



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

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**Saudi Arabia for enhanced trade ties with Pakistan**

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**China to work with Pakistan, other neighbors**

Detailed News On Page-08



**Bilawal Bhutto re-elected PPP chairman till 2025**

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## Briefs

### Bilawal re-elected PPP chairman

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: All the central office-bearers of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), including its chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari, have been "re-elected" for another four-year term without having any contest. The intra-party elections at the federal level were held in Karachi on Wednesday (Jan 6) "in accordance with Constitution of the PPP and the country's Elections Act 2017" and election commissioner Fauzia Habib announced the results, said an announcement by the party's media office here on Thursday.

### Covid-19 vaccination to be free

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Science and Technology Fawad Chaudhry said Friday that the government-sponsored coronavirus vaccines would be available to the people of Pakistan free of charge. The science and technology minister was responding to a person's question on Twitter. Meanwhile, in another tweet, the science minister said that the government would import 1.1 million coronavirus vaccine doses. He clarified that while the government would be importing the vaccine, the private sector would also be allowed to do the same.

### No one listening to families

DNA

QUETTA: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Siraj-ul-Haq on Friday has said that no one is listening to the bereaved families of the miners, who were shot dead in Machh area of Kachhi district on Sunday. Addressing a rally, the JI chief said that Islamabad is the 'graveyard' of 'apathetic' leaders.

### Holiday Notice

The offices of daily Islamabad POST shall remain closed on Saturday on account of weekly off therefore there will be no newspaper on Sunday.  
- Editor

## All demands of Hazara people met, says PM

Says he will go to Quetta after burial; assures culprits shall be brought to justice

ANSAR BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister PM Imran Khan on Friday vowed to visit the families of slain coal miners of Machh, to express solidarity with them after they bury their loved ones. According to the details, Imran Khan while addressing the inauguration ceremony of Technology Park in Islamabad, said "If the bereaved families bury the slain miners today, I will go to Quetta today." He said all of their demands had been met as of Thursday but the Hazara mourners were insisting on his visit to Quetta as a condition for the burial of the victims, which, he said, is uncalled for. "One of their demands is that they will bury the dead after the prime minister comes [to Quetta]," the PM said. The premier inaugurated a technology park in the federal capital Islamabad. After the establishment of

Continued on Page 06

### Shibli slams Opposition

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Friday responded to criticism by the Opposition over the use of the word "blackmail" by Prime Minister Imran Khan as he spoke about the sit-in in Quetta by the Hazara community. Faraz, in his rebuttal to the Opposition said: "The people who see a tragedy like this one as an opportunity for political point scoring are the ones who do not have any humanity left in them." He said the prime minister used the word "blackmail" for those very people who "politicise every matter". He said that the prime minister shares in the sorrow of the affected families and considers it his top-most priority to provide them justice.

## COAS hails Pak-Bahrain efforts to fight terrorism

DNA

BAHRAIN: General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) visited Bahrain on official visit from 06-08 January 2021. COAS called on His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, The Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander & Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Bahrain, His Excellency Field Marshal Sheikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, Commander-in-Chief Bahrain Defence Forces & His Royal Highness Lieutenant General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Isa Al Khalifa,



BAHRAIN: COAS Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa being presented with the Bahrain Order (First Class) by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for making significant contributions towards defence cooperation between both the Countries. - DNA

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## Maryam lashes out at PM for not visiting Quetta

BUREAU REPORT

### Sherry Rehman slams 'egoistic' PM

RANA FARRUKH / DNA

QUETTA: PML-N vice president Maryam Nawaz lashed out at Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday, castigating him for not visiting Quetta to meet relatives of the Machh tragedy victims. "This is the height of insensitivity, you are responsible for 220mn people," said Maryam Nawaz in her message to the prime minister, speaking to Geo News. "If you refer to the cries of the people as blackmail, then

ISLAMABAD: PPP vice-president Senator Sherry Rehman on Friday said that Prime Minister Imran Khan thinks that people asking him to fulfil their just demands are blackmailing him. Reacting to the primer's speech, made a few hours ago, the PPP leader said that the "egoistic" and "ruthless" prime minister has set the worst example. Slamming PM Imran Khan, Rehman said that his statement was "an insult to corpses of the slain coal miners." "He has proved that he is not only incompetent but also ruthless." "This fascist prime minister has no empathy for the people [...] The only brother of six sisters is dead; they have no man left in their family," she noted.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of Cuba in a meeting with President of Pakistan Dr. Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Friday. - DNA

## President Alvi lauds services of outgoing Cuban envoy

Says Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Cuba

A.M.BHATTI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has said that Pakistan attached utmost importance to its ties with Cuba and wants to further enhance bilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, economy, health and culture for the mutual benefit of the two countries. He said that Pakistan deeply appreciated the Cuban assistance in the wake of 2005 earthquake by sending medical teams and providing scholarships to Pakistani medical students. The President gave these remarks while talking to the outgoing Cuban

Ambassador, Mr. Gabriel Tiel Capote, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. While underlining the need to boost bilateral trade cooperation, the President said that both countries needed to identify and explore areas where the two countries can expand trade and investment cooperation. He also stressed the need for cultural and parliamentary exchanges between the two countries. The President expressed the hope that the outgoing Ambassador would continue to work to promote relations between Pakistan and Cuba. He congratulated the envoy on successful completion of his tenure in Pakistan and

expressed best wishes for his future endeavours. Earlier on Wednesday, Cuban envoy paid a farewell call on federal minister for information and broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz. During the meeting, Shibli Faraz further said that Pakistan has a rich and diverse cultural heritage that needs to be shared with the Cuban people. He said a large number of Pakistani students had benefitted from the scheme. He said that Cuba is a resilient nation that has made a remarkable contribution to the spheres of sports, music and medicine.

The Cuban envoy lauded the minister's remarks regarding Cuba and its people and said that Pakistan has supported them at the diplomatic level. He emphasized the need for the implementation of various MoUs signed between Cuba and Pakistan in different fields for the mutual benefit of the people of both countries. Both sides also discussed the measures taken by their governments to combat the COVID 19 epidemic. The minister wished the ambassador the very best in his future diplomatic engagements and hoped he would carry good memories of his stay in Pakistan.

### Trump won't attend Biden's swear-in

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump confirmed Friday what has been suspected for weeks: He will not attend Joe Biden's inauguration Jan. 20. "To all of those who have asked, I will not be going to the inauguration on January 20th," he announced on Twitter. Trump's decision to skip Biden's swearing-in ceremony comes after weeks of his refusal to acknowledge that Biden had defeated him in the Nov. 3 election. Trump finally acknowledged his loss in a video on Thursday, saying that a new administration will take office in January. After reports Thursday that Vice President Mike Pence was expected to attend the inauguration, Pence spokesman Devin O'Malley tweeted: "You can't attend something you haven't received an invitation to...." - DNA

## US delegation meets CJS

Issues ranging from regional security to deepening of bilateral defence and security to military cooperation were discussed



DNA

RAWALPINDI: A US delegation led by David Helvey, Assistant Secretary of Defence for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs visited General Headquarters to hold formal consultations on Pakistan-US Strategic Level Defence Dialogue. Pakistani delegation was led by Lieutenant General

Sahir Shamsad Mirza, Chief of General Staff, Pakistan Army. In a daylong session, issues ranging from regional security to deepening of bilateral defence and security / military to military cooperation were discussed. The discussions were held in very cordial and constructive manner with exchange of views and ideas from both sides.

## US records deadliest day of pandemic

DNA

WASHINGTON: Amid the chaos at the United States Capitol Hill, the country tallied its deadliest day of the pandemic as more than 4,000 people died of the novel coronavirus on Thursday. It is the first time US's single-day death toll has surpassed 4,000 - the country recorded 3,915 deaths a day earlier on Wednesday. The pandemic has now claimed more than 363,000 lives across America. More than 265,000 new COVID-19 cases were reported in one day. With over 21.4 million infections, US has the highest number of cases as well as deaths. But its deadliest day was overshadowed by the President Donald Trump's supporters storming the US Capitol, overwhelming police and forcing authorities to transport lawmakers to secure locations for their own safety. The riots left five dead.

## No rush to see US return to deal, says Khamenei

DNA

TEHRAN: Iran is in no hurry to see the US return to a 2015 nuclear deal with major powers after Joe Biden takes office this month, its supreme leader said Friday. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said it was not a question of "whether the United States returns or not", it was a matter of it lifting its unilateral sanctions. "We are in no rush and we are not insisting on their return. Our demand... is the lifting of sanctions," which outgoing US President Donald Trump reimposed after quitting the deal in 2018.

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EU chief warns members cannot negotiate separate vaccine deals - Page 06

OGDCL achieves milestone of adding massive production - Page 07

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## UAE to reopen all borders with Qatar today

The announcement on Friday came after a week in which Saudi Arabia and Qatar agreed to restore relations after three years of diplomatic rifts

POST REPORT / DNA

DUBAI: The UAE will reopen air, land and sea borders with Qatar from Saturday, WAM the UAE state news agency announced. Khalid Abdullah Belhouli, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Co-operation, said on Friday that the UAE will hold bilateral talks to begin to end all measures taken in relation to Qatar since June 5, 2017. This follows the signing of the Al Ula Statement on Tuesday at the GCC summit in Saudi Arabia. He said that the UAE will work to reopen all land,

sea and airports for incoming and outgoing transport, and that the relevant authorities in the UAE have been instructed with these measures, which will begin on January 9. These measures would strengthen the unity and cohesion of the Gulf, his statement added. The announcement on Friday came after a week in which Saudi Arabia and Qatar agreed to restore relations. The Al Ula Statement was then signed by all participants - including Qatar - during the 41st GCC summit. Qatar Airways restarted flights through Saudi Arabian airspace on Thursday night. UAE Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Dr Anwar Gargash said on Thursday that "practical measures

## Qatar says no change in Iran, Turkey relations

DOHA: Qatar's relations with Iran and Turkey will not be affected by Doha's recent reconciliation agreement with blockading states Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain, and Egypt, Doha's chief diplomat has said. Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said in an interview with The Financial Times on Thursday that despite making some concessions to end the Gulf dispute, Qatar would maintain an independent foreign policy. "Bilateral relationships are mainly driven by a sovereign decision of the country... [and] the national interest," he told the FT. "So there is no effect on our relationship with any other country." - DNA

would soon be introduced to restore travel and trade links with Qatar. Anwar Mohammed Gargash, UAE State Minister

for Foreign Affairs told a virtual media briefing, "We want to do this sooner rather than later." "The UAE is extremely supportive and positive about AlUla Declaration." But, he also said that the crisis will leave issues of trust, some will be easy to fix, but others will take a longer time. "We reiterate the GCC is more successful in its collective common market, rather than politically. So yes, it will take confidence-building. But we are turning a page on the crisis and starting on a positive note to build trust." Gargash also explained about the final communique

of the GCC leaders' summit in the Saudi city of AIULA Summit. He said that the statement affirmed "the solidarity of the Gulf States regarding any direct or indirect interference in their internal affairs, and members agreed that no country's sovereignty be violated or its security targeted." "The communique is significant and an important step towards resolving a difficult and painful crisis. The crisis is coming to an end, which also depends on transparency and constructive approach," by all, the minister said, adding that the announcement was "big news for the GCC and the wider Arab region."

## Briefs

## 10-year-old girl raped in Charsadda

DNA

CHARSADDA: A 10-year-old girl was raped by her brother-in-law in Charsadda district's Parang area on Tuesday (January 5), it surfaced on Thursday. The police have registered a first information report (FIR) and apprehended the culprit.

The FIR, registered on the complaint of the victim's mother, stated that the accused Saleem, a resident of Charsadda, is her son-in-law and married to her eldest daughter for the last four years. She relayed that two days ago, Saleem visited her house and took her 10-year-old daughter along with him. She states in the FIR that on January 6, the health of her child suddenly deteriorated and upon inquiry, her daughter informed that her brother-in-law Saleem had raped her at his residence and ever since her condition was not good. The 38-year-old accused is expected to be presented in court soon, whereas the child has been sent for a medical examination and hospitalised.

Speaking to The Express Tribune, child rights activist Imran Takkar said, "It is unfortunate that we often talk about the lack of government's interest in things in our country but the ground reality is different. "Yes, the government is not interested in these things due to the lack of resources but it is also true that parents also lack awareness. "It is the responsibility of the parents to protect their children and not trust anyone, including close relatives."

## Kashmir is Pakistan: Ertugrul actor Celal Ali

ABRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Ertugrul actor Celal Ali, who plays the character of Abdul Rahman Alp in the hit Turkish television series, shared a post on Instagram where he said that Kashmir is a part of Pakistan. In a message for the "people of the brotherly crescent country" Celal said that the people of Turkey were standing with Pakistanis and were not only offering them greetings but also praying for them.

