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Amb. Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul condemns coal miners' killings

Detailed News On Page-01

Israel illegally extending its settlements

Detailed News On Page-08



'Pak-Canada ties and trade links growing

Detailed News On Page-07



Briefs

Shibli condemns Machh incident

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Sunday that heartbreaking Machh incident of killing of miners was highly reprehensible and tragic. Strongly condemning the incident, the minister, in a tweet, said the external enemy in its attempt to destabilize Pakistan was constantly orchestrating such subversive activities on its soil. Unfortunately, the political elements rejected by the people, consciously or unconsciously, were also becoming a tool of external enemies by spreading chaos and anarchy in the country, he added.

Bilawal condemns massacre

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Sunday strongly condemned the massacre of eleven coal-miners in Bolan district of Balochistan, terming the incident the worst form of terrorism. Bilawal, in a statement, said terrorism should be condemned by every Pakistani and urged the government to take action and provide protection to the workers in the coal fields. He also urged the government to provide compensation to the families of victims and ensure that such incidents do not occur again.

Boris warns of tougher restrictions

DNA

LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said tougher lockdown restrictions were probably on the way as COVID-19 cases keep rising in the United Kingdom, but that the roll-out of vaccines was set to accelerate on Monday with the first 530,000 doses of the newly approved Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccines ready to be administered. He added he hoped "tens of millions" would be treated over the next three months.

11 coal miners massacred in Balochistan

Police says that armed men took the coal miners to nearby mountains where they opened fire on them

BUREAU REPORT / DNA

QUETTA: Eleven coal miners were killed and four others were seriously injured after armed men opened fire at them at the Machh coal field. Police said that armed men took the coal miners to nearby mountains where they opened fire on them. Eleven were confirmed dead by police and the others injured were said to be in critical condition. The injured were taken to the Machh hospital for treatment. After news of the incident broke, police and FC personnel have arrived at the coal mine. Balochistan government spokesperson Liaquat Shahwani said that the incident was an act of terrorism. "Investigative institutions are probing the incident from every angle to determine who is responsible for this," he said. Shahwani said that terrorist activities in

Continued on Page 06

PM Imran orders immediate arrest of killers

NAVEED MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan Sunday condemned the killing of 11 coal miners in Mach area of Balochistan, calling it "yet another cowardly inhumane act of terrorism". Eleven mines were killed after armed militants kidnapped them and took them to a nearby area before opening fire at close range, according to police. The prime minister, in a tweet, directed the Frontier Corps to use all resources to apprehend the killers and bring them to justice. "The families of the victims will not be left abandoned by the government," he said.

India sponsoring terrorism in Pak: FM

ABID RAZA

MULTAN: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi has said that India is sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan to destabilize the country. Talking to Media in Multan Sunday, he said Pakistan has exposed the nefarious designs of India by providing irrefutable evidence in the form of dossier to the International Community. The Foreign Minister said India has been defaming Pakistan through running fake NGOs and websites.



Shah Mahmood Qureshi urged the international community to take notice of Indian atrocities and human rights violations in the Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that the incumbent government is making all-out

efforts to ensure early completion of the second phase of China Pakistan Economic Corridor, which will bring a new era of development in the country. Talking to people in Multan, he said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is pursuing modern trends of economic diplomacy and Pakistani diplomats across the globe have been given certain targets to promote the country's economy. Shah Mahmood Qureshi welcomed the Intra-Afghan dialogue process saying that peace in Afghanistan will lead to peace in the entire region.

COVID positivity rate surges at 5.12 percent

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: The National COVID Positivity Ratio on Sunday was recorded 5.12 percent where 2,284 Coronavirus patients were in critical condition across the country with the number of critical patients rising at a fast pace. The positivity ratio was determined on the basis of positive cases appearing in 100 samples of COVID patients. The highest positivity ratio was observed in Mirpur which was 15.69 percent followed by Peshawar 12.13 percent and Karachi 11.27 percent, according to the latest

update issued by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC). The positivity ratio in various federating units was as in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was 6.16 percent, Balochistan 9.02 percent, Gilgit Baltistan (GB) 1.11 percent, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) 3.12 percent, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) 4.65 percent, Punjab 4.16 percent and Sindh had 7.23 percent positivity ratio. It also mentioned the Province wise COVID Positivity Ratio breakdown that indicated in Punjab, Lahore had maximum positivity

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan urges UN role for release of Asiya Andrabi

A.M.BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Sunday approached the United Nations Secretary General in New York and the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in Geneva to seek immediate release of Kashmiri political leader Asiya Andrabi. Asiya Andrabi, also a human rights activist, was incarcerated in infamous Tihar Jail in India whose life was in danger owing to imminent risk of persecutory conviction by a sham court on 18 January 2020, according to a Foreign Office statement. Pakistan told the UN bodies that as a champion of human rights and an ardent advocate of women empowerment, Andrabi had worked tirelessly for social reforms and realization of fundamental freedoms for the people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) for over four

decades. She founded an organisation called Dukhtar-e-Millat (DeM), which was one of the biggest women rights organizations in IIOJK working on women's education, empowerment, well-being and protection - especially against physical violence and abuse at the hands of Indian occupation forces. Asiya Andrabi has been under illegal and inhuman incarceration for more than 15 years on fabricated charges under draconian laws aimed at further perpetuating India's illegal occupation of



BAHAWALPUR: PDM leaders share stage during a public rally, on Sunday. - DNA

Turkish envoy grieved over Machh incident

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Turkish envoy Ihsan Mustafa Yurdakul has strongly condemned coal miners' killings in Balochistan. In a Tweet message on Sunday the Turkish ambassador said We are deeply saddened by the news that at least 11 coalminers lost their lives in a terrorist attack perpetrated in the Mach area of Balochistan. "We strongly condemn this heinous terrorist attack and extend our sincere condolences to the friendly and brotherly people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We wish Allah's mercy upon those who lost their lives", the message further read.

Rasheed seeks Machh incident report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Sunday while strongly condemning the killing of innocent coal miners in Mach (Balochistan), sought report into the tragic incident from Inspector General Balochistan. In a tweet, the Interior Minister said terrorists would not succeed in their nefarious designs and those involved in this heinous act deserved no leniency. - DNA

Govt responsible for disorder; price hike

PDM Bahawalpur rally vows to oust govt; leaders say govt days numbered

DNA

BAHAWALPUR: Maryam Nawaz has said the support by people "shows that the government's days in power are numbered". She was addressing the crowd at Seraiki Chowk. She conveyed the support of PML-N (greetings) of PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif and party president Shahbaz Sharif. PDM chief Moulana Fazl ue Rehman while addressing the rally said that PDM is a national movement and all the parties are united for our cause. He said PDM's unity and unanimous stance has caused sleeplessness among incompetent rulers.

Continued on Page 06

People have rejected politics of PDM: Shibli

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz Sunday said Vice President Pakistan Muslim League- Nawaz (PML-N) Maryam Nawaz during her address in Bahawalpur forgot to mention that her royal family had robbed funds of people of south Punjab in the name of Lahore renovation. People of south Punjab were deprived of education, health facilities and electricity while all their resources were spent on Lahore, he remarked in his reaction to Maryam Nawaz's speech. He said the farmers of south Punjab hate this royal gang as PML-N forced them to starve during its rule. The sugarcane growers used to curse the then government policies after loading their crops on trolleys. Moreover, he said, the PML-N regime ruined lives of cotton growers due to the hatred with south Punjab. "By blocking supply of pesticides and crop seeds, this royal gang forced the farmers to starve", Shibli remarked. He said the Jati Umrah road had been frequently carpeted and the roads of south Punjab presented a picture of Mohenjo-daro ruins. - APP

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Inside...

Govt orders transparent inquiry of student's murder - Page 02

NAB yielding excellent results under Justice (R) Javed Iqbal - Page 03

ICCI calls for gearing up economic reforms process - Page 04

Perils of social media and EU report - Page 05

Azhar, Rizwan propel Pakistan to 297-run first innings total - Page 06

'Pak-Canada ties growing, trade links strengthening' - Page 07

Israel illegally extending settlements on Palestine land - Page 08

Briefs

'Govt provides relief to masses'

DNA

ABBOTTABAD: Speaker KP Assembly Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani Sunday said that the government is providing huge relief to the masses through its revolutionary Ehsaas program, Shelter homes, Sehat Insaf Card, Langar Khana and other projects. He said this while addressing a public gathering after the inauguration of the Mian Di Sairi tube well along with PTI MNA Ali Khan and CEO Water and Sanitation Company Abbottabad (WSCA). Mushtaq Ghani further said that during the Coronavirus pandemic government has chalked out a comprehensive strategy to tackle the threat and successfully handled the disease and reduced the life losses as compare to the rest of the world. He stated that under the leadership of Imran Khan we are working for the prosperity of the country, many new developmental projects worth millions of rupees including roads, playing grounds, graveyard, water supply and others are in pipeline. The speaker said that we would resolve all issues of the constituency particularly clean drinking water that would be available to every citizen of Abbottabad. We have fulfilled all of our election promises with the people of Mian Di Sairi during our previous term and during this year we would continue serving the masses, adding Mushtaq Ahmed Ghani said.

'MoIT made efforts for better broadband connectivity'

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Information Technology (IT) and Telecommunication Syed Amin Ul Haque Sunday said that the Ministry of Information Technology (MoIT) made all out efforts to ensure better broadband connectivity across the country particularly rural areas under the vision of Digital Pakistan. The ministry was also working to resolve the issues related to taxation of IT industry, he said while speaking as a Chief Guest at a celebratory ceremony for Systems Limited which won the Forbes Asia's Best Under a Billion 2020 award. The minister said that IT exports of the country were raised by 44%, besides the Ministry of IT was making efforts for further increase of the IT related exports. Syed Amin Ul Haque said that the 5G would be introduced in the country by the end of 2022. He said the MoIT took the pandemic as an opportunity rather crisis. During pandemic crisis when all the sectors in the country were facing downfalls, the IT industry of the country was on path of progress. — APP

'Govt for speedy, uplift of NMDs'

DNA

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mahmood Khan has termed the accelerated and sustainable development of the newly merged districts as one of the key focus area of his government. He expressed these views while chairing a meeting to review progress on the ongoing developmental schemes in merged districts held here at the Chief Minister's Secretariat the other day, said an official handout issued here Sunday. Beside, administrative secretaries of Irrigation, Communications and Works, Local Government and Public Health Engineering, the meeting was also attended by other relevant high ups. The meeting was given a detailed briefing regarding the ongoing and new development projects in various sectors in the merged districts. Addressing participants of the meeting, the Chief Minister said that the provincial government was spending huge resources on developmental projects in newly merged districts with the aim to bring these backward areas at par with other developed areas of the province.



ISLAMABAD: Shehryar Khan Afridi, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Special Committee on Kashmir and Syed Z Bukhari, Special Assistant to the PM for overseas Pakistanis offering prayers with the father of Osama Satti. — DNA

Govt orders transparent inquiry of student's murder

Govt forms JIT; assures transparent probe; accused policemen produced before court; Zulfi Bukharai visits residence of Osama on PM instructions

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has formed a JIT to investigate the harrowing murder of a student in Islamabad by anti terrorism operatives. A notification has been issued in this regard, ordering a judicial inquiry into Saturday's killing. First Rana Waqas Anwar was appointed as Additional District Magistrate Inquiry Officer but now a JIT has been formed headed by SP. Representatives of IB and ISI have also been made part of the JIT. The Commission has been directed to submit a comprehensive report within five days after recording

statements of all witnesses, relatives and police officers.

On Sunday, Zulfi Bukhari and Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Afridi visited the residence of the deceased and expressed condolences. They both visited the residence on the instruction of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Special Assistant to Prime Minister Imran Khan for Political Communication Shahbaz Gill has said that there will be a transparent inquiry into the incident. In a tweet on Saturday, he said that a transparent inquiry would be conducted and the facts will be put before the public, adding that action would be taken against whoever is found re-

sponsible. As per de- Islamabad opened a fire and killed a man for not stopping his car near Friday



According to his family, the 21-year-old was coming back after dropping

a friend to university when the incident took place. "He was shot just for not stopping his car," the victim's father said in a video statement. His parents have filed a complaint against the police officers demanding action be taken against them immediately. Following this, five officers of the Anti-Terrorism Squad were arrested. The capital's inspector-general has promised a clear investigation into the case. Earlier, the police claimed they received news of a dacoit in a white car escaping. "The policemen asked the man to stop the car but when he didn't, they opened fire at him," an officer said, claiming that two bullets hit him. A

medical report by PIMS Hospital, however, revealed that six bullets hit the victim, while 17 were fired. The bullets hit him on his face, chest, neck and head. The Islamabad operations DIG has formed teams to investigate the matter. CCTV footage from the nearby cameras is being obtained and evidence from the crime scene is being collected. Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid said the perpetrators will be punished and action against them will be taken under the Anti-Terrorism Act and Section 302 (punishment for murder) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

JI to continue struggle against status quo: Siraj



ABID RAZA

LAHORE: The three-day session of the Jamaat-e-Islami Central Shoorah started at Mansoorah on Saturday under the chair of JI Emir Senator Sirajul Haq. Current political situation, JI annual performance and the future strategy are at the agenda items.

Addressing the inauguration session, Sirajul Haq made it clear that the JI would continue its struggle against the prevailing system of status quo by staying away from the politics of self-serving interests of the ruling and opposition alliances. He said the feudal lords, agents of the imperialistic forces were in-charge of the affairs of the country for decades and they did nothing for the masses. He said the country could default if the policies continued in economy, health, education and other sectors. He said the true democratic system based on the principles of Islam was the only way forward to put the country on track.

