



DNA

KARACHI: The eldest daughter of former president Asif Ali Zardari, Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari, and her fiancé Mahmood Chaudhry exchanged the rings as the city's bigwigs - including business magnates, politicians, and lawyers - turned up at the engagement ceremony here at the Bilawal House. Bakhtawar Bhutto-Zardari's engagement ceremony was being held in the open area of Bilawal House Karachi but without the presence of PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto, her brother who is quarantined after testing positive for the coronavirus. Play Video At least 100-150 guests were present at Bakhtawar's engagement ceremony, with Zardari, her father, also in attendance. The former president reached the venue from the hospitals after his doctors gave the go-ahead.

Kitchen items' prices ease 0.92 pc

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) based weekly inflation for the week ended on November 26, for the combined consumption group, witnessed decrease of 0.92 percent as compared to the previous week. SPI for the week under review in the above mentioned group was recorded at 141.74 points against 143.05 points registered in the previous week, according to the latest data of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). As compared to the corresponding week of last year, the SPI for the combined consumption group in the week under review witnessed an increase of 7.48 percent. The weekly SPI with base year 2015-16=100 is covering 17 urban centers and 51 essential items for all expenditure groups. Sensitive Price Indicator for the lowest consumption group up to Rs17,732 witnessed 1.01 percent decrease and went down from 150.95 points in last week to 149.42 points during the week under review. Meanwhile, the SPI for the consumption groups from Rs17,732-22,888, Rs22,889-29,517; Rs29,518-44,175; Rs29,518 to Rs44,175 and above Rs 44,175 per month also decreased by 1.05 percent, 0.99 percent, 0.97 percent and 0.83 percent respectively.

Sindh reports 1,423 new cases, 12 deaths

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The novel coronavirus claimed 12 more lives and infected as many as 1,423 people during the past 24 hours in Sindh. In a statement on the daily COVID-19 situation in the province, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said that 12 more people died from the coronavirus during the past 24 hours, taking the death toll from the disease to 2,897 in the province. He maintained that 12,226 samples have been tested in 24 hours that detected 1,423 new COVID-19 cases in the province. The chief minister said that 1,157 new coronavirus cases emerged overnight only in Karachi. Earlier on November 26, Sindh had reported 1402 new cases of coronavirus and 19 deaths by the Covid-19 pandemic in the province in the last 24 hours, according to Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah. "Sindh reported 1402 new cases when 10,585 tests were performed during 24 hours," CM Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah said, in a statement on the situation of the pandemic in the province.



NIAMEY: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi meeting with Foreign Minister of Afghanistan Haneef Atmar on the sidelines of the 47th session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers. - DNA

Pak desires peace in Afghanistan: FM Qureshi

DNA

NIAMEY: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Friday expressed Pakistan's steadfast commitment to the Afghan peace process and assured to continue facilitating the Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process. In a meeting with Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Haneef Atmar on sidelines of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Niger's capital Niamey, Qureshi however warned of spoilers who did not wish to see return of peace in the region. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on Afghan peace process and measures to further strengthen Pakistan-Afghanistan bilateral relations. Foreign Minister Qureshi extended condolences to his Afghan counterpart over recent terrorist attacks in Kabul and Bamiyan and reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of terrorism in all forms and manifestations. He also stressed the importance of reduction in violence leading to ceasefire

to save lives and advance peace efforts. Referring to the recent successful visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan to Kabul, Qureshi said that Pakistan remained committed to deepening bilateral cooperation in diverse fields. He said that the understandings reached during the visit and the 'Shared Vision' issued by the two sides would help take this process forward. Qureshi stressed that peace negotiations represented a historic opportunity, which he said, must be seized by the Afghan leadership to establish enduring peace and stability in Afghanistan and the region. He also underlined the need for utilizing the tremendous potential in the economic and commercial fields, which could be exploited by securing peace in Afghanistan and enhancing regional connectivity. The Foreign Minister further underscored that the Afghan peace process offered the opportunity for return of Afghan refugees to their homeland with dignity and honour.

Pak transshipment policy activates int'l transit at Gwadar

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's improved transshipment policy had resulted in the beginning of international transit activities on Pakistani ports particularly Gwadar Port. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday, the change of policies by the government regarding transshipment helped Gwadar Port become more functional. As a result of new policies, 200 tons of first fish cargo was transshipped to China. Under the special directives of Prime Minister Imran Khan, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) took initiative to kickstart this operation at Gwadar Port. In his recent tweet, Adviser to Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood said, the Ministry of Commerce, Pakistan Customs have successfully handled the first fish cargo to be trans-shipped to China. This was a trial run handling 200 MT of fish catch. The fish has been trans-shipped in 8 reefer containers. This will hopefully be the encouraging beginning of our trans-shipment policy & will increase Gwadar Port operations, he added. A dedicated Directorate of Transit Trade has also been established at Gwadar to work closely with the stakeholders and transform Gwadar into a transit trade hub. To encourage and facilitate this further the rules were amended to facilitate free flows of containers. As a result of this proactive approach and support of all stakeholders, in the coming days, more vessels containing international cargo including LPG, steel pipes and DAP fertilizer for transit to Afghanistan are scheduled to arrive at Gwadar Port. In a statement by FBR, Gwadar is all set to become the hub of International Transshipment and will help the country in earning much needed foreign exchange in the future. - DNA