The Turkish actor is part of the delegation that is visiting Pakistan and has held talks with Prime Minister Imran Khan and senior members of the Pakistani government. Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday urged the Pakistani entertainment industry to take inspiration from the famous Turkish show and come up with a quality local production to provide the youth with a welcoming Ertugrul-like alternative of standard and glamorized content. "If Pakistani film and drama industry presents quality local production, it will not only produce but also provide the youth with an alternative of standard and glamorized content, which will be welcomed like that in the case of Ertugrul," he had said. The prime minister had expressed these views during a meeting here with the founding team of popular Turkish drama serial Ertugrul led by Kemal Tekden. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Paraz, Kashmir Committee Chairman Shehryar Khan Afridi, and the representatives of Turkish and Pakistan film industry were present in the meeting.

## Waqar condemns Machh incident

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka has strongly condemned the senseless killing of workers belonging to the Hazara community in Balochistan. Prime Minister Imran Khan should have gone to express sympathy before the demand of the family. He said that Hazara community is a peaceful and patriotic citizen and the government should take concrete steps for their protection. If the government fails to protect the people, power should be handed over to the people.



ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Punjab on Business Investment and Trade Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan calls on Prime Minister Imran Khan. – DNA

## NADRA help sought to identify Karak temple attackers

On the other hand, a local namely Abdul Shah has also been arrested by police. He is the man who moved the the local court against the renovation and extension of the temple two months ago

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The police authorities in Karak has requested the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to help establish the identity of the people visible in the temple attack videos collected by investigation teams. "We have sought the help of NADRA to arrest all the accused involved in the incident and we are also mobilising human intelligence teams as approximately

300 people have been charged in the FIR," said DIG Kohat Tayyab Hafiz Cheema while speaking to The Express Tribune, adding that around 109 suspects had already been arrested and efforts are being made to apprehend the rest. On the other hand, a local namely Abdul Shah has also been arrested by police. He is the man who moved the the local court against the renovation and extension of the temple two months ago.

Local residents informed that in order to expand the building, the Hindu community collected mon-

ey and started paying triple the market price for the houses and shops located adjacent to it. "Abdullah Shah is a local resident who is an opportunist in nature. He witnessed the entire process and then purchased two shops in order to resell it to the Hindu community and make some money," they claimed. "By that time the Hindu community had largely acquired the land for the temple and despite Abdullah Shah's best efforts, they refused to buy more of it." This prompted Shah to play the religious card and he moved

the civil court against the renovation and extension plan because his financial stakes were directly involved. "Another local cleric Faizullah is also one of the masterminds of the attack. It is said that he was a Khateeb in Pakistan Air Force (PAF) but during the Musharraf government he was court martialled and arrested," the locals added. "Then he came to Terri village and started working as a cleric and joined JUIF too."

Sources familiar with the incident said Faizullah is well known for his hawkish stance on all religious

matters and because of this he lost his government job in the past. "Faizullah has been on the run ever since the attack and police has been conducting raid to apprehend him," DPO Karak Irfanullah Marwat said, adding that Abdullah has already been arrested by police. On the other hand, locals also claimed that other clerics were instigating hatred and openly threatening an attack at the Hindu temple. Police, however, refuted any such reports. "We have no report of any hate speech by a local cleric," said DIG Cheema.

## Orphan student takes NADRA to court for defying order

DNA

KARACHI: A Matriculation student approached on Friday the Sindh High Court (SHC) seeking contempt of court proceedings against NADRA for defying its order regarding issuance of a B-form. The orphan girl moved an application in the SHC, stating that NADRA is not issuing her B-form despite the court directives. Though the court had ordered for issuance of B-form on the basis of her maternal aunt's CNIC, NADRA has been asking her to bring her parents for the purpose, she lamented. Earlier, the SHC

had ordered NADRA to issue B-form to the Matriculation student on the basis of her maternal aunt's CNIC within ten days. During the hearing, the court asked a lawyer representing the Board of Secondary Education Karachi to explain why a B-form was necessary for issuance of an admit card for exams, to which he replied that it was necessary for a student's identification. Petitioner Maham Rahman stated before the court that the board refused to issue her an admit card for exam because she didn't have a B-form that NADRA issues on the basis of parents' CNICs.

## Establishment Division notifies various transfers

ISLAMABAD: The Establishment Division Friday issued notifications regarding the transfers and postings of various bureaucrats belonging to different groups to different ministries and divisions. According to the notification, officer belonging to the Pakistan Administrative Services, a BS-22 officer Naveed Kamran Balouch has relinquished the charge of the post of Secretary, Finance Division Islamabad on December, 28, 2020. The current charge of the post of Secretary, Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division has granted to Lt. (Retd.) Ejaz Ahmad Khan a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted a Additional Sec-

retary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Division, is extended for a further period of three months with affect from 19-10-2020 or till the posting of regular incumbent whichever is earlier. Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh, a BS-21 officer of Pakistan Administrative Service, presently posted under government of Punjab, is transferred and directed to report to Establishment Division, with immediate effect and until further orders. Similarly, Umer Nawaz Khan, a BS-19 officer of Secretariat Group on his retirement from Government service on attaining the age of superannuation, has relinquished the charge of the Deputy Secretary (BS-19) Finance on 4 January, 2021. – APP

## TCF's financial disclosures are the best in South Asia

TCF has been declared the winner of the "Best Presented Annual Report" for the fourth time. Previously, it has received the Runner-up award and Certificate of Merit multiple times

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Citizens Foundation (TCF) is the winner of South Asia's Best Presented Annual Report Award 2019 in the Non-Government Organization category, as declared by SAFA – the South Asian Federation of Accountants. SAFA is a forum of the highest-ranking accounting bodies in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) area, which includes Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Ne-

pal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. The SAFA Committee for Improvement in Transparency, Accountability, & Governance (ITAG) announces awards for best presented annual report each year on the basis of its evaluation of published annual reports entries from aforementioned South Asian countries. TCF has been declared the winner of the "Best Presented Annual Report" for the fourth time. Previously, it has received the Runner-up award and Certificate of Merit multiple times. "TCF has always been committed to the highest standards of ethical princi-

ples, governance and transparency in its disclosures," said Syed Asaad Ayub Ahmad, President and CEO, TCF. "We give it all to ensure that our donors and other stakeholders know how much donations are being raised and how they are being utilized for various programmes within TCF." Established in 1995, "TCF is perhaps the largest network of independently run schools in the world," as quoted by "The Economist." It is educating 266,000 deserving students across its network of 1,625 schools in Pakistan where girls make up 50% of the classroom.



HYDERABAD: A large number of peoples take part in the protest in favor of Mach victims at Hyderabad bypass. – DNA / Photo by Jan Ali Laghari

## CAA directed to share info about passengers

CAA as a regulator, cannot absolve itself from its responsibility of sharing rights of passengers by merely putting information about their rights on its web site, at some obscure corner, which is not easily accessible to the citizen, the Commission observed

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Information Commission has directed the Civil Aviation Authority to prominently display passengers' rights at airports, airlines counters, and on websites. According to details, on an appeal of a citizen the commission has issued a detail verdict and directed the Civil Aviation Authority to ensure information about the rights of passengers is prominently displayed at airports, on its web site and that passengers are apprised about their responsibilities as well as their rights through Public Ad-

dress Systems. Moreover, airlines should also make sure this information available on their web sites, electronic and printed tickets and at airline counters.

CAA as a regulator, cannot absolve itself from its responsibility of sharing rights of passengers by merely putting information about their rights on its web site, at some obscure corner, which is not easily accessible to the citizen, the Commission observed. A citizen, Abu Ahmed Akif had lodged an appeal against a private airline in which he had maintained that he was informed by its call center about the cancellation of the flight, (both

through text message and voice call) but he was not informed about his right to be endorsed on other airlines. He appealed with the commission that "While the airline has settled this case by providing additional tickets, the issue of dissemination of passenger rights on tickets and by call centers remains unresolved - and hence citizens continue to suffer both financial and other losses". The commission maintained that the Appellant has raised a pertinent point that "a commercial organization cannot be expected to act against its interests by giving full information on rights which hurts its commercial interests". The commission in its order has

observed that "it is responsibility of CAA, as a regulator, to ensure that both the commercial interests of airlines and the rights of passengers are protected". The twelve pages verdict of PIC states that the Right of Access to Information Act 2017 requires that citizens not only have 'improved access' to information but that the information should be made 'accessible' to all citizens, including citizens with low-literacy level and those with different disabilities. PIC order states, it would be stating the obvious that passengers should not be treated as a homogenous group of people while disseminating information

about their rights as passengers. Passengers also include those with different disabilities i.e., low-vision, blindness, speech, hearing and physical impairments. The ability to exercise the right of access to information by passengers with different disabilities is dictated by the nature of their different disabilities. As such, it is responsibility of the CAA to ensure that both the content and the design of the web sites of CAA and those of airlines is accessible and that information about rights of passengers should be provided catering to the special needs of passengers with different disabilities.

## SMIU Syndicate holds its 24th meeting

DNA

KARACHI: The Syndicate of Sindh Madressatul Islam University (SMIU) meeting with its Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr Mujeebuddin Sahrai Memon, in chair, held 24th online session on Friday and decided to upgrade office superintendent, office assistant and clerks as per Sindh Government rules.

The meeting approved the minutes of the last Syndicate about Academic Council and Financial Planning Commission. The Syndicate approved the committee to form SMIU's policy on sexual harassment as per the Higher Education Commission's policy guidelines. The Syndicate members welcomed the appointment of Prof Memon as the Vice Chancellor of the SMIU, saying the historical institution of the country will progress further under the leadership of Prof. Memon. The meeting was attended by CEO Indus Hospital Dr Abdul Bari, representative of Sindh Higher Education Commission Dr. A.Q. Mughal, Director Centre for Excellence in Journalism-IBA Kamal Siddiqi, Haji Hanif Tayyab, Shahzad Mahmood and others.

## Karachi: Five motorcycles set ablaze

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: At least five motorcycles were set ablaze on Friday reportedly after commuters clashed with Shia community protestors near Drigh Road, Sharea Faisal in Karachi. The countrywide protests that began three days ago, to express solidarity with families of 11 Hazara community miners in Machh, Balochistan last week, have spread to over 15 different spots in Karachi. Road blocks put in place owing to the protests have resulted in gridlocks across the city at peak hours. However, traffic is being diverted from affected roads to alternative routes.

The Shia Ulema Council, Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen, Imamia Students Organisation along with other members of Shia community, have been staging sit-ins at multiple spots across Karachi, to express solidarity with the miners' families.

The sit-ins are being held at Numaish Chowrang, Nipa Chowrang, University Road near Safari Park, Abul Hassan Isphani Road, Kamran Chowrang, Natha Khan Bridge, Quidabad, Shah Faisal Colony, Power House Chowrang, Khuda ki Basti, Nazimabad no.1 and other locations.

Long queues of traffic choked University Road, MA Jinnah Road, Sharea Faisal and the National Highway. Both tracks of Abul Hassan Isphani Road also remained closed for traffic.

"Their [the miners' families] only demand is that Prime Minister Imran Khan visit them, condole the deaths of their beloved family members and give assurance that the perpetrators of the attack would be caught and punished at the earliest," said one of the protesters.

## Parliamentary delegation visits Chaman border

DNA

QUETTA: A parliamentary delegation led by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Establishment Muhammad Shehzad Arbab visited the Chaman border on Thursday. During the visit, the parliamentary delegation visited FC Fort, Chaman BCP and Chaman Chamber of Commerce and Industry to hold meetings. The delegation was briefed on various initiatives including keeping the border open seven days a week, restoring railway connectivity, reducing the number of security check posts, facilitating the local population and bilateral trade among other measures. On the occasion, SAPM Arbab said progress was being made on various issues to boost trade with Afghanistan and facilitate movement on the Chaman border. He added that bilateral trade relations between Pakistan, Afghanistan and better people-to-people contacts between the two countries were very important for Pakistan. "Therefore, we will take all necessary steps to remove obstacles to the smooth flow of trade between the two countries," he said.

## Briefs

### Stage play "Char Diwari" organized at PUCAR

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council and Pak Event Production jointly presented the corrective drama Chardiwari. The special guest of the play was Director Arts Council Waqar Ahmed. The play has been written by Zeeshan Alvi, while the instructions have been given by Abbas Nanna.

The play featured Saeed Anwar, Imran Rushdie, Sobia, Jhalak Ali, Lubna Shahzadi, Reha Yusuf, and Raja Sattar. Waqar Ahmed of Arts said that the title of the drama was the Unique; all the actors have played their roles in the best way.

The Director Arts Council clarified that the platform of the Arts Council is always open for standard dramas. There is a need to provide quality entertainment to the people, so that the people's confidence in stage plays can be restored. A large number of people were present in the Arts Council to watch the plays.