UoS provided free admissions in 4,000 courses: VC



SARGODHA: The University of Sargodha (UoS) provided free admission opportunities to students in more than 4,000 courses introduced by international universities. Talking to APP here on Sunday, UoS Vice Chancellor Dr. Ishtiaq Ahmed

said that after the closure of educational institutions across the country due to coronavirus pandemic, the Sargodha University immediately started online teaching process. A task force was also formed to ensure the provision of quality education during online classes during which more than 100 faculty members were trained, he added. Dr Ishtiaq Ahmed said the Sargodha University had introduced its learning management system through which students had been provided easy access to teaching materials of all courses taught during the semester.



HYDERABAD: A man is busy in his daily work during the cold days at road side. — DNA/ Photo by Jan Ali Laghari

DC ICT chairs meeting of commission on bonded labor

Participants of the meeting were DC Hamza Shafqaat, ADC Rana Waqar, AC Saniya Pasha, State Counsel Daniyal Hasnain, Adnan Haider Randhawa, Advocate High Courts and Umer Ijaz Gilani, Advocate High Courts

ABRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafqaat chaired the first meeting of the Commission on Bonded Labor appointed by the Islamabad High Court today the TOR's are as follows: a) Conduct a survey & inspection of all the brick kilns established in the Islamabad Capital Territory, (b) Collect the record and data of the labourers employed in the brick kilns. (c) Examine the laws enforced in the Islamabad Cap-

ital Territory relating to protecting the rights of the labour.

d) Examine the mechanism relating to registration of the labour employed within the Islamabad Capital Territory, whether in the industry or as domestic help. Assess the enforcement of the enforced laws. (e) Ensure that the public functionaries take appropriate action to free those labourers who are found to be victims of bonded labour in any forum or manifestation. (f) Any other matter which in the opinion of the Commission needs to be considered for elimination of the menace of forced

and bonded employment.

Participants of the meeting were DC Hamza Shafqaat, ADC Rana Waqar, AC Saniya Pasha, State Counsel Daniyal Hasnain, Adnan Haider Randhawa, Advocate High Courts and Umer Ijaz Gilani, Advocate High Courts. After deliberating the TOR's, the Commission agreed upon a data gathering strategy and also devised stage-wise plan for proceeding further and decided that it would be examining expert witnesses as well as brick kiln workers, owners and other relevant stakeholders.

Peshawar High Courts to reopen on Jan 6

PESHAWAR: The holidays of the Peshawar High Court would start functioning from January 6 after ending of holidays on January 5, 2021 however, the holidays of the lower courts announced from December 24, last year across the province have come to an end. The holidays of the Peshawar High Court would end on January 5. The lower courts have been reopened since January 2 but the attendance of lawyers and clients remained low and court proceedings remained stalled. The apex court would also start functioning from January 6 after the Peshawar High Court holidays ended on January 5. — APP

Brick Kilns converted on Zig-zag tech

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has been repeatedly under the adverse impact of Smog, a lethal complex kind of air pollution, since 2014 with record ratios of air pollution in all of its major cities particularly in Punjab province's capital city of Lahore. The province, realising its vulnerability to the deterioration of air quality and identifying brick kilns as major contributors tainting the ambience with highly injurious air pollutants resorted to adopt advance and eco-friendly Zig-Zag technology. The Punjab province was the largest federating unit owing to its bulging size of population and second biggest with respect to its vast and diverse area, hence facing a health emergency due to Smog at the onset of every winter season. — APP

Funeral prayer of martyred cop offered

ISLAMABAD: The funeral prayer of martyred head constable of Islamabad police was offered at his native city Karak in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Head Constable of Islamabad Police, Afzal Janan, received bullet injury in his forehead last week during an encounter with notorious drug pusher Safarish alias Kodu near 'Char Bridge' in Nilore police area. He struggled for life in hospital for one week and breathed his last there. He was laid to rest at Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with official honour and a contingent of Islamabad police presented guard of honour. I

Awareness workshops held at 'Panahgahs'

ISLAMABAD: With a steep increase in the coronavirus cases, the smooth functioning of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad's 'Panahgahs' becomes crucial as it provide shelter, food and healthy lifestyle to the daily wage migrant workers on daily basis. The situation also prompts the shelter homes' management to take effective steps for reinforcing the standard operating procedures (SOPs) that play important role to avert the chances of virus outbreak at crowded places like 'Panahgahs'. Prime Minister's Focal Person on Shelter Homes Naseem ur Rehman, who is playing a lead role in ensuring full implementation at all the facilities, told APP that at least 12 workshops had been conducted recently to effectively communicate health messages to the service providers of both the cities 'Panahgahs'. He added that every service provider had been assigned to sensitize at least 10 dwellers each day about the anti-COVID SOPs in a face-to-face interaction. As of now, over six shelter homes are operational in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, located at various places including Peshawar Mor, Tarai, Bara Kahu and Fawara Chowk. Each of them has staff strength of over six. Naseem said the management had started screening for the coronavirus at all the 'Panahgahs' of twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad to ascertain the prevalence of infection in dwellers and service providers. To a query, he said the results of all the service providers' COVID test came negative. "All the SOPs including mask-wearing, sanitization, hand washing and physical distancing are being reinforced at the twin cities shelter homes to ensure that the dwellers stay safe during the second wave of coronavirus," he remarked. — APP

Year 2020: CDA generates record revenue

According to detail, the year 2020 proved to be a successful financial year for CDA. Due to its economic policies and good strategies CDA got control on its economic issues and also received the historical taxes during the past year. The income of CDA include different taxes, dues, revenue collected from auction of new plots, different NOCs, and different fee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) generated more than targeted revenue during the year 2020. At the end of 2020 CDA's account has taxes of more than Rs 30 billion. The authority initiated various new projects side by side working on the neglected projects during the last year. CDA also met the expenses of Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI). According to detail, the year

CDA collected Rs 1.92 billion

ISLAMABAD: The management of the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has collected revenue of Rs 1.92 billion for the approval of building plans in 2020. While maps of 2315 buildings were approved in 2020. According to details, Capital Development Authority (CDA) management has collected record revenue in the year 2020 for the approval of maps of commercial and residential buildings despite the worst outbreak and lockdown of COVID-19. From 1.1.2020 to 31.12.2020, the authority has approved maps of a total of 2315 buildings. In these maps, 2075 residential and 138 commercial buildings have been approved. Last year, completion certificates of 359 buildings have been issued by this authority. However, revenue of Rs. 1.92 billion has been collected in respect of building approval fees. — DNA

2020 proved to be a successful financial year for CDA. Due to its economic policies and good strategies CDA got control on its economic issues and also

received the historical taxes during the past year. The income of CDA include different taxes, dues, revenue collected from auction of new plots, dif-

ferent NOCs, and different fee. Due to historical collection of tax the authority has initiated various new projects side by side starting work on neglect-

ed projects. Besides this, the work on sector development, beautification, infrastructure, and upgradation is also underway. New projects include under passes, upgradation of IJP road, Express Way, interchanges, and parks. Tax target of CDA was Rs 24 billion during 2020 whereas the authority has Rs 30 billion in its account. CDA has set target of Rs 50 billion for next year. CDA is continuously working to initiate such projects which would help in increasing the revenue of the authority.

Briefs

AL to hold seminar on Sheikh Ayaz

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) will hold a national literary seminar on Monday to pay tribute to renowned Urdu and Sindhi poet Sheikh Ayaz on his 23 death anniversary. Well known scholars Fatima Hassan, Adal Somro and Ayaz Gul will be the chief guest on the occasion, an official said on Sunday. Eminent scholars would shed light on poetic vision and contribution of Sheikh Ayaz in Urdu and Sindhi poetry, he said. Renowned literary figures Iftikhar Arif and Taj Jeyo would preside over the first and second session, he informed. While well known poets including Ahmed Saleem, Gafour Memon, Ishaq Smejo, Dr Abdhllah Khan, Dr Fayaz Lateef, Dr Muhammad Bukhari, Mehboob Zafar and Dr Zia Ur Rehman Baloch would participate in the seminar, he said.

Pakistan Post launches whatsapp complaints

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post has launched special whatsapp numbers for complaints registration aiming to ensure direct complaint redressal. According to a notification, on the special directives of Federal Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saeed and Director General Pakistan Post Office Department (PPOD), whatsapp numbers were displayed of all Postmaster Generals on the website and Pakistan Post App for direct complaint redressal. According to details, the PMGs have displayed whatsapp numbers of Postmaster General FC, AJK and GB Circle, Islamabad 0302-5328938 and Postmaster General Northern Punjab Circle, Rawalpindi whatsapp number 0314-5688322. Similarly, Postmaster General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Circle Peshawar whatsapp number were 0333-9105909 and Postmaster General Central Punjab Circle, Lahore whatsapp number 0348-1692490 for direct complaint. Postmaster General, Southern Punjab Circle, Multan whatsapp number 0311-5602300, Postmaster General northern Sindh Circle Hyderabad whatsapp number 0321-3522136, Postmaster General, Metropolitan Circle Karachi whatsapp number 0318-8801662, Postmaster General, Balochistan Circle Quetta whatsapp number 0333-7940774 and Dte-General, Pak Post (Headquarters) Islamabad whatsapp number 03334850762 for direct complaint.

BOP inks MoU to uplift youth of country

RAWALPINDI: A memorandum of understanding (MOU) has signed between the Bank of Punjab (BOP) and MIA Group of Companies under Prime Minister Kamyab Jawan Programme to uplift the youth of the country by offering opportunities to utilize their entrepreneurial potential. Group Head Bank of Punjab Asif Riaz and Chairman MIA Group of Companies Muhammad Ashraf signed and exchanged the documents here at a ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Asif Riaz said that BOP was actively working with corporate and private sector to promote entrepreneurship and was receiving applications under Kamyab Jawan - Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme for provision of subsidized business loans. Chairman MIA Group of Companies Muhammad Ashraf on the occasion termed the MoU a great success and added that under the agreement, the Company will work closely with Bank of Punjab to use financial assistance to empower youth and business community of Pakistan and promote business activities in the region. - APP

NAB yielding excellent results under Justice (R) Javed Iqbal

The Honorable Chairman NAB said that NAB's faith is Corruption free Pakistan; NAB has chalked out a national anti corruption strategy comprising Awareness, Prevention and Enforcement which has started yielding excellent results

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has said that corruption is the root cause of all evils. NAB is committed to make Pakistan corruption free as the fight against corruption is being taken as a national duty. He said that NAB was established to eradicate corruption and to recover looted money from corrupt elements. He said that NAB is the focal organization of Pakistan under United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as Pakistan has ratified and is signatory of UNCAC. Pakistan is the only country in the world to which China has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for eradication of corruption. He said that NAB is the chairman of SAARC Anti Corruption Forum. This was

a reorganization of NAB's excellent work as NAB is considered as a role model among SAARC countries. NAB's efforts have been appreciated by national and international reputed organizations like Transparency International Pakistan, World Economic Forum, Mishal Pakistan and PILDAT. The Honorable Chairman NAB said that NAB's faith is Corruption free Pakistan; NAB has chalked out a national anti corruption strategy comprising Awareness, Prevention and Enforcement which has started yielding excellent results. He said that one of NAB's major achievements since its inception has been the recovery of around Rs. 714 billion directly and indirectly which is a remarkable achievement as compared to other anti corruption organizations with an overall conviction ratio of 68.8 percent. The performance of



7 Regional Bureaus of NAB under the dynamic leadership of Honorable Mr. Justice Javed Iqbal, Chairman NAB has started yielding excellent results. NAB releases a three years performance report of its seven Regional Bureaus which is given below. NAB Rawalpindi has received 8057 complaints in 2018, 8727 in 2019 and 4287 in 2020 and all complaints were disposed of af-

ter due scrutiny and presently no complaint is under process. NAB Rawalpindi authorized 215 complaint verifications in 2018, 237 in 2019 and 255 in 2020. NAB Rawalpindi authorized 162 inquiries in 2018, 172 in 2019 and 179 in 2020. NAB Rawalpindi authorized 71 investigations in 2018, 83 in 2019 and 64 in 2020. NAB Rawalpindi has filed 213 in 2018, 233 in 2019 and 246 in 2020 in respected Accountability Courts as per law. NAB Rawalpindi has recovered Rs. 287.293983 million in 2018, Rs. 93473.16148 million in 2019 and Rs. 196222.736054 million in 2020 from the year 2018 to Dec 31, 2020 directly and indirectly. NAB Lahore has received 10211 complaints in 2018, 14008 in 2019 and 5023 in 2020 which were disposed of after due scrutiny and presently 757 complaints are under process as per

law. NAB Lahore authorized 326 complaint verifications in 2018, 243 in 2019 and 148 in 2020. NAB Lahore authorized 213 inquiries in 2018, 103 in 2019 and 56 in 2020. NAB Lahore authorized 37 investigations in 2018, 36 in 2019 and 26 in 2020. NAB Lahore has filed 74 references in 2018, 55 in 2019 and 38 in 2020 in respected Accountability Courts as per law. NAB Lahore recovered Rs. 9631 million in 2018, Rs. 33554 million in 2019 and Rs. 29025 million in 2020 from the year 2018 to Dec 31, 2020 directly and indirectly. NAB Karachi has received 10561 complaints in 2018, 11381 in 2019 and 6483 in 2020 and all were disposed of after due scrutiny and presently no complaint is under process. NAB Karachi authorized 590 complaint verifications in 2018, 561 in 2019 and 382 in 2020.