'Maryam spent jail term with VVIP protocol'

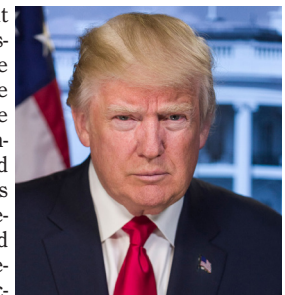
ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Prisons Fayyazul Hassan Chohan on Friday said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz has spent jail term with VVIP protocol. Addressing the press conference in Lahore, the minister said that Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz remained in power for 10 years but they didn't take any step to improve the condition of the jails. Fayyaz Chohan said that Maryam Nawaz used to make tea, coffee and sandwich for herself while she was also allowed to order food from jail cafe. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader was provided with well furnished washroom, he told. The minister further said that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Aleem Khan had spent few weeks in the jail and now, he is assisting the government in ensuring better facilities to the prisoners. We have directed the jail authorities to not have inhumane behavior with Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz president Shehbaz Sharif and his son Hamza Shahbaz, he stated.

Trump signals he is prepared to leave

"Certainly I will. But you know that," Trump said on Thursday when asked whether he would vacate the building, allowing a peaceful transition of power in January

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Thursday that he will leave the White House if the Electoral College formalises President-Elect Joe Biden's victory even as he insisted such a decision would be a mistake as he spent his Thanksgiving renewing baseless claims that massive fraud and crooked officials in battleground states caused his election defeat. "Certainly I will. But you know that," Trump said on Thursday when asked whether he would vacate the building, allowing a peaceful transition of power in January. But Trump - taking questions for the first time since Election Day - insisted that "a lot of things" would happen between now and then that might alter the results. "This has a long way to go," Trump said, even though he lost. The fact that a sitting American president even had to address whether or not he would leave office after losing re-election underscores the extent to which Trump has smashed one convention after another over the last three weeks. While there is no evidence of the kind of widespread fraud Trump has been alleging. - DNA



Number of critical patients surges past 2,000

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Center (NCO) on Friday was apprised that the National Positivity Ratio is 7.2 percent with soaring ratios in the provinces whereas Ulemas were taken on board to ensure compliance of standard operating procedures (SOPs) and encourage the masses to adhere to safety guidelines. The NCO meeting chaired

by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar discussed epidemic curve chart data, SOP's compliance in mosques, shrines and marriage halls and feedback of interaction with Ulemas where the provincial Chief secretaries participated through video link. Speaking on the occasion, Asad Umar said that our main responsibility was public safety and health. He added that all necessary measures as passed through various guidelines and instructions issued time to time by Health Ministry should be ensured. Asad Umar said that continuous monitoring and anticipation of likely pattern or disease prevalence was the most important measure as only this would help us required response for Covid Control efforts. The Forum was apprised about disease prevalence and spread in various parts of the country.

China' goodbye to poverty inspiration for Pak

Home to around 53 million poor people (a quarter of Pakistan's population) who live below the national poverty line, Pakistan has the best model in place in shape of China to get rid of all faces of poverty in phases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China's goodbye to poverty brings new inspiration to Pakistan moving ahead more steadily ensuring well-being of its people, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday. China is coming out with inclusive victory over poverty as its last nine poverty-stricken counties in southwest China's Guizhou Province are officially removed from the poverty list in line with the fulfillment of promise of shaking off poverty by the end of 2020. Home to around 53 million poor

people (a quarter of Pakistan's population) who live below the national poverty line, Pakistan has the best model in place in shape of China to get rid of all faces of poverty in phases. If it followed in true letter and spirit, Pakistan boasts a conspicuous chance to lift up big chunk of its society from severe poverty. Since CPEC came to existence, Pakistan is the recipient of China's friendliness ranging from G2G, B2B and people to people connectivity that have helped Pakistan to tune in its priorities as public-centric improving living standard of poor strata of society. China's feat (to delist all 832

countries including last nine impoverished counties identified as poverty-stricken) has made its immaculate mark at a time when Covid-19 stirred up unprecedented human crisis and jeopardized global economies leaving no option but to miss off their national and international targets. Policies had to be revisited. Balance of payments were rescheduled. Sustainable Development Goals went in a whirlpool of uncertainty. China could have revised its poverty alleviation campaign 2020. But it did not surrender and preferred to stand by its resolve. Eventually it achieved zero poverty

in all nine counties. Recently, Prime Minister Imran Khan in a media interview said "he wants to replicate the Chinese model in Pakistan that lifted 700 million people out of poverty within a short period of 40 years. "Despite not having electoral politics, the Chinese were good at bringing the best people to the top. It's a system based on meritocracy," Imran admired the Chinese model saying, "How the Communist Party sort of sifts through all the talent and brings it to the top." Faraz Danial, an economist said that Chinese influential vibes had already put positive impacts in Pa-

kistan helping Pakistan to realign itself with sustainable prosperity. "Fresh inspiration from China is a bonanza that should never be slipped from our hands," he added. "Pakistan is committed to poverty alleviation in line with the SDGs target Goal-1 "No Poverty" in all its manifestations everywhere by 2030. According to the Planning Commission, the poverty headcount ratio was 24.3 percent by estimating the poverty line for this period as Rs 3,250.28 per adult equivalent per month, which represented around 50 million people living below the national poverty line in 2015-16, the report added.