### Bike-lifter gang busted; 3 arrested

RAWALPINDI: In a crackdown against criminal elements, Rawat Police have busted a bike-lifter gang and arrested its three members. Police also recovered five stolen motorcycles, spare parts of motorcycles, and other items from their possession. According to a police spokesman, Rawat police in a raid, arrested ring leader namely Nazeem Ullah alias Naqi, Khanzada alias Khan and Usman Akbar, three bike lifters and recovered five stolen motorcycles, spare parts and other items from their possession. He informed that the Police team constituted under the supervision of SHO Rawat Police Station on the directives of SP Saddar conducted a raid and managed to net the bike lifters.

As per preliminary investigation, the criminals were also involved in other crimes, he added. He stated that other members and facilitators of the bike lifters would also be arrested following the investigations with the detainee culprits. Superintendent Police (SP) Saddar lauded endeavours of Rawat police team for netting the bike lifters. - APP

### Twenty Five lawbreakers including two gamblers netted

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in their crackdown against anti-social elements have arrested 25 outlaws including 14 for possessing liquor, drugs and weapons, three kite sellers, two gamblers, two proclaimed offenders, two drug peddlers and three for fireworks besides recovering 1430 kites, 18 kite flying string rolls, fireworks and other items from their possession.

According to a police spokesman, police held 14 accused for possessing a liquor bottle, 30 liter liquor, 1690 grams charras and a 30 bore pistol.

He said, City, Rattaamral, Sadiqabad, Kahuta, Waris Khan, Westridge, Murree and Gujar Khan police conducted operations in their jurisdictions and apprehended Rehmatullah, Ali Qureshi, Mujeeb ur Rehman, Sajid Munir, Hamza, Waqar Ahmed, Usama Khurshid, Waqas, Adnan, Fawad, Muhammad Rehan, Rehman Farooq, Nasir Abbas and Sohail for possessing a liquor bottle, 30 liter liquor, 1690 grams charras and a 30 bore pistol. Waris Khan police held two namely Hamza Aziz and Arbab Safdar allegedly involved in betting while playing cards. Police also recovered cash stake money Rs 5000, three mobile phones, a rifle, a 30 bore pistol and other items from their possession. Police also arrested two kite sellers namely Noshawan, Abdullah and Usaama Khurshid and recovered 1430 kites and 18 kite flying string rolls. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Senior photojournalist Shahid Raju of CENTRELINE magazine presenting daily Islamabad POST to Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Malikiy. - DNA

## Nasdaq welcomes opening of USPICC office in Islamabad

USPICC has appointed Muhammad Ahmed as President of Pakistan Chapter for two years while Malik Sohail Hussain has been appointed as Secretary General for five years

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nasdaq Stock Market, also known as Nasdaq or NASDAQ which is an American stock exchange at One Liberty Plaza in New York City has welcomed opening of USPICC office in Islamabad. Nasdaq, it may be mentioned, is ranked second on the list of stock exchanges by market capitalization of shares traded, behind the New York Stock Exchange. Earlier, the US-Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce and Industry (US-Pakistan ICCI) had appointed two leading business leaders for their Pakistan chapter.

The Chairman of US-Pakistan ICCI M. Siddique Sheikh and the board of the chamber had approved appointment of Muhammad Ahmed as President of Pakistan Chapter for two years while Malik Sohail Hussain has been appointed as Secretary General for five years. On the occasion, Siddique Sheikh hoped that both the leaders will strive hard to bring business community of the US and Pakistan closer and play their due role in promoting the common cause



of mutual understanding and prosperity. He said that we are looking forward to the newly-appointed office bearers to promote trade, commerce, understanding, networking, linkages, exchange of delegations and sectoral exhibitions in the both countries. Both the newly appointed businessmen said that we are thrilled to have an opportunity to represent the respected forum of US-Pakistan ICCI which has been serving businesses since long.

They said that promotion of SMEs will be high on their agenda as it is the backbone of Pakistan economy but it is facing many problems which must be resolved. Muhammad Ahmed is a renowned businessman and CEO of leading Group of Companies in Islamabad who has served as President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, rendered valuable services in fight against coronavirus, organised many successful events and strived hard to bring business community closer. The Pakistani business community has also welcomed the decision and greeted both the leading business figures on this success.

## Qazi Jamil ur Rehman takes charge as IGP

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The officer of Police Services of Pakistan (PSP) Qazi Jamil ur Rehman on Friday assumed the charge as new Inspector General of Police Islamabad. On arrival of Central Police Office, a smartly turned out contingent of Islamabad po-

lice presented him guard of honor. He had an introductory meeting with all senior officials of Islamabad police and was also briefed by all Divisional Heads about their performance.

Qazi Jamil ur Rehman belongs to 25th Common and serving BS-20. He joined police force in 1998 as ASP and has served as District

Police Officer (DPO) Swabi, Senior Superintendent of Police (Investigation) Peshawar, DPO Nowshera, DPO Abbottabad, DIG Malakand, DIG (Special Branch), CCPO Peshawar and also in Intelligence Bureau. Qazi Jamil ur Rehman was serving as DIG (Hazara Division) before his appointment as IGP Islamabad.

## PAL to hold seminar on Ahmed Faraz

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL), in collaboration with Ahmed Faraz Trust, is going to organize "Ahmed Faraz National Literary Seminar" on the occasion of 90th birth anniversary of famous Urdu poet Ahmed Faraz. The seminar will be held on Tuesday, January 12, 2021 at 4:00 pm in the conference hall of PAL, a press release on Friday said. - APP

## Govt establishes Corona vaccination centre in Islamabad

*He said that the ministry has also started training of vaccination staff on Corona vaccine in the centre*

ISLAMABAD: The ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Friday established first Corona vaccination centre in the federal capital at Tarlai as substantial progress is likely for early vaccine availability and deployment in country. According to an official of the ministry, the vaccination centre was equipped with latest facilities to maintain quality of vaccine while citizens have been asked to register themselves through helpline 1166. He said that the ministry has also started training of vaccination staff on Corona vaccine in the centre. He said that strict preventive measures were adopted to avoid further spread of Coronavirus in the country related with the closure of educational institutions besides fully implementation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). He added the government had tried its level best to ensure adopting safety measures to protect citizens in order to contain the disease like imposing ban on public gatherings, marriages halls and restaurants and restriction on use of dining places of restaurants that resulted decrease in number of corona cases. He said that the government had adopted effective strategy to combat COVID-19 for reduction in corona cases in the country. He said that the government had also taken strict measures for prompt response to the disease. He added team at National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) was doing efficient work against the disease. He said that the main focus of the strategy was to control the disease on one hand and maintaining business activities on the other hand. He said that all concerned federal, provincial, public and private institutions were playing remarkable role under NCOC against the disease. He said that all possible measures would be adopted to control COVID-19 to avoid further load on already burdened health system of the country. - DNA



ISLAMABAD: Delegation of RCCI led by President Mr. Mohammad Nasir Mirza visited Serena hotels and met with Mr. Faisal Director Sales & Marketing for discussion on future collaboration. - DNA

## AIOU spending billions on strengthening its network

AIOU is the only university of Pakistan which has established its own endowment fund and from current fiscal year all payments of pension would be made from its interest

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) was spending in billions on faculty development program, to strengthen IT infrastructure, expansion of regional network to the remotest and underdeveloped areas of the country as well as on providing financial assistance to deserving students. This was said by AIOU Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum while addressing education beat reporters of Rawalpindi and Islamabad yesterday. He, further, added that uni-

versity has taken special measures to strengthen its financial sustainability and consequently university is managing all expenditures on the faculty development program, enhancement of university infrastructure as well as financial support of the students from its own resources. AIOU is the only university of Pakistan which has established its own endowment fund and from current fiscal year all payments of pension would be made from its interest. Within the limited time

period of two years, university has established 10 regional offices in the country. This network is being further expanded as the projects of establishing regional offices in Ziarat, Kashmir, Liyya, Khuzdar, Wana and Meran Shah are in the pipeline. Moreover, foundation stones have been laid in Mithi and Moro recently.



Similarly, he said, university is negotiating with the provincial governments and district administrations for acquiring government land to establish new regional centers in the remotest and underdeveloped areas of Sindh, Baluchistan, KPK, GB and AJK. In collaboration with Oracle Corporation, AIOU will have a state-of-the-art

automated application system to automate all academic, administrative and financial processes of the university by June 2021 making it the only university of Asia which would be fully transformed to automation, he added. While discussing AIOU's contributions in providing educational facilities to the underprivileged and marginalized segments of the society, Dr Zia Ul-Qayyum said that university offers free of cost education up to matriculation level to the people of Baluchistan and

former FATA besides transgender, prisoners and special children and from spring 2021 semester, this service would be provided to the people of GB as well. University would also initiate revision of curriculum at all levels from the next semester, he said. He concluded the media briefing while expressing the hope that media will support AIOU in its cause of providing education to the masses of Pakistan through its objective critique aimed at bringing reforms in the system. - APP

## 3 sentenced to death in blasphemous content case

ISLAMABAD: An Anti Terrorism Court (ATC) here Friday sentenced three accused to death involved in uploading of blasphemous content at social media.

The court also announced ten-year imprisonment sentence and Rs100,000 fine to another accused on charges of disrespecting the religion. ATC Judge Raja Jawad Abbas Hassan announced the decision which was reserved earlier after listening the two sides at large.

The court announced the sentence to the accused under sections A-295, C-295 and anti terrorism act's section G-7 after the charges proved against them.

The three accused who were awarded death sentence included Nasir Ahmed, Abdul Waheed and Rana Noman while Professor Anwar Ahmed was awarded ten years imprisonment along fine. The accused were produced before the ATC from Adiala Jail amid foolproof security arrangements in place. It may be mentioned here that the Islamabad Police had registered first information report (FIR) against the four accused on directives of Islamabad High Court (IHC)'s Justice Shaukat Aziz Saddiqi on March 19, 2017 on the complaint of Hafiz Ahtisham.

The court had reserved its judgment on December 15, 2020 after conclusion of arguments from both sides at large. The court had also declared other accused including Tayyab Sardar, Rao Qaiser Shahzad, Fazl Perwaiz and Pervaiz Iqbal as absconder and had issued their non-bailable arrest warrants. - APP

## Police held 2 kite sellers; recover 1280 kites

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi police in their crackdown against kite sellers and kite flyers conducted raid and seized their stock of 1280 kites, 18 chemical strings rolls here on Friday. A police spokesman informed that Airport Police intercepted a vehicle and held Noshawan and Abdullah involved in kite selling illegally and recovered 1280 kites with 18 chemical string rolls from his possession.

All the recovered kites and material has been taken into custody by police while accused have been sent behind the bar, spokesman said. He said, Police on the directives of City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Muhammad Ahsan Younas were conducting raids against the kite flying ban violators and taking action in accordance with the law. - APP

## IESCO issues power suspension schedule

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule:-

From 09:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Shamasabad, National Market, Ghausia Cly, PTCL, Haidry Chowk, Tariq Shaheed, Urology Center feeders, From 09:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Bank Road 1,2, Haider Road, NCL, Ahmedabad, Lila Town, Dhok Awan, Zaraj, New Rawat, Bahr Kaliyal, Gharial, Noor Muhammad, Faizabad, Kohistan, Kashif Gul, Mix Industrial, Model Town, Ghazi Koli, Industrial Estate, Sarai Kharboza, Pind Hoon, Paswal, Wapda Town, Sangjani, Shah Allah Ditta, Chakral, I-10/2, NDC-1, Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, New Exchange, G-10/4, G-10/2, G-9/1, G-10/1, CWO, Fazal Ghee Mill, SES, Kidney Center, Police Line, RCCI 1,2,3, 4, Sihala, Tarlai, H-8, Highway, Iqbal Town, Fazia, NPCC-2, Farash Town, Lohi Bhai, Shakar Pariyan, Corotal Hotel, G-10/2, Chasnpur, Old Exchange, G-14/4, Pir Maher Ali Shah, Abdul Qadeer Khan Raja Sultan, Kurry Road, Tariq Shaheed, Tamasabad, Rawal, Kachehri, Pipili, Balkssar, Malikwal, Patwali, Multan Kharud, Tamon, Major Riaz Shaheed, Bilalabad Feeders. - APP

## Briefs

## NADRA to inform about vaccination centers

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government has completed preparations for vaccination against coronavirus. Health department staff has been trained under the supervision of NCOC and NADRA will provide patients with PIN codes and information about their respective vaccination centers through SMS. According to details, NADRA and Health Department have laid out their joint strategy as per the directive of NCOC. In the first phase, paramedical staff and doctors will be vaccinated. The Ministry of Health has set up centers in Tarlai and Benazir Bhutto Hospital Rawalpindi, while the NCOC also plans to set up vaccination centers across the country.