Shehryar condemns Mach massacre

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Khan Afridi on Sunday condemned the massacre of eleven coal-miners in Mach Balochistan. "I am deeply saddened over the illegal killing of innocent workers," Afridi said in a statement issued here. He expressed his sympathies with the family members of the victims and prayed for the departed souls. This country (Pakistan) has made immense sacrifices in the war on terror that would not go in vain, he said. Such coward acts of terrorism could not dampen our spirits, but embellished our sentiments with more patriotism, Afridi observed.

Official vehicles used for patrolling

ISLAMABAD: The official vehicles, not being used by the officers of National Highways and Motorway Police (NHMP) due to weekend including Inspector General Motorway Police Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, were utilized for public service. The spokesman NHMP on Sunday said the vehicles used by other senior officers of motorway police were used for patrolling on Highways and motorways during the weekend. He said over all 47 additional vehicles on national highways and motorways continued during the holidays. The presence of extra vehicles during the holidays was proving to be helpful for the passengers, the spokesman quoted Dr Kaleem Imam as saying. - APP

Over-speeding to be checked through cameras

The SSP also appealed the citizens to immediately inform police case of observing any such practice around them

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) will check over-speeding practices through cameras and to further ensure road discipline on roads by constant monitoring. Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Farrukh Rashid has directed all Zonal In-Charges to check over-speeding practices in the city which not only put the lives of those involved in such activities at risk but also of others. He has appealed parents and citizens to play their role in curbing such practices. It has been also decided to take strict action against those involved in racing at commercial and residential areas. The SSP also appealed the citizens to immediately inform police case of observing any such practice around them. Moreover, the SSP (Traffic) also directed to control lane violation on various roads and ensure smooth flow of traffic in the city. The SSP (Traffic) constituted special squads himself to check lane violation and ensure traffic discipline in the city. He also urged the citizens to avoid from lane violation and maintain traffic discipline to reduce the road accidents. He directed the ITP education teams and volunteers to educate the road users about the disadvantages of lane violation and over-speeding which cause accidents. "The purpose of taking such steps, is to provide safety to the citizens", he said and directed the squad members to take strict action against the violators. SSP (Traffic) said that utmost efforts should be made by all ITP's personnel to ensure safe road environment in the city and no laxity would be tolerated in this regard. - DNA

2 bookmobiles for reviving reading culture

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration is planning to set up two remote libraries in the federal capital in the first month of new year to inculcate reading habit especially among youngsters through offering literary, historical and other types of content to residents at their doorstep. Director General, ICT administration Syeda Shafaq Hashmi told APP while sharing an insight in "ISLAMABAD READS" campaign, launched by the Chief Commissioner Office recently to revive the book-reading culture, which was vanished due to availability of content electronically. Hashmi said the ICT administration's department of libraries was in process of rehabilitating all public libraries, located in various sectors including G-7, G-8, G-11, F-11, I-8 and I-10. Data of libraries had been digitally cataloged to help public check availability of books at various libraries on subjects of their interest, she added.

Entire industry needs more tax liberalization: FEBR

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With a view to keep the economy running and generate employment opportunities the Friends of Economic and Business Reforms (FEBR) President Kashif Anwar on Sunday urged the government to announce the construction sectors' relief package for the entire industry across the country. "The FEBR welcomes the one

year's extension in the period for construction projects by allowing them to be completed by 2023 which would facilitate initiation and execution of more projects in this important sector," he added. He termed it a very commendable decision as it would prove highly beneficial for the country and steer the economy out of current difficulties towards better recovery and growth. It is good news for the business community that the PM has ex-

tended the fixed tax regime for the construction sector for one and the facility of non-disclosure of source of income for six months. He said that this was takeoff time for construction industry, hence needed a comprehensive strategy to get more benefits from this government tax relief package. He also lauded the current tax relaxation to the construction industry and said this would promote market liberalization in this sector.



ISLAMABAD: A large number of women and youngsters participating in an awareness hike for Thalassaemia organised by Sultana Foundation at Trail -5 in the federal capital. - APP

CTP issues traffic advisory for Murree visitors

RAWALPINDI: City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi has issued an advisory for the visitors heading towards the hill station of Murree to facilitate influx of tourists. A spokesperson of CTP said on the directives of City Traffic Officer (CTO) Rawalpindi, they had also devised a comprehensive plan to facilitate the tourists heading towards the place for spending recreational time with the families and friends in the chilly weather. They have deployed senior traffic officers of the CTP to monitor traffic arrangements in the hill station to ensure smooth and safe traffic flow during the snowfall, he told APP.

A dedicated, emergency helpline 1915, had also been introduced for tourists where citizens could call around the clock for any kind of help, he said. He further said the helpline would also serve as a control room from where all possible facilities would be organised for tourists and to do arrangement for handling any emergency. The spokesman said they have increased number of traffic wardens, junior traffic wardens - under the supervision of inspectors - who were deployed at all key points of the hill station. Moreover, they have designated several points for car parking. A number of main roads including Kashmir

Point, Mall Road, Guldana Road and other roads had been closed for two-way traffic to ease traffic flow. He urged the tourists to cooperate with traffic police so that the traffic mess, particularly during snowfall, could be avoided. He said though the snow blanket made the "Queen of Mountains" even more beautiful, which attracted a large number of tourists, but the motorists could face severe traffic congestion due to slippery roads and traffic congestion. In this regard, he advised the visitors to ensure that there was no low air pressure in tyres of their vehicles besides keeping their fuel tank full. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiq took part in a cleanliness drive in Bari Imam area on Sunday. - DNA

GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

PAKISTAN PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No. EE.CCD.V/AB/01

Dated Islamabad the 01/01/2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Sealed Tenders, as per "single stage, single envelope", PPR procedure for the following works are invited on percentage rate basis at the Pak.PWD Schedule of rate 2012 from Pakistan Engineering Council approved contractors /firms having proper renewal in relevant category for the current financial year. The contractors /firms should be registered with income tax Department and available on Active Taxpayers list of Federal Board of Revenue. The tender applications with documents as per terms & conditions below will be received in the office of the undersigned during office hours on any working day upto 18.01.2021 and tender documents will be issued till 20.01.2021 after verification of documents. The applications for tender documents should be submitted on written request at company's letter pad accompanied with attested copies of CNIC, PEC, Firm Documents, NTN & Bid Security.

The tenders should reach in the office of undersigned on 21.01.2021 upto 2:00 PM and will be opened on same day at 02:30 PM in the presence of participants or their authorized representatives.

S #	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs)	Bid Security	Tender Cost	Completion Time
1	Development Schemes Under Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme (SAP) FY 2020-21 Chakwal				
i)	(SH)-Construction of PCC Road at U.C Monara Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	2,680,263	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
ii)	(SH)- Construction of PCC Road at U.C Noorpur Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal	5,003,397	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
iii)	(SH)-Construction of PCC Road at U.C Miani Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	5,619,439	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
iv)	(SH)-Construction of PCC Road at U.C Buchal Khurd Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	5,401,685	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
v)	(SH)- Construction of PCC Road at U.C Buchal Kalan Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	2,946,355	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
vi)	(SH)-Construction of PCC Road at U.C Bharpur Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	3,882,790	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months
vii)	(SH)-Construction of PCC Road at Tehsil Kalar Kahar District Chakwal.	6,474,205	2% of bid price	Rs.2000/-	03-months

Other Terms and conditions:-

- Bid security in the shape of Deposit at call in favour of the Executive Engineer, Central Civil Division No.V Pak.P.W.D. Islamabad issued by any scheduled bank functioning at Islamabad/Rawalpindi must be submitted as follows.
 - (Two percent only) of the estimated cost given above is to be deposited at the time of submission of the application for issuance of the tenders.
 - The remaining 2% (two percent only) of the difference amount if any between the estimated cost and quoted bid cost is to be submitted along with the sealed bid.
- An affidavit on judicial paper worth Rs.100/- to the effect that the contractor /firm is not in any dispute /litigation with any Government Department is a prerequisite for issuance of tenders.
- The tenders shall be issued only to the owner of the firm or his authorized representative having legal Authority Letter/Power of Attorney. In case of joint venture the applicant shall have to produce partnership deed duly registered with the court of law whereas in the case of a sole proprietor, the tenders shall be issued only to the sole proprietor of the firm.
- No applications for issuance of tenders through e-mail, fax, Telex would be entertained.
- No tenders would be sold on the specified opening date.
- Any information/clarification regarding the details of work, specifications and conditions etc, can be seen in the office of the undersigned on any working day during office hours.
- The submission of bids implies that the bidder is fully conversant with the nature of work, scope, site conditions, applicable rules and codes etc.
- Under Rule 33(1) of PPR Rule 2004, the undersigned reserve the right to accept or reject all bids /tenders at any time prior to of bid / tender.

(Muhammad Latif Awan)
Executive Engineer,
Central Civil Division No.V
Pak.P.W.D. Islamabad.
Ph # 051-9261227

PID (I) 3490/20

Briefs

Quaid's vintage car becomes tourist attraction

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah had one of the most grandiose and sober life styles among the elites of the British Indian subcontinent where his luxury cars were one of the sources of temptation and pleasure for its observers. One of Quaid's Vintage car Hudson Minousine Model 1920 was showcased at the Pakistan Monument Museum as it had a huge cultural and historical significance with its old-age grandeur and memories of our great leader. The Hudson Minousine Model 1920 was gifted to National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (NIFTH) by Seth Musajji Essaji's family on the occasion of Quaid's 145th birthday December 25. The vintage car was attracting many local and foreign visitors which offers glimpses of national history and heritage. The showcasing of car was helping people to learn about Pakistan's history and tradition of hospitality for foreign guests. According to an official of The National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) Ali Khan the 7-seater car was a right hand drive formal saloon with a horizontally split windscreen and large full-length running boards. It was powered by a straight six cylinder petrol engine which was built in-house; this was unusual at the time as many smaller firms used engines made by independent manufacturers. He said that Hudson was a highly successful automaker between 1909 and 1954; their cars were manufactured in Detroit, Michigan. — APP

RTA challans 4130 PSVs

RAWALPINDI: Regional Transport Authority (RTA) Rawalpindi have challaned 4130 Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) and impounded 3283 for overcharging, overloading and on other violations during 2020. According to a spokesman of RTA, the teams of the authority have conducted raids and those found indulged in overcharging and overloading were fined and the vehicles were also impounded. He said, several vehicles for having substandard CNG cylinders and a large number of vehicles which were without fitness certificates were also penalized. He informed APP that fines amounting to over Rs 4.3 million were imposed on the rules violators. RTA squads constituted to check and prevent overcharging by the transporters, checked thousands of PSVs during 2020 and penalized the violators, he added. Mobile squads were also performing duties at different public transport terminals to facilitate the people, he said. In a reply to a question he said, the authority was also conducting raids to ensure implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the Punjab government for public transport to prevent the spread of Covid-19. — APP

PDM struggling to get NRO: Faisal Javed

DNA



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Senate Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting Faisal Javed Khan Sunday said the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders were struggling to get the national reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) but it was impossible. The honest and righteous Prime Minister Imran Khan would not give NRO to any corrupt and plunderer or relaxation in their corruption cases, he said talking to a private news channel. He claimed that PDM Members National Assembly would not render their resignation merely to save the corruption and looted national wealth of their bigwigs. He said the PTI government would complete its constitutional tenure and PDM's long march would be futile exercise and a flop show.



ISLAMABAD: Mian Akram Farid Chairman founder group of Islamabad chamber of commerce and industry is presenting flowers bouquet to Fatima Azim, acting president, Islamabad chamber of commerce and industry during his visit to ICCI. — DNA

ICCI calls for gearing up economic reforms process

Fatma Azim said that one of the better options for the government to accelerate the pace of business and industrial activities is to bring down the policy interest rate to at least 3 percent level, which would make significant reduction in credit cost for the private sector

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Fatma Azim, Acting President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that the economic reforms process of the government was quite slow due to which recovery of business and economic activities was not picking up momentum up to desired level and stressed that the government should put the reforms process in fast gear to create a conducive environment for better growth of business activities. She said the Prime Minister has already announced that the new year will be the year of economic growth for Pakistan and added that this goal could only be achieved by putting the re-

forms process in top gear. She said this while talking to a delegation of local industrialists that called on her led by Mian Akram Farid, Chairman Founder Group, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry and discussed with her the key issues of the economy. Tariq Sadiq, Mian-Shaukat Masud, Ch. Waheeduddin, Nasir Qureshi and Aslam Khokhar were in the delegation. Abdul Rehman Khan, Vice President ICCI was also present at the occasion.

Fatma Azim said that one of the better options for the government to accelerate the pace of business and industrial activities is to bring down the policy interest rate to at least 3 percent level, which would make significant reduction in credit cost for the private sector and give

a boost to business and investment activities in the country. She said that the businesses were still struggling to combat the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and in these tough times, reducing policy interest rate to 3 percent would provide them great relief. Speaking at the occasion, Mian Akram Farid Chairman Founder Group Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that industrialization should be the priority focus of the government to put the economy on the path of sustainable growth and create employment opportunities. She said that PM had announced an attractive package for the construction industry due to which the construction activities were now flourishing in the country as many big construction projects

have been launched recently. She demanded that the similar kind of relief package should be announced for other major industries that would accelerate the pace of industrialization in the country. She further emphasized that the government should reduce import duties and taxes on industrial machinery, equipment and plants so that the local industry could upgrade its manufacturing set up and produce value added products that would increase our exports significantly. Mian Akram Farid said that women were over 50 percent of the country's total population and the government should form conducive policies for economic empowerment of women so that they could play a more effective role in the national development

of the country. She said that the government should make new policies for promoting women entrepreneurs that would bring progress and prosperity to the country. Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI said that FBR remained short of Rs.16 billion in collecting the projected tax target of Rs.2.21 trillion during the first half (July-Dec) of the current fiscal year, which necessitated the speedy reforms in the tax authority to improve its performance. He said that high tax rates in Pakistan were a major cause of tax evasion in the country and stressed that government's reforms efforts in FBR should focus on reducing tax rates and broadening the tax base that would help in fostering tax culture and improving tax revenue of the country.

'Desi cuisine' trend gaining momentum

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As every season has its own specialties, a number of people rushed to local food stalls to enjoy some mouth-watering special desi cuisine desserts which was gaining popularity in twin cities. According to private news channel, every season has its own specialties. In Pakistan traditional winter foods has its own set of perks which were the best way to enjoy these foggy cold season and kept the brisk air at bay. To overcome the freezing cold in the air, a number of people were visiting various food stalls to enjoy some traditional winter delicacies and some remained indoors to enjoy home-made food which were also known for their health benefits.

According to citizens, the desi ghee dipped sarsu ka saag, makhana wala parathay, Kashmiri tea, Pinjiri, soup and halwas were like the essentials which made their spot in our routine menu during winters and they were so delicious that nobody could be able to resist them. The cool mornings and foggy nights were not less than any enjoy-

ment in the running season for every food lovers in the country, said Asma Zubair. "Mustard Leaf Curry or Sarson ka Saag is one of the most popular dish in Punjab that's served using Makki ki Roti' (corn bread) in winters may be incomplete," said Amir Usman. The tea parties in the winters are never complete without the hot and delicious halwas with full of nuts," said a shopkeeper. "Both pinni and panjiri are a powerhouse of energy and have always been a part of the Punjabi household, said a mother, adding, ingredients used in making panjiri are whole wheat flour, jaggery, and ghee, mixed with dry fruits. Apart from feeding babies, it's also a nutritional supplement for pregnant women and new mothers," she mentioned. Winters were the perfect time to dig into a variety of warm halwas, said a customer at shop, adding, large platters of halwas adorned with silver vark and crushed nuts could be seen in eateries to attract all aged customers. A shopkeeper said "Most demanding items throughout winter are gajar ka halwa, Kashmiri tea and variety of chicken soups."

Digitization transforms landscape of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: The increasing digitization of life has brought about drastic transformation in socio-cultural and economic landscape of Pakistan during the last two decades with exponential growth in use of electronic gadgets and tools of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). The electronic gadgets have become a commonplace phenomenon of everyday life in almost every household even in the remotest parts

of the country. Therefore, if anything happens worth watching or reading in any part of the globe, it does not go unnoticed on social media. Similarly, the trending (the stuff of your choice) that appears on the screen keeps the viewer mentally engaged for hours. Everything has been brought down to the pocket-size minicomputer on the palm of the consumer. It is a whole world of socialization with a number of social

media websites. The Facebook and whatsapp groups of friends, family members and colleagues have once again virtually connected people. The IT has provided alternative means to almost everything from education to citizen-government interaction, economy to market-customer relations, socialization to marketing, healthcare to banking sector, praying to mourning, greetings to happy birthday wishes, sports

to entertainment, media to business, Google maps to webinars, YouTube Channels to online newspaper, e-commerce to online games, e-payment to online transaction, online shopping to digital tourism, Artificial Intelligence (AI), robotics, Internet of Things (IoT), big data, automation, cloud computing, and mobility had a growing effect over the industry, economy and socio-cultural environment of the country. — APP



ISLAMABAD: Members of civil society holding a demonstration in favour of their demands. — DNA

'Digital survey soon under Ehsaas Programme'

The initiative would create awareness, integrate delivery of services under the Ehsaas umbrella, ensure transparency and improve government-to-citizen service delivery, she added

ISLAMABAD: PM's Special Assistant Dr Sania Nishtar Sunday said the government would launch a new survey in next few months for precise identification of the poor people under Ehsaas Programme. Data of the deserving households would be collected across the country through computerized digital system, she said while talking to PTV. Dr Sania said Prime Minister Imran Khan had directed that the survey should be completed in the shortest time possible with utmost transparency so that no

deserving citizen left out from the social welfare net. She said the Ehsaas Programme was the flagship poverty alleviation initiative of the present government under the vision of PM Imran Khan, which was bringing a positive change in the lives of poor and deserving people. In fact it had laid the foundation of a global model for reducing poverty. The SAPM said the government would soon set up one-window operation centers in major cities, which would assist the beneficiaries of the Ehsaas

Programme, besides reducing the chances of duplication. The initiative would create awareness, integrate delivery of services under the Ehsaas umbrella, ensure transparency and improve government-to-citizen service delivery, she added. Replying a question, Dr Sania said the government planned to open the first Ehsaas Physical Centre in Islamabad within a year. She said opening biometric ATMs (auto teller machines) and bank branches for the beneficiaries of Kifalat was also a

major feature of the new Ehsaas digital payment system. There was strict monitoring of the programme to ensure that the funds reached the deserving persons. It was all the more important in the wake of emergency situation developed due to the spread of coronavirus, which had crippled the livelihood resources of common people, she added. Dr Sania said during the year 2019-20, around 50,000 students, shortlisted from all the public sector universities across the country were awarded

scholarships under the Ehsaas Undergraduate Scholarship Programme. The objective of the scholarship programme, she added, was to ensure that no eligible student was deprived of higher education because of financial constraints. The SAPM said helping the needy segments of the society was a priority agenda of the current government. Prime Minister Imran Khan was continuously working for the betterment of the country and welfare of the general public, she added. — APP

Hilly parts of country attracting visitors

ISLAMABAD: A blanket of snow on Sunday has covered Azad Kashmir and other hilly tourist destinations of the country which received moderate snowfall of the season and giving picturesque look to attract visitors. On weekend the people from various parts of the country especially Punjab and Islamabad thronged Murree and AJK to catch glimpses of the snow-blanketed hill stations famous for scenic beauty and captivating landscape.

All restaurants get packed with tourists and the demanded for winter clothes also went up as the mercury were below the freezing point, a local in Murree said while speaking to a private news channel. The snowfall was tempting the visitors to come out of their homes and enjoy this rare beauty despite the bone-chilling winds, said a citizen.

Hills always attracted me but in every winter, these glimmering white peaks became my favorite subject for photography, said a Photojournalist. The weather across Azad Jammu & Kashmir has remained dry and cold since the snowfall and with the night temperature staying several degrees below the freezing point, said a visitor. A large number of people visited country hills to enjoy the snow after media reported that the hill resorts received snowfall, said another visitor Noman Khalid. Meanwhile, a Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) official said that all resorts including Bhurban, New Murree, Kashmir Point, Pindi Point, Mall Road and Ayubia were packed with tourists but we strictly asked them to follow Covid-19 SOPs and avoid wrong parking while staying on roads. — APP

IRSA releases 36,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Sunday released 36,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 39,600 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, water level in the Indus River at Tarbela Dam was 1472.46 feet, which was 80.46 feet higher than its dead level 1386 feet. Water inflow in the dam was recorded as 16,700 cusecs and outflow as 16,100 cusecs.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1164.85 feet, which was 124.85 feet higher than its dead level of 1040 feet whereas the inflow and outflow of water was recorded as 7,400 cusecs and 5,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa and Sukkur was recorded as 28,600, 16,600 and zero cusecs respectively.

Similarly, from the Kabul River a total of 6,500 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera and 9,000 cusecs released from the Chenab River at Marala. — APP

DEO urges citizens not to disturb Rescue-1122

RAWALPINDI: Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi had received so far 1.9 million calls in Command and Control Room during 2020 while 36,006 were actual emergency calls, fake calls not only wasted the resources of the department but also precious time of genuine people grievances. District Emergency Officer (DEO) Rawalpindi Ali Husain urged the citizens not to disturb Rescue-1122 with prank calls as most of the calls, Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi received during 2020 were irrelevant including distorted, blank, dropped, wrong and fake calls. According to DEO, Rescue-1122 conducted operations and rescued 36,828 victims of emergencies. Rescue-1122 Rawalpindi maintaining an average response time of less than seven minutes responded and conducted operations in seven tensils of the district. Nearly 36,828 victims of different emergencies including 111,56 calls of road accidents, 18,806 of medical emergencies, 3758 of the special rescue operation, 39 drowning incidents, 25 building collapse, 1,076 of crime incidents and 1,109 of explosion/blast incidents and other victims of miscellaneous incidents were rescued. — APP

A complete mess

THE details of the Broadsheet LLP case are a complete mess that Pakistan has been embroiled in for a long time. There is a penalty of millions of dollars hanging over the State's head, and as it scrambles to find out who was to blame, more court judgments get decided against Pakistan's favour and attack the accounts of our embassies upon our delay of payment. In this case, Broadsheet LLP was hired by NAB during Musharraf's regime to trace the hidden assets of 200 Pakistanis. Complications led to the termination of services and the London Court of International Arbitration (LCIA) awarded a penalty of millions of dollars to the anti-corruption watchdog. While the current government has been pursuing this case to see who to castigate the blame on, the UK high court decided to debit \$28.7m from the accounts of the Pakistan High Commission in London over non-payment of the penalty. There were clearly several fatal mistakes made in the handling of this case, and the government should investigate where it went wrong, in order to ensure more transparency and competence in the future. Yet it also needs to deal with this issue for once and all, before further non-payment damages our High Commission. The case has been lost and a sitting government of Pakistan had agreed to not pursue it and pay—the current government cannot just take back the word of previous government heads. The international politics of a country do not matter to international arbitration courts, when services of foreign firms are sought. The government needs to put this matter to rest, while at the same time initiating inquiries and pushing reforms to ensure that such an episode does not happen again.



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Muslim oppression

PART of the larger trend of systematic subjugation by the Indian government in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), Muslim nomads were forced into eviction after a court determined that they were living in the region illegally. Furthermore, Assam's government has also effectively turned state-run seminars into regular schools, approving Islamic subjects to be dropped from the curriculum, thereby robbing the right to practice religion in a Muslim majority area. Much like many of the other atrocities being committed in Kashmir, such directives of the BJP government are going unnoticed by the global community. Nomads, tribal people who migrate in accordance to the seasons, constitute as 12 percent of the total population of Kashmir. As part of the larger government-led eviction campaign, this significant portion of society is being forcefully removed from their home region—a place where they should have the full right to establish residence, if they wish. In the midst of below-freezing temperatures, countless families are being left immensely disenfranchised by the autocratic rule imposed upon the region by India. Furthermore, the Assam government's decision to drop Islamic subjects and turn state-run seminars into regular school is cause for alarm as well. Instead, Sanskrit tolls are being converted into centres of study for Indian heritage and civilisation. Clearly, behind such developments is an intention to further marginalise the Muslim population of IIOJK who now face immense hurdles in the process of practicing, or in fact learning more about, their faith. As time passes, the Indian government brings us a new story, incident and political move each week that is intended to subjugate the innocent people of Kashmir for satisfying their own political ambitions. Meanwhile, the international community remains apathetic to the grievances of the people as well as the consistent human rights violation in the area. For greater change to be inspired, Pakistan must continue to highlight such a suppressive environment.

Perils of social media and EU report

Prof Badar Shahzad

The terrorist / extremist organizations are exploiting media technologies for radicalizing populations to achieve their ends. This has become a disturbing phenomenon in the crisis situations, war zones and peace times. Gabriel Weismann from the University of Haifa states, "Nearly 90% of organized terror activities on internet takes place via social media. Terror groups use social media to spread messages, recruit members and gather intelligence." Similarly, fake or distorted news is easy and cheap to produce/ disseminate on social media

SOCIAL media helps people to isolate themselves in ideological niches by seeking and consuming only information consistent with their views. The internet helps eliminate the barriers of distance and creates a sense of community beyond borders. Acts of terror are promoted and shared and watched in real time like the mosque shooting in Christchurch which was live-streamed on Facebook. Online video games are used to entice and indoctrinate young players to hate ethnic minorities. The games are modified versions of classic videogames in which the original enemies were replaced with religious, racial and ethnic minorities. There are plenty of historical evidences implicating the traditional media for acting as a propaganda tool for hatred leading to ethnic rifts and producing turbulence in society. Printing technology gave rumours a legitimacy. In the 16th century Italy, rumour about the Jewish people drinking children's blood circulated on printed pamphlets. Today, those rumours are considered the precursor to anti-Semitism in the world. Der Stürmer, a weekly tabloid, was found to have "injected into the minds of thousands of Germans a poison that caused them to support the National Socialist policy of Jewish persecution and extermination". Like Der Stürmer, Kangura, a Rwandan tabloid, spewed out hate and fabricated stories against the Tutsis preparing the population mentally for killing them. Broadcast technologies have also been misused to spread hate, which is most visibly in Rwanda where the majority Hutus massacred the minority Tutsis. Social media also played a dirty role in Rohingya ethnic cleansing in Myanmar. The UN put blame on Facebook for playing a role in spreading hate speech amid the mounting Rohingya crisis. Marzuki Darusman, who led the UN Fact-Finding Mission, stated that social media played a determining role in the crisis. Digitization of "text and images" increases their availability, makes them more toxic, more lethal and their impact on society and nations more profound than the previous print versions. The conversion of ink into hypertext has increased violent crimes, hate speeches and propaganda, and enabled the extremists to disseminate it much effectively to its audience. Shrinking of time and space has bestowed upon the text and images the magic power eliciting a massive public reaction and social impact. The massacre and promotion of hate crimes against Muslims in Myanmar, Gujarat, Delhi, and the street protests in response to George Floyd's killing by a police cop in USA is testimony to the fact that media is a powerful mover and shaker of society — a double edged sword. Metamorphosis of the traditional media into different types of social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, YouTube, Periscope,