## Worker's remittances surge 16.2% in December

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The workers' remittances sent by the overseas Pakistanis surged by 16.2 percent to 2.44 billion in December 2020 against same month of last year when the remittances inflow was recorded at \$2.1 billion. "Remittances from overseas Pakistanis rose further to \$2.4 bln in December compared to December 2019 and 4.2 percent over November 2020," said State Bank of Pakistan said in its official twitter account. For the first six months of this fiscal year, remittances reached \$14.2 billion and have risen 24.9 percent over last fiscal year. Efforts under the Pakistan Remittances Initiative (PRI) and the gradual re-opening of major host destinations such as Middle East, Europe and United States contributed to the sustained increase in workers' remittances. The details show that in December, the worker's inflow from USA increased from \$159.2 million last year to \$203.2 million in the same month of 2020, whereas from United Kingdom the inflow also surged to \$326.9 million from \$229 million in December 2019. Similarly from Saudi Arabia the workers' remittances also rose from \$577 million to 624.8 million while that from Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman, the workers' inflow also rose to \$456.6 million, \$51 million, \$5.5 million, \$40 million, \$64 million and \$89 million respectively. The workers' remittances from European countries also jumped to \$246 million in December 2020 compared to the inflow worth of \$150 million in December 2019 and \$219 million in November 2020.

## ATC sentences two times life RI in firing case

DNA

RAWALPINDI: An Anti Terrorist Court here Friday sentenced two times life Rigorous Imprisonment (RI) and a fine of Rs 3 million to an accused Danish Kiani in a case of firing on police officials while two co-accused Sajjad Shah and Ikram were awarded 22 years RI. The three accused were found guilty of firing on police officials at a check post in Airport Police station area in 2019 in which constable Waheed Iqbal was seriously injured. ATC Judge Shaukat Kamal Dar announced the verdict after recording evidence of the witnesses and final arguments by both sides.



ISLAMABAD: Delegation of RCCI led by President Mohammad Nasir Mirza visited PTV and met with Chairman Naem Bukhari. both organizations exchanged views of mutual cooperation. President RCCI also presented shield to Chairman PTV. – DNA

## Hundreds of inmates suffering from corona across Pakistan

The report suggested provincial governments to build jails in every district headquarter, and the Federal Government in Islamabad. Every jail should have separate and independent portion for women and juvenile prisoners, with sleeping space for every prisoner with adequate toilet and hygiene facilities, it proposed

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman Friday submitted its 8th implementation report in the Supreme Court (SC) regarding miserable conditions of women in jails. In the report submitted by Secretary Wafaqi Mohtasib Secretariat (WMS), Dr Jamal Nasir through Hafiz Ahsan Khokhar, stated that all the Provinces had been directed to constitute two Committees including a District Oversight Committees and Welfare Committees for Improvement of life of prisoners in Jails especially for Children, Women and Destitute / Resource-less Prisoners. Ensuring that District Oversight Committees are constituted to monitor the implementation of Orders of Supreme Court in their respective Districts and to submit deficiencies, if any, to the respective Home Department / IG Prisons, it added. The report stated that these

committees should consist of members from the Civil Society, Bars, Education and Health Sectors, who had proven track record of significant contributions for improvement of life of the prisoners. The report stated that the Ministry of Interior and Provincial Home / Prison Departments had been directed to appoint Senior Officers to act as a Focal Person to enable surprise visits of the above said Committees. The Committees would submit a comprehensive schedule of visits to the respective Focal Persons, it added. According to the report, the Law & Justice Commission together with Advocates General and Provincial Ombudsmen to review and submit proposals for significant expansion of probation / parole facilities to reduce pressure on accommodation facilities in jails. The Probation and Parole

system also needed to be revisited and made more effective to deal not only with overcrowding but also for reformation of convicts, juvenile and first-time offenders, it added. The report suggested provincial governments to build jails in every district headquarter, and the Federal Government in Islamabad. Every jail should have separate and independent portion for women and juvenile prisoners, with sleeping space for every prisoner with adequate toilet and hygiene facilities, it proposed. The report suggested that there was a need to link Biometric system in jails with courts for maintaining the record of prisoners. Peshi roaster and jail record / registers should also be computerized / automated, it added. It suggested that the Provincial governments should be directed

to proceed accordingly and ensure development of an interface between jails, courts and NADRA for monitoring and verification of the prisoners' record. Drug users and mentally insane prisoners to be kept outside the premises of the jail in drug clinics/homes for mentally retarded prisoners and provided medical treatment, it stated and added that the hardcore/high profile criminals such as murderers, terrorist, extortionists should be kept separate from the ordinary or under trial prisoners who are not involved in such heinous crimes. It stated that the prisoners with HIV, Hepatitis, T.B. and drug addicts should be segregated and kept apart from other prisoners and strict surveillance should be done in jails for protecting the prisoners from physical and sexual assaults. It recommended that the Higher

Education Commission of Pakistan, the University falling in respective territorial area of jail, Allama Iqbal Open University, and other good reputed Government institutions/ organizations should be directed to assist in improving educational and skill training facilities including missing facilities / payment of fines to deserving prisoners. It stated that the concerned Ministries at Federal and Provincial level should be directed to allocate necessary funds and resources for improvement in jails and establishment of Prisoners Voluntary Donations Fund at provincial level be ensured. The report suggested that Pakistan Bar Council and Provincial Bar Councils should be advised to provide free legal aid to prisoners and especially, to the Under-Trial Prisoners and for appeal purpose. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Members of civil society participate in a protest against police murder of Osama Satti in front of National press club Islamabad. – DNA / Photo by Khayam Abbasi

## Osama Satti's family demands Judicial Inquiry Commission

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The family of young Osama Satti, who was brutally killed by Islamabad Police in the federal capital Islamabad, staged a protest rally from National Press Club Islamabad to D-Chowk on Friday along with civil society. Rally was attended by thousands of citizens from Murree, Kotli Satyan and the twin cities. The participants held banners and placards in their hands for a transparent investigation of Osama Sati murder case. On this occasion, the Joint Action Committee in the Osama murder case and the father of Osama Satti demand from the government to set up a Judicial Inquiry Commission for a transparent investigation of the case. They further said that the police was showing impartiality in the investigation of the case and our protest would continue till the killers of Osama were convicted. Upon reaching D-Chowk, protestors announced a sit-in till the demands are approved. A delegation of the administration led by Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Interior, Raja Khurram Nawaz and Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Hamza Shafiq held talks with the

sit-in committee. On the demand of committee, the District Magistrate wrote the Chief Commissioner Islamabad to request the Registrar Islamabad High Court to set up a Judicial Commission. After which the end of the sit-in was announced. Earlier five policemen arrested over their involvement in the murder of 22-year-old Osama Satti in an alleged staged shootout were axed from service. The cops, identified as sub-inspector Ifukhar Ahmed and constables Muhammad Mustafa, Shakeel Ahmed, Mudassar Mukhtiar, and Saeed, are currently in police custody on physical remand. They have been dismissed from service for "failing to handle the situation in professional manner and directly firing on the vehicle", thereby "bringing a bad name to the department." "Keeping in view of whole episode and his unprofessional approach towards official duties which has resulted [in] such unpleasant incident, the undersigned reached to the conclusion that his attitude towards official tasks is unbefitting and his further retention in the disciplined force like Islamabad Police is not justified," read a dismissal letter issued to one of the personnel.

## WHO hands over medical equipment to PIMS

ISLAMABAD: World Health Organization (WHO) Representative in Pakistan, Dr Palitha Mahipala on Friday handed over medical equipment and Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC) supplies worth Rs 4.48 million to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS). The supplies provided for the IPC and ICU Units will strengthen Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and case management at PIMS

hospital Islamabad. The donation included ECG machines, pulse oximeters, laryngoscope, leads, IBP cables and transducers for ventilators for the ICU, KF94 face masks, desktop computer, printer, laptop and office furniture for the IPC unit. Addressing the ceremony, Dr Mahipala highlighted the importance of IPC measures for combating healthcare-associated infections and

ensuring the quality and safety of health services delivery. He said that COVID-19 response provides an opportunity to build sustainable systems for IPC in the country. Executive Director PIMS, Professor Dr Anser Masood appreciated the steady contribution of the WHO Pakistan under the dynamic leadership of Dr Mahipala for supporting PIMS as one of the model IPC implementation sites. – APP

## CPSC hosts journalists delegation from GB

Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, warmly welcomed the delegation on their visit to ISSI and briefed them about the structure of ISSI and its contribution in enhancing China-Pakistan ties

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a delegation of Journalists from Gilgit Press Club on January 8, 2021. Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director China-Pakistan Study Centre, warmly welcomed the delegation on their visit to ISSI and briefed them about the structure of ISSI and its contribution in enhancing China-Pakistan ties. Dr. Shabbir also highlighted the working of CPSC, its achievements in the past two years and also shared the planned activities for the upcoming year. Ms. Neelum Nigar, Research Fellow, CPSC present-



ed an overview of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and highlighted the potentials of proposed CPEC projects in Gilgit Baltistan. Later, an interactive session was held between Director, CPSC and members of the delegation. The members shared their ideas in order to speed up the work of CPEC projects in Gilgit Baltistan and numerous suggestions were put forth to address the existing issues. While concluding, Imtiaz Sultan, Coordinator of the delegation, thanked ISSI and Director CPSC for providing the platform for journalists from Gilgit Baltistan to deliberate on various issues and hoped that such meetings will continue in future as well.

## Capital records 155 fresh corona cases

ISLAMABAD: The COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 155 new corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Friday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 156 cases were reported on Thursday while 136 cases were reported on Wednesday. He said so far 38,842 cases were reported from the federal capital while 436 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 36,231 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. They also started taking actions on violation of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related with the corona while visiting marriage halls, markets and petrol pumps by its inspection teams. The administration also sealed schools, shops, workshop and restaurants on violation of SOPs. The inspection teams also issued notices to marriage halls besides imposing fines on owners of different shops. Commenting on the situation, an official of Ministry of National Health Services said that several local level administrative decisions were made to control the disease. He advised the citizens to continue following the social distancing, use of mask and other precautionary measures to stop increasing local transmission of COVID-19 in the city. He said the government had adopted effective strategy to combat COVID-19 that resulted reduction in corona cases in the country.

## Man held for refilling gas illegally

RAWALPINDI: Ganjmandi Police have arrested a man for illegally refilling gas cylinders here on Thursday, informed police spokesman. During course of action, police have also confiscated material and instruments from his possession. The arrested accused was identified as Pir Muhammad. Police have registered a case against him. City Police Officer Muhammad Ahsan Younas appreciated the performance of the police adding that strict action must be taken against the perpetrators who were involved in endangering the lives of the other people. – APP

## Exports increase 5% in H1

ISLAMABAD: The exports from the country increased by 4.98 percent during the first half (H1) of the current fiscal year (2020-21) as compared to the corresponding period of last year, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported. The exports from the country during July-December (2020-21) were recorded at \$12.098 billion against the exports of \$11.524 billion during July-December (2019-20), according to the latest PBS data. The imports into the country during the period under review also increased by 5.72 percent by growing from \$23.195 billion last year to \$24.521 billion during the first half of current fiscal year. Based on the figures, the country's trade deficit increased by 6.44 percent during the first half compared to the corresponding period of last year. The trade deficit during the first six months of the current fiscal year was recorded at \$12.423 billion against the deficit of \$11.671 billion last year. Meanwhile, on year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 18.31 percent during the month of December 2020 as compared to the exports of December 2019. The exports during December 2020 were recorded at \$2.352 billion against the exports of \$1.988 billion in December 2019, the data revealed. The imports into the country also increased from \$4.020 billion in December 2019 to \$5.035 billion in December 2020, showing growth of 25.25 percent. On month-on-month basis, the exports from the country increased by 8.19 percent during December 2020 when compared to the exports of \$2.174 billion in November 2020. – APP

## Chaos at the Capitol

The scene at the US Capitol in Washington DC resembled more a site of a parliament overtaken by civil war rather than a semblance of democracy on Wednesday. Hundreds of US President Donald Trump's supporters stormed the meeting place of the US Congress in an unprecedented attempt to overturn his election defeat, leading to a confrontation with the police in the hallways, smashing windows and infrastructure, ultimately leading to one death and several injured. The attack was eventually controlled after more than three hours of struggle, the Police declared the building secure, and both houses of Congress resumed their work on certifying Biden's Electoral College win but under heavy guard. However, the eventual control of the invasion should not take away from just how serious this event was—it was an assault on US democracy the likes of which were not seen in the last 200 years. The invasion has shocked Republicans and Democrats alike—it had been thought inconceivable that the strife between the two factions of the country would boil over to a riot onto the US Capitol. There is a lesson for all countries here. Taking advantage of and furthering cultural clashes might seem politically beneficial in the short-term—but those can have a butterfly effect, leaving behind division that could take centuries to undo. Fanning the flames of bigotry towards segments of a country's own population may win votes for the meantime, but the impact it can have on the country's political stability and institutions can be highly dangerous and volatile. Improving relations between political divides and believing in unity and civility, despite differences, is vital for a country's preservation. The government and the opposition in Pakistan should take note—while it may be tempting to see the US situation as irrelevant, it should serve as a reminder to us what extreme rhetoric can culminate into.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

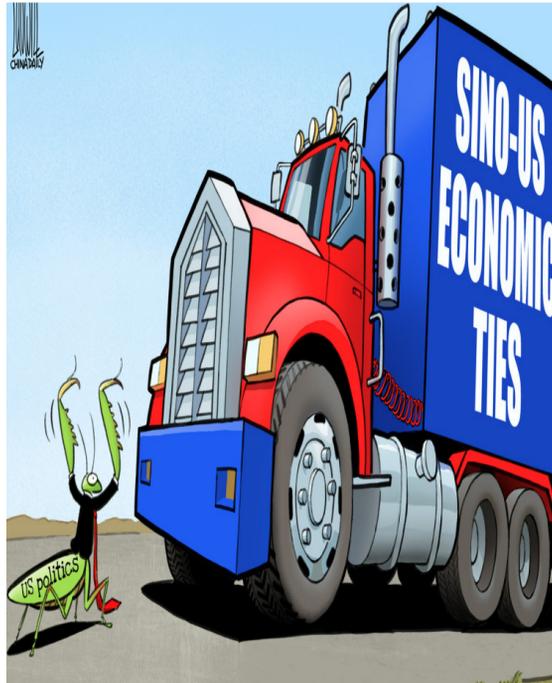
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## Rising pensions

According to the State Bank of Pakistan, public sector pension spending has gone up exponentially within Fiscal Year (FY) 2021—accounting for 18.7 percent share of the total tax revenue. This is a problem that could affect the country negatively in the long term, as such high spending creates an unstable economic structure that disables the government to cater to other expenses of the state.