Vimeo) has increased the flow of information making it easier for extremists and policymakers to influence and radicalize the youth and sections of society by manifolds. By October 2020, 4.59 billion people had access to internet. With zero or few gatekeepers the flooding of hypertext was almost uncontrollable. With the introduction of 5G, a new dimension has been opened; 5G can elevate data speed by up to 100 times and reduce latency from 20 milliseconds to one millisecond. User is now able to download entire season of a TV series in less than a minute. The terrorist/ extremist organizations are exploiting media technologies for radicalizing populations to achieve their ends. This has become a disturbing phenomenon in the crisis situations, war zones and peace times. Gabriel Weismann from the University of Haifa states, "Nearly 90% of organized terror activities on internet takes place via social media. Terror groups use social media to spread messages, recruit members and gather intelligence." Similarly, fake or distorted news is easy and cheap to produce/ disseminate on social media. Boutros-Ghali was once quoted as complaining that "CNN is the 16th member of UN SC". Policymaker provide a more complex view of the CNN effect. Colin Powell said, "Live TV coverage doesn't change the policy, but it does create environment in which policy is made". The body of 3-year-old Aylan Kurdi, a Syrian refugee, lying face down on a beach in Turkey, changed the entire media debate. Likewise, Rwandan cultural anthropologist Charles Mironko analyzed the confessions of 100 genocide perpetrators. His work confirms that hate messages had an effect on the dehumanization of population that was subject to persistent slander. Indian media in Gujarat printed fake news like "Khoon Ka Badla Khoon" (Avenge Blood with Blood) to provoke, communalize and terrorize people resulting in the massacre of Muslims. Sandesh published fabricated reports before the killings, promoting violent Hinduva policies. Genocide Watch issued genocide alerts for Muslims in Kashmir and Assam. Anti-Muslim venom on Indian social media indicates a serious move by RSS to instigate Hindus against Muslims. "Preparation for genocide is definitely underway in India...next stage is extermination that's what we call a genocide", said Prof Gregory Stanton, the author of The 10 Stages of Genocide. EU Disinfo Lab's recent report reveals how India since decades has been engaged in spreading fake or distorted news from the soil of EU, using names of non-existent individuals and some Pakistani figures. This report should have created a storm in the local and international media, but, again, because of effectiveness of Indian media's propaganda brigade, Pakistani print and electronic media as well as its foreign office have

failed to exploit this heinous crime by Indians agencies. The realization on part of Pakistan's security establishment, as Gen Bajwa had mentioned many a time, about the hybrid war is a good omen and hopefully they are doing their utmost to thwart and frustrate such kind of onslaught. At the same time there is a need to ask social media to have a self-check, too. The World Economic Forum, in 2014, called misinformation one of the 10 greatest perils confronting the society. "It sows the seeds of hate, waters them and harvests them". Social media has become the most powerful news disseminators. Technology serves not only to amplify disinformation and hate but also creates the scope for its automated spread. This sort of tech has no use for borders. So, people and machines in Ukraine can influence public opinion in USA. Russian agencies can interfere with the US electoral process. The Cambridge Analytica scandal shows us how easy it was to manufacture biased info and target it to specific population groups to help Trump win the election. WHO, citing 50 years of research on imitation, has posted media guidelines on reporting suicides to prevent imitative suicides. The guidelines include suggestions such as not sensationalizing suicide (e.g. suggesting an "epidemic"), avoiding prominent headlines, not repeating the story too frequently, not providing step-by-step descriptions of methods, limiting use of photographs and videos, etc. Reacting to such pressures Facebook, Reddit, Google, LinkedIn, Microsoft, Twitter and YouTube have issued a joint statement to check misinformation. The rules will also ban tweets in which people play armchair doctor and make claims like, "If you have a wet cough, it's not coronavirus, but a dry cough is." Social media played a vital role in politicizing Covid-19 and generated fake cures or myths about it. In India, Muslims were accused of Corona Jihad spreading the virus to Hindu population. Indians blamed Pakistanis for sending Corona terrorists for infecting Hindus. Muslims were burnt alive or lynched to death due to propaganda on Indian media which urged Hindus to boycott Muslim merchandise. Accuracy and elimination of fake news/propaganda content is critical for growth and ensuring media credibility and harmony in society. To ensure credibility, Facebook has decided to have stringent rules to check and identify harmful misinformation in collaboration with International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN). Twitter is labeling and issuing warnings for tweets that violate its policy. Crowd Tangle is a public insights tool from Facebook that makes it easy to follow, analyze, and report on what's happening across social media.

— The author is visiting lecturer at Bahria University

Saudi-Israel relation: A game of interests

Naveed Abbas Maitlo



Saudi Arabia is backward in technology. However, Israel's technology is highly prized. Saudi will request Israeli intelligence firms to structure a special program that had the ability via scanning social media to pinpoint potential terrorist threats in the country. Reportedly, Israel software helped Saudis spy on journalist Jamal Khashoggi

ONCE upon a time, Saudi and Israel were archenemies of each other. Saudi troops were sent to fight against Israel in the 1948 and 1973 wars on the behalf of Palestine. Saudi Arabia was one of several Middle Eastern states that voted against the United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine. However, it seems that the unpleasant weather between the countries has been changed. Saudi Arabia has intended to normalize relations with Israel. This new spirit of friendship seems to be based on interests. Crown Prince of Saudi said, "I believe the Palestinians and Israelis have the right to have their land. But, we have to have a peace agreement to assure the stability of everyone and to have normal relations. There are a lot of interests we share with Israel and if there is peace, there would be a lot of interest between Israel and the Gulf Cooperation Council." It is a witness that Saudi has accepted Israel for its benefits. Saudi Arabia is backward in technology. However, Israel's technology is highly prized. Saudi will request Israeli intelligence firms to structure a special program that had the ability via scanning social media to pinpoint potential terrorist threats in the country. Reportedly, Israel software helped Saudis spy on journalist Jamal Khashoggi. Moreover, it is prophesied by astute analysts that discussions are made about how through economic partisanship Israel can participate in Crown Prince Salman's Vision 2030. There are vivid signals that Israeli firms may join in the bidding process through mediators to invest in the Smart City project in the Gulf



of Aqaba. Besides, Saudi has a normalized relationship with Israel because Saudi Arabia is facing serious consequences resulting from its clashes with Shiite Iran and its proxies. Houthi strikes on the Saudi oil business would be disastrous because oil is the central pillar of the kingdom's economy and the cornerstone of its development. According to the IMF's latest data, oil receipts accounted for around 85% of Saudi Arabia's exports and almost 90% of fiscal revenue, and the oil sector comprises over 40% of the overall GDP. Saudi Arabia's budget deficit each year, depending on the price of Brent crude, is \$40-60 billion. Saudi Arabia urgently needs an alternative export route for its oil. There is no ambiguity that Saudi is looking to import natural gas reserves which are the fifth largest in the world.



On the other hand, Israel is developing its natural gas reserves but does not possess enough to justify building an export pipeline to Europe. A link with Saudi Arabia, however, could tip the scales in favor of an Eastern Mediterranean pipeline, which could be extremely lucrative for both partners. Saudi's friendly behavior with Israel is based on interest. However, it should be remembered that Saudi will deteriorate with its sincere ally Pakistan. Because Pakistan is not a self-centered country and will not shake the hand of Israel in the immediate future. The PM Imran Khan explicitly said, "Our stance is very clear; as Qaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah said, Pakistan will never recognize Israel until Palestinians are given their right of a just settlement."

Briefs

11 coal miners massacred in Balochistan

From Page 01

Balochistan were on the rise, adding that Levies personnel are present in the area to provide security. "The situation [in the area] was satisfactory hence this incident wasn't expected," he said, adding that the area where the killings took place is quite large. The Balochistan government official said that security in the area will be increased after assessing the situation. He vowed that those responsible for the incident will be brought to the book.

COVID positivity rate surges at 5.12%

From Page 01

ratio of 8.39 percent. Rawalpindi had 3.84 percent, Faisalabad 2.22 percent and Multan 1.52 percent. In Sindh, Karachi had 11.27 percent, Hyderabad 9.59 percent, in KP, Peshawar had 12.13 percent, Swat 1.85 and Abbottabad 2.02 percent, in Baluchistan, Quetta had 2.9 percent, in ICT 3.12 percent positivity ratio was prevailing. In AJK, Mirpur had 15.69 percent positivity ratio. The update also showed Mortality Analysis during the prevailing pandemic outbreak as a total of 10,311 deaths were recorded with prevailing Case Fatality Rate of 2.12 percent against the global death rate of 2.17 percent. It added that as per the gender analysis of the deceased around 69 percent were males with 77.5 percent over the age of 50-year. As many as 73 percent of the perished COVID-19 patients had chronic comorbidities (affected with another disease prior to contracting Coronavirus). Out of the total died COVID patients 91 percent of the deceased remained hospitalised and out if these patients 57 percent were on ventilators, it added.

Dozens of civilians killed in Niger gun attacks

NIGER: The death toll in an attack on villages in Niger's restive border regions has risen to more than 70, the country's interior minister said on Sunday. Alkache Alhade said the attack took place on Saturday in the villages of Tchombangou and Zaroumdareye near the border with Mali. At least 20 people were also wounded.

The attack is believed to be in retaliation to the earlier killing of two fighters by villagers, the minister added. Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from Niger's capital Niamey, said the attack took place in one of the most porous areas of the border.

"Officials say they suspect the attackers crossed into Niger from neighbouring Mali. The area where the attack took place has also witnessed inter-communal violence. A government delegation is now on the way to the area to investigate what happened," Idris said. A local journalist told the AFP news agency that 50 people were killed in Tchombangou, while Reuters, citing a security source, said at least 49 were killed and 17 were wounded in the same village. Another 30 were killed in Zaroumdareye, Reuters reported, citing a second security source. The violence came on the same day Niger announced the results from the first round of a presidential election.

Former Interior Minister Mohamed Bazoum of the governing Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism was leading the vote with 39 percent of the votes. He will now face former President Mahamane Ousmane, who garnered 17 percent of the vote, in a runoff on February 20. The area where Saturday's attacks took place, Mangaize, is located in Tillaberi, a vast and unstable region where the borders of Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso converge. Travel by motorbike has been banned in Tillaberi since January in a bid to prevent incursions by highly mobile rebel fighters riding on two wheels. Fighters with links to al-Qaeda and the ISIL armed group have increasingly mounted attacks across West Africa's Sahel region in recent years despite the presence of thousands of regional and foreign troops. — APP



CHRISTCHURCH: Senior batsman Azhar Ali's 93 and stand-in captain Mohammad Rizwan's 61 guided Pakistan post 297 all out in their first innings on the opening day of the second Test. — DNA

Azhar, Rizwan propel Pakistan to 297-run first innings total

Azhar strokes 12 fours in his 172-ball innings. All-rounder Faheem Ashraf continued to show his form as he made a crucial 48-run contribution before becoming Jamieson's fifth-wicket of the day

CHRISTCHURCH: Senior batsman Azhar Ali's 93 and stand-in captain Mohammad Rizwan's 61 guided Pakistan post 297 all out in their first innings on the opening day of the second Test at the Hag-

ley Oval on Sunday. New Zealand captain Kane Williamson won the toss and opted to field first. Pakistan lost opener Shan Masood (0) in the third over of the day to Tim Southee. Abid Ali 25 (53 balls, three fours) added 62 runs for the second wick-

et with Azhar before falling to Kyle Jamieson. The visitors then lost two more wickets in quick succession as Haris Sohail (1) and inform Fawad Alam (2) fell shortly before the lunch interval; Pakistan took lunch at 88 for four. Azhar was then joined by Rizwan who rescued Pakistan af-

ter lunch. The duo smashed 88 runs with Rizwan being the aggressive one. The 28-year-old Rizwan hit his fifth consecutive half-century and sixth overall. Rizwan was removed by Jamieson for 61 off 71 balls (11 fours). On the other hand, Azhar fell seven runs short of his 18th

Test century when fast bowler Matt Henry had him caught in the slips. Azhar strokes 12 fours in his 172-ball innings. All-rounder Faheem Ashraf continued to show his form as he made a crucial 48-run contribution before becoming Jamieson's fifth-wicket of the day.

Sourav Ganguly recovering after heart attack



KOLKATA: Indian cricket chief Sourav Ganguly was under observation in hospital Sunday after a successful heart operation, doctors said, as well wishes continued to pour in for the former star and captain. The 48-year-old, who heads the country's powerful cricket board, suffered a heart attack during his morning exercise session on Saturday. He was immediately taken

to Woodlands Hospital in Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal state, where doctors found three blockages in his arteries, one of which needed a stent implant. "Sourav Ganguly is now stable and without support of oxygen after undergoing angioplasty. He had his breakfast," doctor Saroj Mandal told reporters outside the hospital. "Genetic history and long-term stress and other factors may have caused the disease," Mandal said, adding that a seven-member medical team is monitoring his health. A crowd of well-wishers remained outside the hospital waiting for updates about "dada", a term used endearingly for an elder brother in Bengali. India's record-breaking batsman Sachin Tendulkar tweeted his support. — APP

'Desire to score century in NZ not fulfilled'

SPORTS DESK

CHRISTCHURCH: Pakistan Test batsman Azhar Ali on Sunday said that it was unfortunate he could not score a century against New Zealand on first day of second Test at Hagley Oval in Christchurch. "I wanted to score a century here as I haven't scored one in New Zealand before but unfortunately that was not possible. Although, I have one innings left, I had a good chance to score it today," he said. Azhar scored a magnificent innings of 93 runs leading Pakistan to a fighting total

of 297 after a batting mini-collapse in the opening session left Pakistan in trouble. The batsman, however, failed to turn the innings to a century, falling short off just 7 runs. The batsman is yet to score a hundred in New Zealand in his ten-year long Test career. Despite the disappointment, Azhar was happy about scoring runs in difficult conditions, saying it has increased his confidence. "Conditions have not been easy as the pitch suits the bowlers. But we have runs on the scoreboard, that gives us a good chance in this Test match," he said.

Saudi Arabia reopens borders closed due to Covid

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia on Sunday announced the reopening of borders and the resumption of international flights after a two-week suspension aimed to stem the spread of a new Covid-19 strain. The government ordered the lifting of "precautionary measures related to the spread of a new variant of coronavirus", the Ministry of the Interior said, according to the official Saudi Press Agency. Saudi Arabia has recorded more than 363,000 cases, including over 6,200

deaths — the highest among the Gulf Arab states — but has also reported a high recovery rate. Riyadh suspended international flights and access through land crossings and ports on December 21. Other Gulf countries, Oman and Kuwait, who had taken similar measures, have also lifted them in recent days. But travellers returning from Britain, South Africa or "any country where the new variant of the coronavirus is spreading" are subject to more re-

strictions, the statement added. Foreigners coming from those countries must spend 14 days in another country before entering Saudi Arabia, and show a negative test. Saudi nationals returning from those countries will be able to enter directly — but must then spend two weeks in quarantine on arrival, and be subject to tests. Last month Saudi Arabia was one of the first Gulf countries to launch a massive vaccination campaign using the Pfizer-BioNTech jab. — APP

Pakistani players meet families of Christchurch attack victims



SPORTS DESK

CHRISTCHURCH: Pakistan cricket team on Saturday spent an afternoon with the victims of Christchurch mosque attack at Hagley Oval. In a video shared by Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on its social media pages, players are seen greeting and consoling the victims and giving them gifts.

Head coach Misbah-ul-Haq and batting coach Younis Khan were both spotted addressing the families of victims. "I know that we did not go through the situation that you people did, but we do understand the pain that you feel," Younis Khan was heard as saying. "We are with you in your grief. May those who lost their lives have high ranks in Jannah [paradise]" he added. In March 2019, more than 50 people lost

their lives in a mass shooting at two separate mosques in Christchurch. New Zealand Cricket also appreciated the gesture by Pakistan cricket team. "Really nice touch from the Pakistan team today," Black Caps wrote on Twitter while quote-tweeting the footage. Pakistan will face New Zealand for the second and final Test on Sunday at Hagley Oval in Christchurch.

Government responsible for disorder; price hike

From Page 01

Moulana Fazl slammed the government for incompetence and ruining the country's economy. He said the people are dying of hunger but government does not seem to care. He blamed the incumbent government for bargaining on the Kashmir cause. He further said that the people have showed "no-confidence" for the fake government. Maryam repeatedly asked the crowd to signal with their chants if they wish to see the government resign or remain seated in the "fake assemblies". Counting all the woes of the people due to the inflation, she said the International Monetary Fund, to make matters worse, has now "directed for the electricity prices to go up by 25%". "I feel your pain. Will the people of Bahawalpur make ends meet to feed their families, to pay their children's fees, to pay utilities or pay for the treatment of the elderly at home?" "This is why I want us to send this fake, incompetent prime minister packing who, after two-and-a-half years has thrown his hands in the air to declare he does not know how to run the country's affairs," Maryam said. Maryam said that "what to speak of chicken, no one will soon be able to afford vegetables even". "Your daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif feels your pain and this is what brought us to you all today," she added. The PML-N vice president said that Punjab would be "taunted" for "not standing up for others" and other provinces would say that "unless Punjab stands up, things will not change". "Well listen here! Not only has Punjab risen, it is ready to take back the rights it has been robbed off. And when Punjab stands up, whose legs start shaking?" she asked the crowd. "The selectors and the selected can see that the people of Punjab have now stood up."

Equestrian polo match on snow

SPORTS DESK

TASHKENT: The Uzbekistan Polo Federation, together with the Amirsoy mountain resort complex, held the first snow polo match in the history of our country. The event was attended by the Secretary General of the NOC Oybek Kasymov, the chairman of the federations of polo, modern pentathlon and equestrian sports Bakhromjon Gaziev, as well as the heads of sports federations and associations, the media. The birthplace of snow polo is St. Moritz (Switzerland). In 1985, the world premiere of the snow polo tournament took place on the frozen Lake St. Moritz, and has since hosted the world's largest snow polo tournament. What started on snow in St. Moritz 36 years ago has become a global trend — nowadays, snow polo is played all over the world from Aspen in the USA and Cortina in Italy to Tianjin in China. — APP

Mulder sparks Sri Lankan collapse

JOHANNESBURG: All-rounder Wiaan Mulder made a triple strike and sparked a Sri Lankan collapse on the first day of the second and final Test against South Africa at the Wanderers Stadium in Johannesburg on Sunday. Sri Lanka were 84 for five at lunch after winning the toss and deciding to bat. Opening batsman Kusal Perera hit an aggressive 60 off 67 balls, striking 11 boundaries off South Africa's fast bowlers, as Sri Lanka reached 71 for one in the 21st over. But the introduction of the medium-paced Mulder halted the momentum. Perera played out a maiden over from Mulder before edging the first ball of Mulder's next over to Aiden Markram in the gully. Four balls later Mulder had Kusal Mendis caught at first slip and in his next over Lahiru Thirimanne was caught at second slip. Anrich Nortje struck a fifth blow with the last ball before lunch when debutant Minod Bhanuka was caught at first slip for five. Sri Lanka had lost four wickets for 13 runs in four overs. — APP

Soleimani assassination anniversary marked

Guterres had told the Fifth Committee that despite the COVID-19 pandemic and liquidity crunch, "our new processes and structures have proven instrumental in enabling us to remain open and function effectively"

BAGHDAD: A mock funeral procession in Iraq marked the first anniversary of the drone strike near Baghdad by the United States that killed top Iranian general Qassem Soleimani and Iraqi militia leader Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis. Thousands of mourners joined the march on the highway leading to the Baghdad airport on Saturday evening where the strike that killed the two men took place. As the highway remained blocked with cars, demonstrators carrying posters of Soleimani and al-Muhandis adorned both sides of the road lined with tents that served food and drinks for those walking. The scene of the bombing

was turned into a shrine-like area sealed off by red ropes, with a photo of Soleimani and al-Muhandis in the middle, as mourners lit candles. Shrapnel marks were still visible on the asphalt and walls in the area. Soleimani headed Iran's Revolutionary Guard's elite Quds Force, responsible for the Islamic republic's foreign operations and frequently shuttled between Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. His assassination dramatically ratcheted up tensions in the region and brought the US and Iran to the brink of war. Al Jazeera's Charles Stratford, reporting from Baghdad, said more protests are expected across Iraq on Sunday. "The protests are focused on

demanding that the Iraqi government put pressure on the Americans to withdraw the remaining soldiers from the country," he said. "Meanwhile, people on the streets are concerned about any potential escalation or any kind of deterioration in security of this country." The Baghdad procession came as Iraq's military said explosives experts with its naval forces successfully dismantled a mine that was discovered stuck to an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf two days earlier. The statement on Saturday said Iraqi authorities have opened an investigation into the incident. No group has claimed responsibility for placing the mine. Tensions between Tehran and Washington have been rising

in the run-up to the first anniversary of top Iranian general's killing. In a letter to the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, Iran condemned US "military adventurism" in the Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and "fake information, baseless accusations and threatening rhetoric" against Tehran. A day earlier, the US military flew two nuclear-capable B-52 bombers over the Gulf in a message of deterrence to Iran, the latest in a series of such moves in the past month. "New intelligence from Iraq indicate(s) that Israeli agent-provocateurs are plotting attacks against Americans — putting an outgoing Trump in a bind with a fake casus belli (act justifying war),"

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said in a tweet on Saturday. "Be careful of a trap, @realDonaldTrump. Any fireworks will backfire badly," Zarif wrote. With less than a month left in the White House, Trump is under pressure from key Middle East allies, Israel and Saudi Arabia, to act against Iran, Danny Postel, assistant director of the Center for International and Area Studies at Northwestern University, told Al Jazeera. "Trump is a very wounded and very cornered animal in an end-game scenario. He's got a few weeks left, and we know that he is capable of extremely erratic behaviour," Postel, an expert on Iran and US foreign policy, said. — Agencies

Briefs

'SIAL takes full care of its passengers'

SIALKOT: Sialkot International Airport Limited (SIAL) Chairman Mian Naeem Javed said the management of airport had taken full care of the needs and regulations of its passengers and airlines during the corona pandemic and took all possible steps for them. He stated this while talking to representatives of airlines at the SIAL Secretariat. Vice Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Afzal Shaheen, Airport Manager Nisar Ahmed and other officials were also present. Chairman SIAL Mian Naeem Javed said that they were trying to provide the best possible facilities to all the airlines and their passengers. He also thanked the representatives of all airlines for their exemplary cooperation in this difficult situation and appreciated their services. — APP

'Scotland must wait a generation for new vote'

LONDON: Another Scottish independence referendum should not take place for a generation, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said Sunday, as Scotland's leader renewed calls for a fresh vote in the wake of Brexit. "Referendums in my experience, direct experience, in this country are not particularly jolly events," the prime minister told BBC's Andrew Marr Show. "They don't have a notably unifying force in the national mood, they should be only once in a generation." Scotland voted to remain part of the United Kingdom in 2014. Scottish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon at the time called it a once-in-a-generation vote, but now argues that Britain's departure from the European Union, which a majority of Scots opposed, has changed the game. Recent polls have shown consistent support for independence, boosted by rows between London and the devolved governments over the handling of the coronavirus pandemic. "For too long, successive UK governments have taken Scotland in the wrong direction, culminating in Brexit. It's no wonder so many people in Scotland have had enough," she wrote on her party's website on Saturday. — APP

Germany poised to extend lockdown

BERLIN: Germany is likely to extend a national lockdown beyond Jan. 10 to curb coronavirus infection rates that are still running high and putting huge strains on hospitals and health workers, politicians said at the weekend. Chancellor Angela Merkel and regional leaders are expected to agree to extend the restrictions when they convene on Tuesday. It is not yet clear how long the extension would last. "The numbers are still too high, so we will have to prolong the restrictions," Health Minister Jens Spahn told RTL television in an interview on Saturday evening. Infection rates had to be sustainably reduced, Spahn said, adding: "That is better than loosening too early and then, perhaps in as little as a few weeks, facing new and difficult questions." Germany imposed tougher social restrictions before Christmas, including closing restaurants and most shops. Even so, infections continued to rise and the death toll has hit more than 1,000 on some days. Seven-day infection rates are currently at 140 per 100,000 people — well over the target of 50 that politicians have agreed would be safe enough to ease the curbs. With a new, more infectious coronavirus variant circulating, some politicians and health leaders are calling for the restrictions to be lifted only when the seven-day rate falls to 25. "We will only see next week in the hospitals how strongly Christmas contributed to the spread of COVID-19 — the New Year effect will come only later," Uwe Janssens, head of a group representing intensive-care doctors, told the Rheinische Post. Officials from Germany's 16 states agreed on a conference call on Saturday to extend restrictions, the Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung reported. — APP



KABUL: Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan, Mansoor Ahmed Khan calls on Karim Khalili leader of Hizb-e-Wahdat and gave him formal invitation to visit Pakistan. — DNA

'Pak-Canada ties growing, trade links strengthening'

He said Pakistan was open for business and investment and any investment in Pakistan was fully secure. He said the Canadian businessmen could benefit from Pakistan's geostrategic position and use it as a hub for the manufacturing of their products to be further sent to Central Asia

DNA

OTTAWA: Pakistan High Commissioner in Canada Raza Bashir Tarar has said that Pakistan and Canada enjoy good bilateral relations which will be further strengthened as the volume of trade and commerce between both the countries grows in coming years. Talking to a local Canadian television, Raza Bashir Tarar said the private sector was playing a leading role in driving the trade and investment ties between both the countries and the ease in the travel restrictions likely after the COVID-19 pandemic was over, was likely to give a further boost to the bilat-

eral trade and commerce. He said the Pakistan High Commission had recently approached various premiers in Canada for enhancement of trade and the response had been quite positive so far. He said Pakistan was open for business and investment and any investment in Pakistan was fully secure. He said the Canadian businessmen could benefit from Pakistan's geostrategic position and use it as a hub for the manufacturing of their products to be further sent to Central Asia and other parts in the region.

To a question, Raza Bashir Tarar urged the Pakistani community living in Canada and elsewhere in the world to rise above their



group affinities and political loyalties to forge a strong sense of unity among them to be a strong player in the public and political life. He also advised the Pakistani community to reach out to and help each other as together they could overcome unusual

challenges such as those posed by the COVID-19. He lauded the Canadian government for putting up a strong response in the wake of COVID-19 to help businesses to stay afloat despite closures and lockdowns. To another question, the High Commissioner noted that Pakistan was not a pushover for any one and it enjoyed a special status in the comity of nations which had been further enhanced by a leading role Pakistan had played in the successful resolution of various regional and international issues since its inception. He advised the fellow countrymen to shun their despondence and negativity built around the negative

coverage Pakistan sometimes received in the international press but such situations had been faced by other countries as well, and a confident approach backed by a strong association with the historical and cultural moorings of the country, could help the Pakistanis to forge ahead and play a constructive role in whatever situations and conditions they found themselves at different places in the world. During the interview, the High Commissioner also reflected on the role of civil servants in the development of nation building and the changing nature of public policy and diplomacy and the challenges it had spawned in today's world.