The pension payment system of Pakistan is one that is proving to be a massive burden on the economy primarily because it is unfunded in nature. We follow a pay-as-you-go (PAYG) system through which retirement benefits are guaranteed to even those employees who fail to make personal contributions from their salaries. Furthermore, an increase in life expectancy rates entails that pensions are paid out for a longer period of time, thereby exaggerating the problem. Even the fact that investment returns have been lower than expected is also likely to lead towards a shortfall that takes away from other valuable ventures of the government.

If we do not address this issue and brush it under the rug, we may as well see our economic decline worsen in an already tough economic climate. Already, according to the World Bank, civil service pensions are set to overtake overall wage expenses by the years 2023 and 2028 in Punjab and Sindh. This would be catastrophic as the country would be paying its unproductive workers more than its productive ones.

As such, what we need right now is to come up with a sustainable strategy that carries the weight of the expense and emphasises the importance of reinvesting pensions and provident funds into government campaigns so as to keep the momentum flowing. This is a sure-fire way through which the government can ensure income generation all the while allowing for the masses to enjoy retirement benefits.

## Rumi: Compassion beyond all faiths

Wajeeha Bilal

I reflected on how Rumi's message of love and peace offers a life of love and purity while the faiths that enforce violence in the name of religion only to spread terror, have nothing to offer other than hate and fear. Through my reflection I have come to realize the power of words in uniting or dividing the humankind and commit to doing the former. One of the most beautiful expressions of love that I found in Turkey was the plantation of trees by the Turkish government at the Kecioren Park memorial site in Kartaltepe

We all possess a centered place of wisdom, affection and stability within us but the truth is that we all swing away from that place, from time to time. In life it is essential that we acquire a path adjusting device for our balance that can guide us back to our purpose. There are many models of faith, beliefs and

convictions who offer different experiences in life and then there is the way of a man who has love for his Creator, and everything created by Him. He finds everything around him to be an expression of that love and compassion. One such model is the great mystic poet, Maulana Rumi, whose six-volume "Masnavi" is a collection of inspirational verses and one of the most influential works of mysticism. The world is familiar with Rumi and his works. I would like to share my own experience of being one of those who keenly wished to visit his city. I remember visiting his tomb as a child while living in Turkey, but at that time I had no idea of what the religion of love and compassion was really about. It wasn't till I grew up and started exploring life's real purpose, that I realized the power of living with compassion. Life will definitely have an impact on you if you are in search of truth and its experience flows through you like the light of knowledge. Every time I read about great thinkers and their works, I would think of the time I had gone to Maulana's mausoleum as a child, and wanted to experience that once again, but this time fully aware of my presence at this respectable place. Reading through his poetry has always been like walking with a navigation of verses to guide us. This time while visiting Turkey, I planned to visit Konya, too, and I was glad that life had given me this opportunity to pay homage to this great poet that I admire so much. I heard that once you visit the Maulana's tomb in Konya, you are bound to go there seven times or as people say that Rumi calls you seven times if you go to visit him once. Well, that's

definitely a fun saying made by his followers or something my brother makes sure everyone abides by, but I really enjoyed it because I would love to go there again and experience the presence of love and affection.

Standing there I felt like it is not only the city that is dedicated to him, but you can see his influence throughout the country where the people are the politest and respectful. I had lived in Turkey as a child and still love going there due to the love and respect that people have, which is only a strong conviction of the fact that "the religion of love and unity is beyond all faiths." Rumi died on December 17, 1273. He had been a devout Muslim for all his life, praying five times and keeping all the required fasts while writing about belief in a "religion of love" that crosses over traditional boundaries of the faith system.

I reflected on how Rumi's message of love and peace offers a life of love and purity while the faiths that enforce violence in the name of religion only to spread terror, have nothing to offer other than hate and fear. Through my reflection I have come to realize the power of words in uniting or dividing the humankind and commit to doing the former. One of the most beautiful expressions of love that I found in Turkey was the plantation of trees by the Turkish government at the Kecioren Park memorial site in Kartaltepe. Trees are planted to honour the martyrs of Peshawar School (16th December 2014 terrorist act). I feel compelled to share this because it is merely unfortunate that there is no mention of this worthy forest on Google or any other social network. At least not one that I could

find easily while every other tiny jiff can be googled easily.

Rumi gave his followers instructions to treat the night of his death like a joyous night of union. For Rumi, the presence of the performers specified that the deceased was both a Muslim and a lover of his Creator. But there were also Jewish rabbis reciting psalms, and Christian priests reading from the Gospels at Rumi's funeral. It was clear that Rumi had become a well-respected figure within other holy communities. Rumi's poetry that is largely tolerant of all people and other faiths still continues to touch hearts across the world. "When we are dead, seek not our tomb in the earth, but find it in the hearts of men." Allama Iqbal is not only our national poet but one of my favourites, too, and the inspiration that Iqbal derived from Rumi is mirrored in his work 'Pir-o-Mureed' (1935). It is a dialogue between Iqbal and Rumi written in both Urdu and Persian, and in one of the verses, Iqbal (mureed) says to Rumi (pir), "You, the leader of the lovers of God; I do remember your exalted words." The earnest form of love for Rumi, as a mystic, involves escape from the self-centered whims of the ego. His inspiring words remind us how poetry can be a nourishing part of everyday life.

For me Rumi's divine literature is a strong testimony of the powerful impact that words and poetry can have in our lives and on our souls. So, we need to share a purposeful life with your friends and family to create unity and awareness.

(Wajeeha is author of "The Conscious Ego" and "The Beautiful Present")

## The day Trump finally lost it

Marwan Bishara



White nationalists and conservative evangelists, who make up the backbone of today's Republican Party, may still anoint him king of America, but fewer and fewer Republicans and Americans, in general, will go along after the January 6 carnage

I realise this was a chilling and nauseating day but I also found "Black Wednesday" somewhat entertaining. It felt like watching the last episode of the reality TV show, The Apprentice. Except Donald Trump, the man who fires, was himself fired, finally and for good. For four years, President Donald Trump has been messing up big time. This week, however, he messed up bigly. On Novem-

ber 3, he lost the election and on January 6, he lost his chance for a comeback. During a political rally on Wednesday, Trump goaded his mob of supporters to march down Pennsylvania Avenue towards Capitol Hill. They did so roundly and laid siege to the Capitol Building, then stormed it and wreaked havoc in its halls. The dramatic images from the crime scene were truly shocking and until yesterday, thoroughly unimaginable, except in a sensational Hollywood movie. Some of the rioters, dressed up to look tough, seemed more like cosplay partygoers plucked out of a Halloween event. The last time Congress was ransacked was by the British more than two centuries ago. Trump's populist attack on the electoral process and his determination to disrupt the Senate certifying the election results was condemned as "a coup attempt", "an insurrection", and a case of "domestic terrorism". This is indeed a bit exaggerated. But guess what – these condemnations were voiced not by Democrats or Liberals, but by prominent Republicans, who have grown fed up with the president's increasingly dangerous shenanigans. It seems Trump finally overplayed his hand and alienated many of his own allies. This time, he did not merely assault a member of Congress, a federal branch or a cabinet secretary, but he actually launched an attack on the constitution, the Congress and American democracy as a whole – all to remain in office. Trump has shown he cares for power and power only, that he does not really care for the Republicans or the American people, let alone for making America great again. Worse, he has demonstrated the will and willingness to bring the GOP

and the country down with him.

And he almost did. He almost turned America into a truly "s\*\*\*hole country". He just could not help himself after his loss. He would not shut up about it and accept the results after the courts threw out his fabricated cases alleging election tampering. Instead, he went on to undermine the certification of the election results by any means possible. And it backfired.

Trump has been such an egotistical narcissist, that he has used what is left of his star power to undermine his own populist movement, demanding it does all to reverse the election results.

He pressured Republican state and national leaders to reject the results. Some have acquiesced; others refrained from doing his dirty work for him. They not only failed to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's win but will also pay the price of undermining the people's will.

By revealing his true colours, his naked ambition, Trump is now losing the sympathies and trust of many of the 74 million Americans who voted for him. These people were loyal enough to cast their ballot to re-elect him, despite his incompetence and his mismanagement of the coronavirus pandemic that led to the death of more than 360,000 Americans. No more.

White nationalists and conservative evangelists, who make up the backbone of today's Republican Party, may still anoint him king of America, but fewer and fewer Republicans and Americans, in general, will go along after the January 6 carnage.

Trump's populist agenda has taken such a beating that it may be too toxic for Republican leaders to maintain and may end up splitting the party. It is all too

possible that Trumpism will go down with Trump after January 20.

This is quite significant and should be celebrated not just in the US but also abroad. But the signs of Trumpism's downward trajectory were evident even before the storming of Capitol Hill. In the January 5 runoffs in Georgia, a Confederate state and traditionally a Republican stronghold, Trump's utter obsession with his own loss cost the Republicans two Senate seats and ultimately their majority in the Senate. This would certainly facilitate Biden's pursuit of implementing his agenda which partly will be about the undoing of Trump's agenda. But will Biden stop there or will he hold Trump responsible for what Democrats consider treasonous violations of democracy and the rule of law?

Generally, US presidents have refrained from pursuing their predecessors legally or otherwise, mainly for fear of establishing dangerous precedents, allowing their successors to prosecute them as well.

So just as President Barack Obama turned the page on the George Bush presidency, so will Biden turn the page on the Trump era, leaving state prosecutors to chase after him.

Some are still wondering if Trump will use his last two weeks in office to embark on a foreign military venture, say, against Iran.

This may have been possible throughout the past two months, but the debacle on Capitol Hill crippled him politically and disabled his policy adventurism.

January 6 may have been a dark moment in US history, but it may well pave the way for a new day in America.

Courtesy: Al Jazeera

## Briefs

## COAS hails Pak-Bahrain efforts

From Page 01

Commander Bahrain National Guard. During the meeting matters of mutual interest, Bilateral defence & security cooperation and regional security situation in Middle East came under discussion. Bahraini leadership reaffirmed their special relationship with Pakistan and also pledged to keep working for even better relations between the two brotherly countries.

COAS was presented with the Bahrain Order (First Class) by His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for making significant contributions towards defence cooperation between both the Countries.

Later on COAS also witnessed the closing ceremony of PAK-Bahrain joint military exercise AL-BADAR-V at Sakhir Camp. He appreciated standard of training and the results attained. COAS said that the exercise signifies the joint efforts of both nations against terrorism.

## Maryam lashes out at PM

From Page 01

you should be ashamed of yourself," she added. The PML-N vice president was referring to the prime minister's statement from earlier in the day when he said that making the burial [of the dead] conditional on the prime minister's visit was not appropriate.

"This is akin to blackmailing the prime minister," he had said. The Hazaras have refused to bury 11 slain coal miners who were shot dead in cold blood last week at Machh by unidentified assailants. Protest sit-ins have taken place in various parts of the country over the tragedy. Maryam lamented that the Hazaras were sitting out in the open, in the freezing temperature, with the bodies of their loved ones and the prime minister had yet not visited the area.