Businessmen for strengthening of rupee

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Business Community seeks major correction in exchange rate against dollar in the year of 2021. Pakistan Businesses Forum (PBF) Vice President, Ahmad Jawad said country exports starts increasing including positive improvement in remittances as well as surplus in the current account structure; now free float concept may be stop and Government must go for certain measures to strengthen Pak Rupee against dollar which is much needed to boost economy. Jawad said "exchange rate is a fundamental 'price' in the economy, and getting it right is essential not just for boosting the export sector but also for providing a measure of protection to domestic industry" The Pakistani Rupee had a volatile 2020 after starting the year at Rs. 154.87 against the US Dollar. The local currency ended the year at Rs. 159.83 against the greenback after touching an all-time low of Rs. 168.43 during the year. In the calendar year (2020), the lowest exchange rate that PKR-USD recorded was

Rs. 154.1697 to the USD on February 14, 2020, and the highest exchange rate was Rs. 168.43 to the USD on August 26, 2020. According to the financial analytics platform, Capital Stake, the year-to-date change in the Rupee was still down by Rs. 4.99 (or 3.22 percent) deterioration against the greenback. The month to date movement for the Rupee has also been downward with a loss of Rs. 0.41 in total (or 0.26 percent) against the USD. However, if compared with the 52-week high of Rs. 168.43, the domestic currency saw a recovery of 5.11 percent or Rs. 8.6 versus the dollar. The year was initially stable going for a plunge all the way to Rs. 168 (due to ambiguity over Coronavirus and economic shutdown). However, flows from multilateral lenders, remittances growth, compressed imports & export resurgence has kept Rupee solid at Rs. 160. Jawad also added the Rupee will recover with the inflows. Pakistan offers the fourth highest one-year interest rate of 7.4 per cent in emerging markets, but this is not high enough to encourage inflows into Pakistani rupee bonds.

'Tourism help promote positive image of Balochistan'

DNA

BEIJING: Government's initiatives to improve security situation in Balochistan and projects launched under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) have created a number of opportunities for tourist to explore natural beauty of the province. "I think it's fair to say that the continuous development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), especially the construction of Gwadar Port, has brought a new hope to Balochistan, which has been backward for a long time and has also created conditions for the development of tourism and cultural industry in the province." This was stated by

Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in his article published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Saturday. According to media reports, the Balochistan government has launched seven projects to promote tourism in coastal areas of the province on which work is in progress. A meeting chaired by the chief minister discussed promotion of tourism, culture, archeology and development schemes at tourist sites in Balochistan. A master plan has been prepared for the promotion of tourism and work on eco-tourism resorts is also underway at seven places in the coastal areas of the province. As per the master plan, model beach parks will be established at Gadani,

Kund Malir, Ormara, Pasni and Gwadar to provide maximum facilities to tourists. The master plan for the development of tourism facilities in Ziarat and Shaban valleys has also been prepared. In Balochistan, tourism offices will be set up at divisional levels, and tourism information centers will be opened along major highways. The Balochistan government believes that the promotion of tourism, arts and culture will highlight the positive image of Balochistan. Balochistan, the largest provinces of the country, spreads over an area of 347,190 square kilometers, accounting 43.6 percent of the total area of Pakistan. Balochistan has a population of 7.167 million, accounting for five per cent of Pakistan's total population.



ETHIOPIA: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Ethiopia Barlybay Sidikov interacting with the local community. — DNA

Pak should get preferential treatment in Afghanistan

Afghanistan was also urged to provide access to Central Asia and joint mechanisms may be developed to realize valuable propositions across border. It was stressed that withdrawal of illicit charges and assurance of security while passing Afghanistan territory for CARs must be ensured

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: "In line with a series of meetings held by Ministry of Commerce pertinent to Afghanistan Pakistan bilateral trade and transit, PAJCCI was sought its recommendations on behalf of private sector. Khan Jan Alokzai, Co-Chairman PAJCCI lauded initiatives taken by Pakistan Government in line with proposals submitted by PAJCCI across the border, reflecting true

sentiments of business community of both the countries. He urged that as a landlocked and under developed country, Afghanistan should get exclusive treatment while signing the PTA. Chairman PAJCCI, Zubair Motiwala reiterated that in line with the vision of PM Imran Khan to support and facilitate Afghanistan in all economic context, however, to support our trade and local industry, we should get preferential and primary partner treatment in Afghanistan espe-

cially for goods manufactured domestically. Also we should get regionally best rates in contrast to other players like India, Iran, Turkey or Central Asian Republics (CARs). He also stressed that single gate operation at Torkham border is aggravating the situation and Afghanistan should ensure operations at both the gates to overcome gridlock. One gate should be reserved for trade and other for transit along with facilitating fast movement for empty containers and export

consignments that would open up availability of trackers, containers, vehicles at the competitive rates in the market. In reference to comments of draft APTTA and PTA submitted by Afghanistan, PAJCCI conducted several stakeholders' session across Pakistan and compiled a comprehensive proposal, which was submitted to the Ministry of Commerce as an instrumental document illustrating desires of the private sector of Pakistan. The document also in-

cluded challenges faced by Pakistani businesses while conducting transit to Central Asia via Afghanistan. It is pertinent to note that import duties over kinnos transited to Uzbekistan via Afghanistan fetches highest duty in the world that has a detrimental effect. It was also discussed that Pakistan should have proper bilateral agreements with Central Asian countries to reap the benefit and the reciprocal supportive duty regime may be put in place between Pakistan and Afghanistan for both bilateral and transit landscape.

Kazakhstan abolishes death penalty

NURSULTAN: Kazakhstan abolished the death penalty by making permanent a nearly two-decade freeze on capital punishment in the authoritarian Central Asian country, a notice on the presidential website said Saturday. The notice said President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev had signed off on parliamentary ratification of the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — a document that commits signatories to the abolition of capital punishment. Executions were paused in Kazakhstan from 2003 but courts continued to sentence convicts to death in exceptional circumstances, including for crimes deemed acts of terror. — Agencies

Hungary cools on Russian Covid jab

BUDAPEST: Hungary is unlikely to use Russia's coronavirus vaccine due to its limited production capacity, Prime Minister Viktor Orban said Sunday while criticising the EU's vaccine acquisition approach. Often at loggerheads with Brussels over democratic standards, Orban has sent experts to monitor vaccine development in Russia and China, and received samples of Moscow's controversial Sputnik V jab. "We know that the Russian vaccine is good, but there is not enough of it and probably will not be, as there are production capacity limits," Orban said in an interview on Hungarian public radio. In comparison with Sputnik V "the Chinese (vaccine) is more promising, it seems that it will be available sooner and in greater quantities," said Orban. "Ideally, you will be able to choose whether you want to vaccinate yourself with either a vaccine from the west or a Chinese vaccine," he said. In November Budapest boasted that Hungary was the first European country to receive test samples of the Russian vaccine. Western and Russian experts have raised concerns over the fast-tracked drug, which has not yet been approved for marketing inside the bloc by the EU's European Medicines Agency (EMA). Critics have also described Sputnik V as a tool to bolster Russia's geopolitical influence. Orban said Sunday however that he is "not happy with the pace" of vaccine acquisition from the EU. "There were manufacturers whose products were available sooner in Canada, the UK, and in Israel than for example in the EU," he said. "But that is Brussels' job, they are dealing with it," he added. "We are looking after the eastern relations contact network, as Brussels is not doing that... that is why it is better to stand on two legs," he said. Orban's latest jibe toward Brussels comes after Hungary sidestepped the EU's coordinated approach to vaccinations last week. After receiving its first delivery of the Belgian-made Pfizer-BioNTech coronavirus jab December 26 it immediately started administering the vaccine, sidestepping the EU's joint start that began a day later. — APP

Fifth body found in Norway, five still missing

OSLO: Rescue workers have uncovered a fifth body four days after a landslide buried homes near Norway's capital, police said Sunday, as the search goes on for five people still missing. The tragedy occurred in the early hours of Wednesday when houses were destroyed and shifted hundreds of metres under a torrent of mud at the village of Ask, 25 kilometres (15 miles) northeast of Oslo. "Just before 6 am a deceased person was found," Sunday's police statement said. The discovery of a fourth body had been made Saturday after three were recovered the day before at the bleak, snow-covered scene at Ask, in Gjerdrum municipality. Police on Saturday identified the body of the first person found on Friday as 31-year-old Eirik Gr nolen. The identities of the four other dead have not been released. But police on Friday published a list of the names of all the eight adults, a two-year-old and a 13-year-old child who went missing on Wednesday. Ten people were also injured in the landslide, including one seriously who was transferred to Oslo for treatment. — APP

Briefs

PIA resumes flight operation to Saudi Arabia

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan International Airlines on Sunday announced to resume its regular passenger flight service to Saudi Arabia, advising the passengers concerned to urgently approach their offices for reactivating their bookings. A PIA spokesman, in a statement, said as per the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation's (SGACA) latest notification suspension of all flights and travel to the kingdom had been lifted and international airlines permitted to transport passengers. He asked the passengers with their seats already booked with the national flag carrier or those intending to fly to the Saudi Kingdom with the PIA approach its nearest office or contact the call centers via 111 786 786. The PIA, since late December, due to resurgence of COVID pandemic and associated ban imposed on international flights by the SGACA, have only been carrying back home Pakistanis stranded in the kingdom.

Decision about school reopening today

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: A meeting of the Inter-Provincial Education Ministers will be held tomorrow (Monday) via video link with Federal Minister for Education Shafiqat Mahmood in the chair. The forum will discuss the prevailing situation of the second wave of Covid-19 and reopening of educational institutions across the country. It will also deliberate upon beginning of new academic session from August and reduction of spring and summer vacations. The agenda of the meeting have a proposal to conduct board examinations from the last week of May. The proposals regarding reduction in summer vacation and start of the 2021-22 academic session in August will also likely to be discussed in the meeting of the education ministers. The meeting is expected to discuss the national education policy.

India approves 2 vaccines for emergency use

DNA

NEW DELHI: India's drug regulator on Sunday confirmed that the country has approved the emergency use of two COVID-19 vaccines developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University and by local pharmaceutical firm Bharat Biotech. "The... vaccines of Serum Institute (AstraZeneca/Oxford vaccine) and Bharat Biotech are being approved for restricted use in emergency situations," the Drugs Controller General of India, V.G. Somani, said at a briefing. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that the fast-track approvals were "a decisive turning point to strengthen a spirited fight" that "accelerates the road to a healthier and Covid-free nation".

'People rejected politics of opposition'

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications Murad Saeed has said that the people of Pakistan have rejected the ill-conceived politics of the opposition aimed at safeguarding corruption of its leadership. In a live broadcast, he said Prime Minister Imran Khan has been striving hard to uplift weaker segment of the society while the opposition leaders are busy in protecting their hereditary politics. The Minister said the past rulers lived in the palatial PM House, besides setting up many camp offices for themselves but never bothered for the homeless people living on the roads.

Israel illegally extending settlements on Palestine land

The ambassador underlined that a just solution of the issue requires an end to occupation of Palestine. He thanked the people and political parties of Pakistan for their continuing support to the Palestinian cause

DNA

KARACHI: Palestinian National Day was celebrated at the Karachi Press Club (KPC). Retired Maj Gen Sikandar Hayat, president of the event. The message of the Palestinian Ambassador, Ahmad Rabaie, was read out by a Palestinian student Abdul Qadir. The ambassador remembered Yasser Arafat's achievements on the day 56 years ago against Israeli targets. "Our roots are in the land of Palestine", he said. For the last 100 years, hundreds of Palestinians have been martyred, injured and taken prisoner. Israel has illegally extended its settlements into Palestinian land. Encouraged by the US, it has been ignoring UN resolutions, he said. The ambassador underlined that a just solution of the issue requires an end to occupation of Palestine. He thanked the people and political parties of Pakistan for their continuing support to

the Palestinian cause. Sikandar said his first interaction with the Palestinian people happened when he was a student at the Engineering University, Lahore. There were more than a dozen Palestinian students. There he got to know them better. He asked the audience to think what the problem of Palestine is. "Is it just the problem of occupying a small piece of land?" After the end of the Ottoman Empire, he argued, the entire world was in the hands of the colonisers. They were shaping the world the way they wanted to. They could have done anything. But they kept Palestine separate as per a particular plan. If they could leave the subcontinent and give it to a certain power, then they could do anything [with other regions]. "This is something else for which we need to go into history." Gen Hayat pointed out that historians say that humanity is divided into three branches: the Aryans, the Mongols and the Samis (Sem-



ites). The last ones are those who belong to Arab land. All the prophets were born in this region. This area has tremendous importance. He said there's potential in this area and that's what they [occupying forces] are afraid of. When we look at Palestine, "is there a more brave and courageous nation in the world than Palestinians?" He added the kind of oppression that the Palestinians have faced

is hard to find in human history. Rockets are fired on neighbourhoods. "You will not find a more brave and courageous nation in the world." Now you can imagine why they are so focused on Palestine. It's the potential, which can be gauged from history, that is there and they don't want that to appear again. Therefore the Palestinian issue needs to be analysed differently, he said. Ambassador Hasan Habib said by holding a programme on the important day at the KPC they weren't doing any favour to the Palestinian brethren. "It is our sacred duty to support Palestine. It's an issue close to our hearts. Relations with Israel can only happen after your [Palestinians'] rights are secured." Bishop Nazeer Alam said he would always support the Palestinian cause. Mahfuzun Nabi Khan appreciated the fact that the event on Friday was taking place in Karachi, the city of Qaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and at the press club

which has always supported the cause of the oppressed people. After the speeches a communiqué was read out. The first of its two paragraphs was: "The participants of the Palestinian National Day celebrations have appealed [to] the human conscience to treat Palestinian Arabs as equal human beings. They urged the political establishment, civil society, intelligentsia and peace-loving masses all over the world to honour the political rights and respect the human rights and civil liberties of the people of illegally occupied territory of Palestine. "They called upon the government to use their good offices and moral influence to get Palestine, the heartland of civilisations, from the clutches of the forces of occupation internationally. The participants kindled high hopes that the world community will come forward to get the sovereign and independent nation state of Palestinian Arabs."