"They are asking you to come and place your hand over their heads," she said, referring to the bereaved families. "They are asking for some guarantees [from PM Imran Khan] and will bury the dead after that," added the PML-N leader.

Maryam said that visiting the grieving families was the prime minister's obligation and "he will have to do this". "You have time to meet Turkish dramas and meet actors," she said in reference to the prime minister's meeting with the founding team of the Turkish hit TV series Ertugrul from the previous day. "You have time to play with your dogs but not place your hand over the heads of the oppressed," she added.

## S Africa announce test squad for Pak tour

ISLAMABAD: Fast bowler Daryn Dupavillon and medium-pacer Othniel Baartman have received maiden call ups to South Africa's Test squad for Pakistan. They are part of a 21-member group that will travel to Pakistan for a two-Test series starting on January 26, website Espncricinfo.com. reported on Friday. The pair replace Glenton Stuurman and Migael Pretorius, who were part of the squad that played against Sri Lanka but both suffered injuries in training and have not recovered in time to travel. Top-order batsman Raynard van Tonder also misses out after fracturing his finger. The series will be South Africa's first in Pakistan since 2007. South Africa have included three spinners in their squad - Keshav Maharaj, George Linde and Tabraiz Shamsi - and as many as nine pace-bowling options. Both Kagiso Rabada and Dwaine Pretorius have been cleared to play after missing the Sri Lanka series while recovering from groin and hamstring injuries respectively. "Considering that the conditions that will be faced are largely unknown to the South African team, we wanted to strengthen the attack with the skill sets that Tabraiz Shamsi and George Linde have to offer, while giving players like Daryn Dupavillon and Othniel Baartman an opportunity after making strong cases for themselves in recent seasons," Victor Mpitsang, South Africa's convener of selectors, said.



Advisor to the Prime Minister on commerce & investment Abdul Razak Dawood in a meeting with Pakistan's ambassador to the United States of America, Dr. Asad Majeed Khan. - DNA

## EU chief warns members cannot negotiate separate vaccine deals

That move allows EU governments to double their orders from Pfizer to 600 million doses, as the bloc races to inoculate its 450 million people

## FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: European Union member states will not be permitted to negotiate separate vaccine deals with pharmaceutical companies, in parallel to the bloc's efforts as a whole, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Friday.

She told reporters at the EU's headquarters in Brussels that the 27-member bloc would continue to work as one to secure vaccine doses from suppliers. "The only framework we are negotiating in is as 27," she said. "We do this together and no member state on this legal binding basis is allowed to negotiate in parallel or to have a contract in parallel."

Von der Leyen's comments came amid reports that some EU countries have tried to secure separate deals with vaccine manufacturers and as she announced the European Commission - the EU's executive branch - had reached a deal with Pfizer and BioNTech for 300 million additional doses of their COVID-19 vaccine. That move allows EU governments to double their orders from Pfizer to 600 million doses, as the bloc races to inoculate its 450 million people.

Combined with a contract with Moderna for its vaccine, the EU now has the capacity to vaccinate 380 million people, von der Leyen said, more than 80 percent of the EU's population. The EU commission later said in a statement it offered to member states to buy an

additional 200 million doses of the vaccine, with the option to acquire another 100 million doses.

"This would enable the EU to purchase up to 600 million doses of this vaccine, which is already being used across the EU. The additional doses will be delivered starting in the second quarter of 2021," the EU said. Von der Leyen said 75 million of the extra doses would be available during the second quarter, with the rest being delivered throughout 2021.

Doses are usually shared among EU states in proportion to their population, but it is unclear whether all governments will make orders based on the new contract.

The European Commission negotiates vaccine contracts on behalf of EU member states and

as of Friday, had sealed contracts for more than two billion doses with Moderna, AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Pfizer-BioNTech and CureVac. Only the Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have been approved for use so far in the bloc. But there has been growing criticism, in Germany for instance, about the decision to let the commission handle vaccine purchases for all EU members. Germany said on Monday it had agreed with BioNTech to supply 30 million additional doses in a side deal, although the timing of the delivery is unclear. The German move agreed in September - but revealed only this week as the government faced pressures at home - appeared to be in contrast with EU rules. But Ger-

many has said its agreement with BioNTech does not affect contracts between the company and the EU. Meanwhile, the health minister of Portugal, which holds the six-month EU presidency, said separately on Friday any side deals for COVID-19 vaccines by EU countries cannot undermine the bloc's joint orders.

Health Minister Marta Temido told reporters the EU should strive for as much of a joint approach to combating the coronavirus pandemic - including on vaccine purchases - as possible.

That did not rule out member states taking further steps on their own if they deem them necessary, she said, but stressed that any vaccine side deals "couldn't run any risk" to what was already agreed under joint purchases.

## US reports over 4,000 deaths for first time

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States has reported more than 4,000 coronavirus deaths in one day for the first time since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic in December 2019, as health systems struggle to cope with the number of sick and dying patients.

A total of 4,033 people died in connection with the disease within 24 hours, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

The country has seen a total of 365,000 deaths linked to the coronavirus so far, according to data from the Johns Hopkins University, out of a population of 330 million people.

On Thursday, more than 266,000 new cases were re-

ported, bringing the total tally to more than 21.6 million cases. Case numbers are particularly high in the state of California, especially in Los Angeles County, where more than 20 percent test results are coming back positive.

Parts of California issued fresh lockdown orders and the governor said on Thursday that the state could run out of intensive care unit capacity within weeks.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) forecast on Thursday that 12,900 to 24,900 deaths "will likely be reported" in the week ending January 30. By that date, the CDC projected the country's overall death toll would be in the range of 405,000 to 438,000.



LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Sports, Ray Temoor Bhatti in a group photo with players after 1st Quaid-e-Azam Open Inter Division Championship organized by Sports Board Punjab. - DNA

## Illegal visits to Karabakh must stop: Aliyev

"We have seen what damage a populist person has inflicted upon his own country in the last four years, bringing disgrace upon his nation while also inflicting great damage on our region, on Palestine, Syria and Yemen," President Rouhani said, referring to Trump

## DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has warned the Armenian authorities and foreign citizens against making illegal visits to Azerbaijan's internationally-recognized territories, describing such visits as a provocation.

Addressing an online government meeting on the results of 2020 that was held on January 6, Aliyev said that the Armenian foreign minister's recent visit to Khankandi was in contradiction to the trilateral peace deal signed by the Azerbaijani, Russian and Armenian leaders on November 10.

"These visits must stop. We warn them if such provocative steps continue to be taken, Armenia will regret it even more... If a similar step is repeated, our response will be very harsh. We first warned them through the Foreign Ministry. Further warnings will be given differently," he added.

Aliyev questioned such provocative

visits against the background of steps that are now being taken to normalize relations between Azerbaijan and Armenia.

"Russia has offered its mediation opportunities to the parties. A delegation of Russian government officials recently visited Armenia and Azerbaijan and mainly discussed these issues. After all, if relations normalize, then what is the need for such provocative 'visits'? What are they trying to show? Are they trying to irritate us again? Let them not forget that such steps cost them dearly. Therefore, all visits must stop," he said.

The president added that no foreign citizen can enter that area without Azerbaijan's permission.

"No international organization except for the Red Cross can go there. This is our territory. The whole world recognizes this territory as an integral part of Azerbaijan... No one should have any business in our territory," he said.

Aliyev underlined that Azerbaijan



previously conveyed its concern to Russian peacekeepers deployed in the region that no foreign citizen could visit Nagorno-Karabakh without Baku's permission.

"Representatives of the parliaments of different countries used to go there, but let's see how they will go there now. A delegation went there from France, members of their parliament. Unfortunately, the peacekeepers gave them this permission.

"However, we had told the peacekeeping forces that no foreign citizens can go to Nagorno-Karabakh without our permission. As a result, the French ambassador was invited to our Foreign Ministry and a note

was handed to him. We will not remain silent," the president said.

Aliyev noted that Russian peacekeepers stationed in the Nagorno-Karabakh are involved in humanitarian activities, although the trilateral peace deal established no humanitarian function for the Russian peacekeepers in the region.

"We are turning a blind eye to that, so to speak. Why? Because we understand that people live there, we understand that winter has come and the weather is cold. Some work must be done there so that this winter does not create problems for the Armenians living there. This is why we have created this opportunity. Most of the cargo goes there through Azerbaijan now. We gave them this opportunity. Cargoes go to Barda by rail and then are taken to Nagorno-Karabakh by automobiles."

The president spoke about vandalism and destruction carried out in Azerbaijan's lands that used to under the Armenian occupation for

three decades.

Aliyev stressed that despite the fact that Armenia cut off Azerbaijan's water for 30 years and left 100,000 hectares of land without water even though both Sarsang and Sugovushan reservoirs were built at national leader Heydar Aliyev's initiative, Baku will not take the path of Yerevan.

"The people living in Nagorno-Karabakh today are our citizens. As I have said, they will see that they will live better under Azerbaijan's leadership. This is why we have created these opportunities for them. Otherwise, it is very difficult to transport cargo there via the Lachin corridor. We have taken other steps to carry out humanitarian work there. Let me reiterate that although the document signed on November 10 does not stipulate this, we have created these opportunities," he said.

Aliyev noted that the trilateral statement should be the basis for future activities as no other document had been signed apart from that.

## All demands of Hazara people met, says PM

From Page 01

country's first Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurated a technology park in the federal capital Islamabad. While addressing the event, PM Khan said that the establishment of STZs will generate employment in the country, whereas, overseas Pakistanis could also get benefits of the STZ authority. He said that the government will provide maximum assistance to resolve issues being faced by the special technology zones authority. Earlier, PM Imran Khan chaired the first session of the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) of which the premier is himself heading its board of governors. During the session, the authority approved the plan for laying a network of technology zones across the country. Amer Ahmed Hashmi said in a statement that the premier is launching a game-changer project as a target was set up for expanding country's IT exports to \$15 billion. He added that the government will bring top information technology (IT) companies to the country.

Hashmi detailed that the government had granted tax incentives to IT companies for a period of 10 years besides deciding to establish mini-tech cities. It may be noted that Amer Ahmed Hashmi had been appointed as the chairperson of the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) which was formed after the promulgation of an ordinance by President Arif Alvi in December last year.

Earlier on December 9, Prime Minister Imran Khan had inaugurated the country's first National Science and Technology Park at National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST). Pakistan's first National Science and Technology Park was established in the vicinity of NUST and being hailed as the country's largest innovation and research ecosystem.

The high-tech IT Park houses more than forty companies, including start-ups, Small Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and tech giants. The park will serve as a launchpad for the country's leading researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.

## Pfizer likely effective against UK variant

## FOREIGN DESK

NEW YORK: Pfizer Inc and BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine appeared to work against a key mutation in the highly transmissible new variants of the coronavirus discovered in the United Kingdom and South Africa, according to a laboratory study conducted by the US drugmaker.

The study, yet to be peer-reviewed by Pfizer researchers and scientists from the University of Texas Medical Branch, indicated the vaccine was effective in neutralising virus with the so-called N501Y mutation of the spike protein.

The mutation could be responsible for greater transmissibility and there had been concern it could also make the virus escape antibody neutralisation elicited by the vaccine, said Phil Dormitzer, one of Pfizer's top viral vaccine scientists.

The study was conducted on blood taken from people who had been given the vaccine. Its findings are limited because it does not look at the full set of mutations found in either of the new variants of the rapidly spreading virus. Dormitzer said it was encouraging that the vaccine appears effective against the mutation, as well as 15 other mutations the company has previously tested against. "So we've now tested 16 different mutations, and none of them have really had any significant impact. That's the good news," he said. "That doesn't mean that the 17th won't."

Dormitzer noted another mutation found in the South African variant, called the E484K mutation, is also concerning. The researchers plan to run similar tests to see if the vaccine is effective against other mutations found in the UK and South African variants and hope to have more data within weeks. Scientists have expressed concern that vaccines being rolled out may not be able to protect against the new variants, particularly the one that emerged in South Africa.

## Briefs

## China says US facing 'internal collapse'

WEB DESK

BEIJING: The assault on the US Capitol by supporters of President Donald Trump reflects a failure of leadership, as well as the deep divide running through American society, editorials in China's state media said on Friday. Hundreds of supporters of President Trump besieged the Capitol on Wednesday in what House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi described as "an armed insurrection against America". The Global Times, a tabloid run by the People's Daily, the newspaper of the ruling Communist Party, described the riots as a sign of "internal collapse" that could not easily be reversed. "The unprecedented mob in the Capitol, a symbol of the US system, is the result of the US society's severe division and the country's failure to control such division," it said. "As time goes by and with abuses of resources by generations of politicians, the US political system has degraded," the paper said, adding that such politicians "deserve chaos, violence". It also lashed out at what it described as "double standards" among US politicians who expressed support for pro-democracy protesters, who forced their way into the territory's Legislative Council in 2019. "In Hong Kong, violent actions are described as a 'beautiful sight', in the US, people involved in this chaos are called 'mobs'," it said.