SC to hear Daniel Pearl case appeal on Jan 5

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan fixed the hearing of the Daniel Pearl murder case for January 5. Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed constituted a three-judge bench headed by Justice Mushir Alam and comprising Justice Sardar Tariq Masood and Justice Yahya Afridi would hear the Sindh government and the appeal of Daniel Pearl's parents against the Sindh High Court's (SHC) judgment. The bench will hear the plea seeking suspension of the SHC's judgment regarding acquitting/areleasing the accused Daniel Pearl's murderer. On April 2, 2020, the SHC had commuted the death sentence of Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikhah the man convicted of kidnapping and murdering American journalist Daniel Pearl in 2002 to a seven-year sentence. The SHC had also acquitted three others who had been awarded life imprisonment in the case. The slain journalist's parents had approached the Supreme Court against the Sindh High Court's verdict. - APP

Temple attack designed to malign Pak: Tahir Ashrafi

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Karak Hindu temple attack was designed to malign Pakistan and Islam, said Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Special Aide to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East. Talking to media here on Sunday after inaugural ceremony of Jamia Masjid Usman, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi condemned killing of 11 mineworkers of Hazara Community in Mach (Balochistan) adding that military and people of Pakistan have rendered enormous sacrifices to defeat terrorists. He said that enemies and Indian lobbies have been accomplice in fanning baseless malicious propaganda campaigning against Pakistan Army and Security Institutions of the country. He also urged on political and

religious leadership of the country to seek dialogues' option to address prevailing challenges of the country. Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi also stated that Religious scholars and leadership of different religious schools of thought during and after Muharram Haram played very positive and effective role to avert conspiracies of sectarian violence in the country. Pakistan's relations with Arab and Islamic Countries are being strengthened and Pakistan reinforcing cooperation with Arab countries in the areas of trade, economy, defense and Religious affairs, said Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, Special Aide to Prime Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East. Pakistan owns very key and effective position in the Islamic world, said Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi. He added that Pakistan could only be transformed on the pattern

of Medina with cooperation of all the sections of society. To mould Pakistan on the pattern of the state of Medina, justice, accountability and fulfilment of rights of people are key pillars and each and every section of the society should be purged from corruption and corrupt elements. He also added that mosques should also be used as community centers with practical steps for fulfilment of rights of people with one another. Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi also stated that Seminaries and mosques are serving the people to their best and no one is going to clip freedom of seminaries and mosques. The incumbent Government associated registration of Seminaries with Ministry of Education, said Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi adding that all the reservations on Evacuee Trust Properties Amendment

Bill will be addressed. Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi responding to a question said that formation of Interfaith Harmony Councils is underway at Central and provincial level. He said that Karak Hindu temple attack was designed to malign Pakistan adding that all the elements involved in Karak temple attack have been arrested and instructions have been issued for reconstruction of Hindu temple in Karak with consultation of Hindi Community. Expressing condemnation on killings of Hazara Community mineworkers in Mach, Hafiz Tahir Ashrafi said enemies of Pakistan designing these bids adding that Indian Secret Agency with assistance of extremist and terrorists Organizations making these attacks to make instability and anarchy in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Indian man arrested in Afghanistan for sexual assault

KABUL: A 15-year-old girl, Narmeen Karzoun was sexually forced by an Indian tourist visiting Kabul, Afghanistan, last week and the incident came to light later after an accused shared a video of the crime on a social media platform, the Afghan police said, reported media on Sunday. Superintendent of police Rashid said, "The incident occurred on December 28 in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul. The accused, Deep Desai reportedly threatened the girl with consequences if she informed anyone. Apparently, this is why the girl did not inform her family members about it." The local police acted after the video went viral and an FIR was filed in the matter. Teams from four police stations were deployed on the case. The police detained one of the accused. "We have detained one of the accused and our teams are raiding possible hideouts of the remaining accused. All the accused are adults and are of the same area. Efforts are also being made to prevent further circulation of the video online," the police officer said. The local police acted after the video went viral and an FIR was filed in the matter. Teams from four police stations were deployed on the case. The police detained one of the accused. Some time back, Indian Defence Attache in Kabul Brigadier SK Narain was expelled from Afghanistan over charges of raping an Afghan girl. Brigadier SK Narain was posted as defence attache in the Indian Embassy in Kabul. The Afghan girl he raped had reportedly approached the Indian Embassy earlier to obtain a scholarship. She was later raped on the premises. Taking urgent notice of the incident, the Afghanistan government expelled the Indian army officer from the country immediately. However, no criminal proceedings have been initiated against the accused Indian official. A few weeks ago three Indian army soldiers also raped an Indian girl while on a moving train. Indian army soldiers have also regularly been accused of committing mass rape in Indian-occupied Kashmir, and have also been involved in incidents of rape while on deputation at UN missions abroad. - DNA

Zardari, Shehbaz puncture PDM tyre

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Prisons Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan on Sunday said that those who had ruined the country for the last seven decades could not be given one more chance. While commenting on the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) rally in Bahawalpur, he said that Asif Ali Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif had punctured the PDM tyre. He said that now PDM could not go for short, medium or long march. He said, "Let me remind the PDM leadership that the date of their resignations had passed four days ago." He further said that decision to take part in by-polls was the biggest U-turn as earlier PDM made hollow slogans of long march, resignations etc. Fayyaz-ul-Hassan Chohan said that according to Hafiz Hussain Ahmad, JUI (F) of Maulana Fazlur-Rehman had just confined to personal motives. - APP

PTA moves to block sacrilegious content

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority on Sunday moved to block content in the country pertaining to what it termed the "sacrilegious" film titled "Lady in Heaven". The authority, in a statement, said that keeping in view "different reports" regarding the movie and its "sacrilegious content", social media platforms including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, have been directed "for immediate blocking of all content related to the said movie from their platforms". It said that so far, 336 links containing promotional material of the movie have been reported to the different social media platforms. On December 25, PTA said it has sent notices to tech giant Google and online encyclopedia Wikipedia for disseminating "sacrilegious content" through the platforms. - APP

No new variant case in Punjab

LAHORE: The new coronavirus variant that was discovered in the UK a few weeks ago, has not been reported in any patient in Punjab yet, confirmed the Primary and Secondary Health Care Punjab on Sunday. The new strain, referred to by some experts as the B.1.17 lineage, is not the first variant of the COVID-19 pandemic, but it is said to be up to 70% more transmissible than the previously dominant strain. The health department's spokesperson explained that samples of passengers arriving from the UK are sent for gene sequencing to detect the presence of the new variant. However, a woman who tested positive for the coronavirus did not undergo gene sequencing. - APP

Culprits in Usama murder case on physical remand

ISLAMABAD: Local court in Islamabad on Sunday has approved a three-day physical remand of five Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel for allegedly indiscriminately gunning down a 22-year-old young man Usama Satti in a staged encounter. Police presented the arrested cops before the court of duty judge Shehzad Khan and sought their physical remand for investigation. When the judge questioned whether the weapon had been recovered, the investigation officer informed him that it was yet to be recovered. Earlier today, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Amir Ahmed Ali constituted a joint investigation team (JIT) to probe the death of the young man in an alleged staged encounter. SP Sadder Sarfarz Virk has been named as the head of the JIT while the DSP Ramna, DSP investigation, the SHO of the Ramna police station and representatives of intelligence agencies will join the team as its members. The commissioner formed the probe team under the anti-terrorism act. It is required to carry out a detailed investigation into the incident and submit a report at the earliest. According to his family, the 21-year-old was coming back after dropping a friend to university when the incident took place. "He was shot just for not stopping his car," the victim's father said in a video statement. His parents have filed a complaint against the police officers demanding action be taken against them immediately. Following this, five officers of the Anti-Terrorism Squad were arrested. The capital's inspector-general has promised a clear investigation into the case. The police claimed they received news of a dacoit in a white car escaping. "The policemen asked the man to stop the car but when he didn't, they opened fire at him," an officer said, claiming that two bullets hit him. A medical report by PIMS Hospital, however, revealed that six bullets hit the victim, while 17 were fired. The bullets hit him on his face, chest, neck and head. - (Another news on Page 02)



SC to hear reference on Senate elections

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has constituted a five-judge larger bench to commence hearing on a presidential reference seeking the court's opinion whether 'open ballot' for Senate elections would help acknowledge the respect of choice and desire of the citizen voters on Monday (January 4). The five-member larger bench would be headed by Chief Justice Gulzar Ahmed and comprising Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz-ul-Ahsan and Justice Yahya Afridi. Attorney General Khalid Jawed Khan would represent President Dr Arif Alvi. On December 23, President Arif Alvi, after approving the proposal of the prime minister, had filed a 11-page reference in the Supreme Court under Article 186 of the Constitution relating to the advisory jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and sought its opinion on holding the upcoming elections. - APP

Work' on PARCO coastal refinery to start soon

ISLAMABAD: The government has planned to start 'physical work' on the much-delayed Pakistan Arab Refinery Company (PARCO) Coastal Refinery before the next summer to achieve self-reliance in the oil production sector. A senior official privy to petroleum sector developments told APP that all the formalities including refinery's design, licensing, engineering work, sizing and product-slab have been completed. Hopefully the physical work on the seven-billion dollar project would start before next summer after its formal groundbreaking. The refinery approved in October 2007 but remained suspended due to paucity of funds would have the capacity to refine 250,000 barrels BPD, equal to 13 million tons of petroleum products per annum. He said the present government was working on a prudent strategy to achieve self-reliance in the oil refining sector by upgrading the existing facilities and establishing new deep conversion refineries in different parts of the country. According to an official report, currently as many as five refineries were operating in the country with an overall installed capacity of 417,400 barrel per day (BPD) oil and contributing significantly in meeting the petroleum needs through indigenous production. Out of which, Pak Arab Refinery Limited (PARCO) has 100,000 BPD oil refining capacity, Attock Refinery Limited (ARL) 53,400 BPD, Byco Petroleum Pakistan Limited (Byco) 150,000 BPD, National Refinery Limited (NRL) 64,000 BPD and Pakistan Refinery Limited 50,000 BPD. - APP

Investors start installing plants in Mohmand SEZ

However, the Mohmand SEZ, expected to generate around 18,000 direct jobs, has the potential to make the district a hub of jobs and business opportunities instead

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Mohmand, a Pakistani district bordering Afghanistan, is going to witness a new era of development as industrialists prepare to install marble processing plants at the special economic zone being developed under CPEC. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday, Mohmand, and surrounding districts of Bajaur and Khyber, are rich in a vast variety of marble stones and other minerals. Even then, these districts are known for extreme poverty and unemployment. However, the Mohmand SEZ, expected to generate around 18,000

direct jobs, has the potential to make the district a hub of jobs and business opportunities instead. Bilal Mohmand, an industrialist and convener of the standing committee on marbles and granite of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry, or FPCCI, sought early provision of facilities to the SEZ. "I have started setting up my plant in the SEZ but there are no access roads or facilities like water supply and electricity", he said. Several other industrialists had also started installing marble processing plants, he added. The SEZ was firstly envisaged by Pakistan Stone Development Company, or Pasdec, as Mohmand

Marble City to streamline the marble stone processing industry in the region and provide facilities for the purpose near the districts rich in these minerals. Later, it was designated as a full-planned Special Economic Zone under CPEC keeping in view its ideal location, said Waqas Ansari, Project Manager (Marble Cities) at Pasdec. The management of Mohmand Economic Zone was later handed over to the KP Economic Zones Development and Management Company, or KPEZDMC, a provincial government body, following two constitutional amendments, he said. He also said that this shift in authority delayed much-needed facil-

ities including uninterrupted power supply and access roads. A source in KPEZDMC said that the KP government wanted the project to become fully operational before July. Umar Shahid, a technical officer at KPEZDMC, said that tenders had been sought for the left-over works. A week ago, Tribal Areas Electricity Supply Company (TESCO) authorities visited the grid station being installed at the facility. On December 31, the KP chief minister Mehmood Khan while directing for early completion of facilities at the SEZ also asked the officials to start shifting marble plants on Warsak Road and scat-

tered plants in Mohmand districts to the new facility. He was informed that of the 290 plots, 106 had been leased out already while the Warsak Road plants would be accommodated in the rest of the plots. Waqas Ansari hailed the location of the SEZ. It's close to the Pak-Afghan Highway, so products developed here could be easily transported to Afghanistan and Central Asian countries. Moreover, it is situated along the Kabul River, downstream from Warsak Dam. Therefore, it's easy to ensure ample provision of water and waste management for the marble stone processing industry, he said.