## Tesla CEO Musk world's wealthiest person

NEW YORK: Whether the topic is transforming the automobile or conquering the next frontier of space, Elon Musk has shown a knack for captivating an audience beyond investors and science geeks. The brash Tesla CEO, now the world's wealthiest person following the electric automaker's meteoric rise, was the quintessential Silicon Valley disruptor - except he no longer lives in California. The norm-shattering entrepreneur, who has more than 41 million followers on Twitter and a fortune now estimated at more than \$180 billion, announced last month he had relocated to Texas and could not resist one last dig at the West Coast state. "If a team has been winning for too long, they do tend to get a little complacent, a little entitled, and then they don't win the championship anymore," Musk said at a conference hosted by the Wall Street Journal. "California has been winning for a long time... and they are taking it for granted." - APP

## Brazil Covid death toll passes 200,000

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil's Covid-19 death toll passed 200,000 Thursday amid a surging second wave, with a record number of new cases and the second-highest number of daily deaths since the pandemic began. Highlighting the long road still ahead to bring the pandemic under control, the South American country recorded 87,843 cases and 1,524 deaths in 24 hours, bringing its total death toll to 200,498 - the second-highest in the world, after the United States. The bleak milestone doused optimism that 2021 will bring respite anytime soon for a country whose government faces scathing criticism for its erratic handling of the pandemic. This is supposed to be the year things get better in the pandemic, but in Brazil, 2021 has begun with a firestorm of controversy over holes in the government's vaccination plan and far-right President Jair Bolsonaro's continued Covid-19 denialism. Bolsonaro, who has defied expert advice on managing the pandemic at every turn - railing against lockdowns, face masks, social distancing and other "hysteria" - has stuck to the same script as the world starts vaccination campaigns. Critics accuse him of fueling anti-vaccine skepticism by saying he does not plan to be vaccinated. - APP

## OGDCL achieves milestone of adding massive production

Shahid Salim Khan MD OGDCL says company remains a market leader in Oil & Gas production, contributing 48% in oil, 27% in gas & 37% in LPG production of the country



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's flagship Exploration and Production Company listed on Pakistan Stock Exchange & London Stock Exchange continued to contribute significantly towards the overall oil and gas production portfolio of the country during the last year. The company remains a market

leader in Oil & Gas production, contributing 48% in oil, 27% in gas & 37% in LPG production of the country. The company has made contribution of Rs. 130 billion to the national exchequer during 2019-20. During the quarter ended 31st December 2020, OGDCL successfully added oil & gas to the tune of 2666 Barrels per day of oil, 82.0 MMSCFD of Gas and 77 Metric Tons per day of LPG. During this short span OGDCL has not only added production

from new wells but also enhanced its production through optimization of production from already producing wells. According to the figures, OGDCL has acquired 1566 Barrels of additional oil and 71 MMSCFD of additional gas by injecting wells while 1100 Barrels of oil and 11 MMSCFD of gas production enhanced through other efforts. The company also enhanced production of LPG and added 77 MTD in the system. This production enhancement by in-



jecting 14 new wells from all over Pakistan and adding substantial oil and gas in the national grid in short span of time was only possible due to dynamic leadership of MD/CEO of OGDCL and his team. As per the detail and available data, OGDCL has injected Saand well # 1, Saand well # 2, Tando Allah Yar South West well #1, Togh Bala well # 1, Nashpa well # 10, Mangrio well # 1, Qadirpur well # 10, Umair well # 1, Qadirpur well # 53, Qadirpur well # 16, Qadirpur

well # 17, Daru well # 1, Pasakhi Deep well # 6, Pasakhi West Deep well # 2 and commissioning of Nashpha compression project. The newly injected wells and substantial increase in oil & gas production will not only add to the hydrocarbon in the network but will also bring significant savings to the exchequer in the form of import substitution. The increase in oil & gas production is also likely to help in mitigating ever growing demand of domestic consumers and industry.

## US Capitol police officer dies

FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: A US Capitol Police officer has died of injuries sustained during clashes with supporters of President Donald Trump, who stormed the Capitol building to prevent Congress from certifying President-elect Joe Biden, police said late on Thursday. Officer Brian D Sicknick had sustained injuries while on-duty, physically engaging with rioters at the US Capitol, the statement said. "He returned to his division office and collapsed. He was taken to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries" on Thursday night, it said. The death of Sicknick will be investigated by the Metropolitan Police Department's Homicide Branch, the Capitol Police and federal investigators. Democratic leaders of the House Appropriations Com-

mittee said the "tragic loss" of a Capitol Police officer "should remind all of us of the bravery of the law enforcement officers who protected us, our colleagues, Congressional staff, the press corps and other essential workers during the hours-long takeover of the Capitol by pro-Trump protesters. The number of people who died from the storming of the Capitol is now at five. Three members of the pro-Trump mob died from medical emergencies, and another was shot inside the building. After a rally where Trump exhorted his supporters to "fight" to overturn the November 3 election he lost, hundreds of them stormed the Capitol on Wednesday, forcing senators and members of the House of Representatives to evacuate as they smashed windows and engaged in looting.

## IRGC unveils missile base amid US tensions

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's elite Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has unveiled a huge underground missile base along the Persian Gulf coast amid heightened tensions with the United States. In a clip aired on state television, high-level commanders from the IRGC are seen as they enter the underground depot, the entrance of which is painted with US and Israeli flags so they could walk over them. They then are shown walking along seemingly unending tunnels that are filled with a variety of missiles and trucks with launchers on their back. "Behind us, you can see a column of these missiles and their launch systems. These columns stretch for

kilometres," said IRGC chief Hossein Salami, standing in front of the launchers, adding that IRGC's Navy has "many" such bases. "IRGC Navy missiles today have a range of hundreds of kilometres, their precision has improved and they have high destructive power," he said. The unveiling of the base, the location of which was not mentioned, comes amid heightened tensions with the US in the past weeks. Hours before the unveiling, the US deployed two nuclear-capable B-52 strategic bombers to the Middle East, marking the fourth time the planes have done a tour in the past two months. The US also reversed its decision last week to return its only navy aircraft carrier in the region to its base, citing "threats" by Iranian officials.

## China's changes resonate with grassroots Pakistanis

DNA

BEIJING: China's changes resonate with grassroots Pakistanis, says report published by China Economic Net (CEN) on Friday. "Things had improved a lot here," noted Asif Jalil, a Pakistani businessman and restaurant owner based in Beijing, adding that 2021 marks the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan and he wishes China to emerge as a beautiful country. "It was very lively before," Jalil cherished the good old days since he had been here for more than 20 years, "you could see restaurants had their tables outside, with people sitting, eating food, enjoying beer, chatting in the evening almost in every Hutong (a narrow lane), especially in summer. But this caused some pollution so slowly these things had gone." However, he admitted that things and people had improved. "Beijing has changed a lot," he likes the atmosphere here - a city renowned for its ancient, opulent palaces, temples, and huge stone walls and gates. "One thing is the physical change. There are more buildings and infrastructures here. It's much more modern than before." "At the same time, we are seeing big changes in people. People's manners are improving. The way they are operating is much different from the traditional ways when the country was poorer. When they are more like in the third

world countries, there is a big difference in different segments of society. People lie; people steal..." Now as economically China becomes better, individuals started improving, he added. "For example, throwing garbage or spitting on the roads. If someone tries now - mostly older people - the youngsters would stare at them and sometimes try to stop them, so it's much cleaner now. Also, people are talking much politer than before. Their talks are not that rough like it used to be." These changes are also recognized by Muhammad Kamran, a Pakistani chef devoting himself to promoting Pakistani cuisine in Chengdu, China, the country he loves very much. Kamran has been to many countries but he found Chinese people the most loving and friendly. "Whenever I am lost in China, at bus station or subway, I just had to show the name of the intended destination to some Chinese and they would guide me to the right direction. The first time when I landed at Shanghai's airport, I didn't know how to find the exit and reach my destination, and some Chinese helped me contact my boss and arranged a taxi for me." Living in China for many years, he regards China a safe place to enjoy life. "When I was in Yiwu, I have seen people enjoying nightlife there. You can go out at any time in the evening without any fear. I was afraid at the beginning but later I found there was nothing to

worry about and I reckon China as a very safe country and you certainly won't get harassed or robbed here." Muhammad Shahbaz, a Pakistani surgeon and PhD scholar at China's Shandong University, is impressed by China's poverty alleviation campaign over the past decades. His perception about China was different before. "I used to see the Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan movies on TV, and it was everybody's thought that every Chinese can play Kongfu and every Chinese rides bicycle." Spending more than a decade in China as a medical student, he witnessed the rise of China from Beijing Olympics in 2008, and he also saw how China help countries along Belt and Road keep better health care opportunities for common people. "China not only helped other countries, its economy has also boosted." Also, he mentioned, as the world's second largest economy, China has lifted more than 700 million people out of poverty. "700 million is something, Pakistan has a population of around 220 million people, if you lift the needy above the poverty line, that's a big achievement. I pay my tribute to that and I like the idea of BRI." "I hope that China will emerge as a beautiful country, not just financially but also culturally," Jalil told China Economic Net, adding, "Pakistan and China can cooperate in many, many fields and now we have been collaborating already. We are working together."

## Khamenei bans corona vaccines from UK, US

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei has prohibited imports of COVID-19 vaccines from the United States and the United Kingdom. In a televised speech on Friday, the supreme leader said he has no confidence in vaccines coming out of the two Western powers since they have some of the highest mortality rates in the world. "If the Americans had managed to manufacture a vaccine, this coronavirus fiasco wouldn't have happened in their own country," he said, adding that the US is now registering a daily death toll of 4,000 people. "If they can create a vaccine, if their Pfizer factory can manufacture a vaccine, then why do they want to give it to us? They should consume it themselves so they wouldn't have so many deaths." Khamenei said the same applies to the UK, and that he does not trust the US and the UK since they may wish to test out their vaccines on other nations. The supreme leader also said he has "doubts" about France due to its infected blood scandal that began in the early 1990s. At the time, Iran was among the recipients of blood supplies from France that later turned out to be infected with HIV. Hundreds of Iranian haemophiliacs were infected by the tainted blood and Iran says it never received compensation. The supreme leader's order led to a halt in Iranian Red Crescent Society's plans to import 150,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine that had been secured with the help of philanthropists, the organisation's spokesman said shortly after the speech. "The Red Crescent Society will act based on the supreme leader's remarks as they distinguish right from wrong concerning all issues including importing corona vaccines," Mohammad Hassan Ghosian told the Tasnim news website.

## CPEC-supported solar energy boosts cultivation

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Thursday she was "furious and saddened" by the violence and chaos instigated by supporters of Donald Trump, adding that the president shared blame for the unrest. "I deeply regret that President Trump has not conceded his defeat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) supported solar energy boosts Pakistani produce cultivation, says a report published by Gwadar Pro on Friday. Several energy projects under CPEC are focused on much-needed alternative renewable energies. In fact China is playing a big part in helping Pakistan become energy-sufficient," Muhammad Tariq, an energy expert said. The report quoting Raham Khaliq, a local cultivator in Malakand district, KP stated that in the early 1980s farmers started digging tube wells running with electric power generators, leading to an increase in citrus orchards. Some farmers also established similar orchards with tube wells running

with diesel generators. Hence, with the advent of tube wells in the area, citrus production increased and people began to sell their fruits in nearby markets. However, the majority of the tube wells were established near villages, so remote uninhabited areas, with no electricity supply line, remained barren, or people cultivated wheat, maize and other such crops relying on rainwater. Talking to Gwadar Pro, Raham Khaliq said that the malta of Palai had established itself in the market due to its quality. In recent years, the number of citrus orchards increased a lot after farmers started installing solar-powered tube wells in their fields. Apart from citrus, local people also cultivate peaches, guavas, tomatoes and other vegetables. Afzal Hussain installed a solar-pow-

ered pump on his tube-well in Bara Bazzara village about five years ago. The tube well brought about a revolution in his farming and he began the cultivation of malta, peaches and tomatoes in his fields, which for centuries had relied only on rainwater and produced only wheat and corn. "Today my land is not only a source of income for my family but our orchards have provided informal jobs for several locals," he told Gwadar Pro. Zahid Shah is another farmer from Sherkhana village who uses both electric and diesel operated tube-wells to water his orange orchards. However, he is thinking of switching to a solar-powered tube-well. "Due to frequent load-shedding and low voltage and soaring gasoline prices, I am going to move to solar tube-wells," he told Gwadar Pro add-

ing that many cultivators have started using solar systems and even the arid hilly areas have turned green due to solar-powered tube wells. The area with bright blue sky and powerful sun receive more than 10 hours of sunlight making it conducive for solar system installation. Abdur Rahim runs a small engineering workshop in Bathkela, the headquarters of the Malakand district. Although he is not an engineer with a university degree, he has acquired expertise in the solar energy system and has installed many solar systems to meet the electricity needs of households and farms. Abdur Rahim said the solar-powered tube wells have brought about an agricultural revolution in the Malakand area. People have started growing fruit trees and cultivating wheat and maize on those arid lands which until recently were only suit-

able for shrubs while some planted eucalyptus in those fields. Due to limited resources, Abdur Rahim's clients opt for cheaper solar-powered tube wells. "I have set up such tube wells worth about Rs. 170,000 to Rs 1,100,000 (1.1 million) for my clients," he said. According to him, all the photovoltaic (PV) modules he uses are from China while the stands and cables for the system are made in Pakistan. The majority of submersible water-pumps used in the tube wells are also Chinese products. "Almost 80% of the parts of solar-powered tube wells come from China, while 20% of the parts are made locally," he said and added that some of the farmers had to spend Rs 10,000 to Rs. 40,000 per month for electricity and fuel consumption but are now running their solar-powered tube wells at no monthly cost.

## S Africa to receive vaccines in January

WEB DESK

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa will receive its first batch of coronavirus vaccines in January, the health minister said, as the continent's worst-hit country battles a record number of infections. "South Africa will be receiving one million doses in January and 500,000 doses in February," Zweli Mkhize said in a statement on Thursday. South Africa is using the vaccine made jointly by researchers at the University of Oxford and the biotech firm AstraZeneca. It is seen as a potential game-changer in the global fight against the coronavirus, as it does not have to be stored at the ultra-low temperatures required by Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna alternatives. That could mean greater access in less wealthy countries. On Wednesday, Kenya's health minister also said the country is expected to start receiving 24 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine next month. South Africa will prioritise the vaccination of its 1.25 million healthcare workers, Mkhize said. Thereafter, the government hopes to be able to give the job to around two-thirds of the population of around 60 million by year's end. Mkhize urged patience as his ministry negotiates directly with vaccine providers, following criticism of the pace of proceedings from some unions and health professionals.

## Lawmakers urge White House staff to stay on

WASHINGTON: US lawmakers urged White House staff to stay in their jobs amid a spate of resignations in protest at President Donald Trump's support for the attack on Congress by his followers. Senior Republican Senator Lindsey Graham urged top Trump aides to keep working for the final 14 days of the administration, naming chief of staff Mark Meadows, White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien. "Most Americans will never know the service that Mark Meadows and Pat Cipollone and those under their charge provided to this country over the last year," Graham said in a press conference. "To those who believe you should leave your post now to make a statement, I would urge you not," he said. "To Robert O'Brien: you have been a good counsel to the president, you have been a steady hand. I've been missing your phone calls; Robert, stay on." "To those in the national security apparatus, we need you now more than ever." Earlier Thursday Transport Secretary Elaine Chao said she was resigning, the highest-level departure yet since Trump supporters, riled up by the president's false claims of election fraud, invaded and shut down the US Congress Wednesday. - APP

## Biden confirms Garland as pick for AG

WILMINGTON: President-elect Joe Biden on Thursday introduced Merrick Garland - a centrist judge who Republicans denied a seat on the Supreme Court five years ago - as his pick for US attorney general. The 68-year-old Garland, a judge on the Washington federal appeals court, has a record as a moderate liberal but is not aligned with either political party. If confirmed by the US Senate, Garland will help a Justice Department that must decide whether to investigate President Donald Trump and his associates for various actions over the past four years. Senate Republicans blocked Garland's nomination to the high court by then-president Barack Obama for eight months in 2016, which allowed Trump to fill the vacant seat with a conservative-leaning justice the following year. "Entering the Department of Justice will be a kind of homecoming for me," Garland said as Biden introduced him in a televised appearance, the judge's voice cracking with emotion, adding he would approach his new job with "humility". - APP

**Briefs**

**Pakistan urges UN to act against fake NGOs**

NEW YORK: Pakistan has urged United Nations committee to act against NGOs involved in massive disinformation campaign to damage the reputation and hurt the interests of a member state. In a letter to Chairman of the Committee on NGOs, Mohamed Sallam Adam, Ambassador Munir Akram drew his attention to the "startling revelations" made by EU DisinfoLab, a Brussels-based independent and NGO, about the blatant abuse by at least 10 NGOs of their consultative status with the Economic and Social Council. Pakistani envoy said that NGO Committee is mandated to regulate the United Nations' relationship with non-governmental organizations. He also wrote that it is equally important that the committee undertake comprehensive review of its working methods with a view to prevent such abuse by fake NGOs in the future. - Agencies

**Beggars suspected to be using abducted children**

KARACHI: Police have detained dozens of beggars in the metropolis after suspecting that children seen with them may have been abducted. The police are also planning to carry out DNA tests of the arrested individuals as well as the children to verify their suspicion. The police, in collaboration with 10 agencies, have initiated a joint investigation to launch a crackdown on the beggar mafia in the city. Speaking to a private news channel, Karachi police chief Ghulam Nabi Memon said that some important decisions have been taken in this regard. "The Sindh government's Social Welfare Department, the Child Protection Authority, Roshni Helpline, Saylani Welfare Trust, the Anti-Violent Crime Cell, Traffic Police, and other organisations are collaborating with the police," he said. According to Ghulam Nabi Memon, there is growing evidence that Karachi beggars are involved in several criminal activities, including drug trafficking. "Most of these beggars do not belong to the native population of the city. They either speak Seraiki and have been involved in the begging 'profession' for many generations, or belong to the Bengali or Burmese ethnic groups," the police chief said, adding that many of them are also foreign citizens, with a large number of them being Afghans. "During our meeting with different organisations, we raised our suspicion about the children accompanied by these beggars and have decided to carry out DNA tests to find out if the children have been abducted," he said. - APP

**Saudi Arabia to allow all Intl flights from March 31**

DNA  
RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has decided to lift the temporary travel ban and resume all international flights. The move, which will come into force on March 31, 2021, includes the following measures:  
1. Citizens will be allowed to travel outside the Kingdom and come back.  
2. The temporary ban on international flights will be lifted.  
3. All air, sea, and land borders will reopen.  
The implementation of the above-mentioned measures will be done in accordance with the procedures and precautions laid down by the concerned committee amid all necessary precautionary measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus in the Kingdom in coordination with the concerned authorities, the statement added.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia Nawaf Saeed Al Malikiy and President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Yasir Ilyas exchange documents after signing MoU, at ICCI Headquarters on Friday. - DNA

**Saudi Arabia for enhanced trade ties with Pakistan**

The Saudi ambassador, during his visit to ICCI, assured that he would continue to work for further promoting trade cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Nawaf Saeed Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia said that Saudi Arabia wanted to further deepen and strengthen its trade ties with Pakistan as both countries have great scope to promote trade in many areas. He said that Saudi Arabia wanted to see Pakistan as a growing economy as it was a very important country for the whole Muslim Ummah. He said this while addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The envoy said that Saudi Arabia intended to further expand its commercial and investment coop-

eration with Pakistan. He said that Pakistan has a lot of potential for economic growth that should be highlighted more effectively to attract foreign investors. He urged that the media should focus on projecting the positive things of Pakistan to change wrong perception about it. He said that misperceptions about Pakistan in foreign world needed to be changed to unlock its real economic potential. He assured that he would continue to work for further promoting trade cooperation between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed

very cordial relations, but the bilateral trade of around US\$ 3.5 billion was much below the real potential of both countries, therefore, strenuous efforts from both sides were needed to improve it. He said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were doing trade in limited items and they should focus on diversification of trade to achieve better results. He said that many high quality and cost effective Pakistani products including Halal food products, pharmaceuticals, textiles, surgical instruments, rice, fruits, dairy products, sports wears, leather products, financial services, insurance & IT services and entertainment products could find good market in Saudi Arabia and Saudi Arabia should

focus on importing these products from Pakistan. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan emphasized that both countries should focus on strengthening B2B contacts, exchange of trade delegations and participation in trade fairs on reciprocal basis to improve trade volume. He said that Pakistan was establishing many special economic zones under CPEC and investors of Saudi Arabia should explore JVs and investment in these SEZs. He said that Pakistan was working for a One Window for investors that would facilitate Saudi investors to invest in Pakistan. Mian Akram Farid, Chairman Founder Group ICCI lauded the efforts of Saudi Ambassador for

improving trade ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He said that Pakistani SEZs offered great potential for Saudi investors and they should explore JVs and investment in Pakistan. Fatima Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Aslam Khokhar and others also spoke at the occasion and shared ideas for further promoting bilateral trade and economic relations between the two countries. At this occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan President ICCI and H.E. Nawaf Saeed Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia signed a MoU of cooperation to work jointly for promoting business relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.



ISLAMABAD: CEO Union Group Abid Raza along with Malik Jawad overseas businessmen meeting with Chairman Bahria Town Malik Riaz. They discussed various upcoming development projects being carried out under the aegis of the Union Group. - DNA

**Democrats mull second Trump impeachment**

Trump released a video in which he denounced the violence that saw one person shot dead by police

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON: Congressional Democrats were moving closer to a historic step on Friday as they weighed impeaching US President Donald Trump for a second time, two days after his false claims of election fraud helped encourage a mob that breached the US Capitol. Top Democratic leaders, including House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, called for immediate impeachment proceedings if Vice President Mike Pence and Trump's cabinet refused to take steps to remove Trump from power. "The president's dangerous and seditious acts necessitate his immediate removal from office," they said in a statement on Thursday evening, accusing Trump of inciting an "insurrection". As calls for his ouster mounted on Thursday, Trump released a video

in which he denounced the violence that saw one person shot dead by police and three die from medical emergencies. The Republican president came the closest yet to conceding his loss in the Nov 3 presidential election, promising to ensure a smooth transition to a "new administration". President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, is set to be sworn in on Jan 20. Trump's words were in stark contrast to his speech on Wednesday, when he exhorted a crowd of thousands to descend upon the Capitol as Congress met to certify Biden's election victory. Rioters stormed the build-



ing, overwhelming police and forcing authorities to transport lawmakers to secure locations for their own safety. A Capitol police officer died from injuries sustained in the assault, the force said late on Thursday, bringing to five the number of related deaths. With less than two weeks left in Trump's term, it was not clear whether enough time remained to complete the impeachment process. Pelosi has not announced a decision, though she made clear at a news conference that rank-and-file Democrats in her caucus were clamouring for action in the wake of Wednesday's siege.



If impeached in the House, Trump would theoretically face trial in the Republican-controlled Senate, which is scheduled to be in recess until Jan 19. Aides to Mitch McConnell, the majority leader, have not said what he would do if the House approves articles of impeachment. The Democratic-led House impeached Trump in December 2019 for pressuring the president of Ukraine to investigate Biden, but the Republican-led Senate acquitted him in February 2020. Only two other presidents in history have been impeached, and none has ever been impeached twice. Democrats will control the Senate after sweeping two runoff elections in Georgia on Tuesday, but the new senators, Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock, will not be sworn in until the state certifies the results. The state deadline to do so is Jan 22, though it could come sooner.

**'Govt not to hinder opposition's protest'**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed on Friday said the government would not create any hindrance in the opposition's protests. Talking to media persons after Islamabad Police Passing Out Parade ceremony at the National Police Academy, the minister stated, "Whosoever from opposition wants to come to Islamabad, will be allowed and no hindrance will be created". The opposition parties' alliance is coming to Islamabad on January 19 to stage protest in front of Election Commission of Pakistan despite the fact that Raja Sultan Sikandar was not the Chief Election Commissioner at that time. The minister said that his ministry was in efforts to improve law and order situation in the country. He said that the facility of online visas had been introduced while 100,000 Computerized National Identity Cards will be issued on daily basis. The Interior Ministry will also set up a media center for the journalists, he said.

**China to work with Pak, other neighbors for healthy future**

"This is a follow up of the China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal Foreign Ministers meeting in last July and the China, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh's Vice Foreign Ministers meeting last November," he said

BEIJING: China will work with Pakistan and other neighboring countries to make greater contribution to building a regional community with shared future for health, Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson, Hua Chunying said on Friday. "China would like to work with all sides in implementing our consensus and make greater contribution to building a regional community with shared future for health," she said during her regular briefing in response to a question about meeting on anti-epidemic cooperation with Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. She informed that China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh held the first anti-epidemic cooperation and poverty reduction cooperation on January 6. "This is a follow up of the China, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Nepal Foreign Ministers meeting in last July and the China, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh's Vice Foreign Ministers meeting last November," he said. The spokesperson said that in this meeting the representatives shared experience on anti-epidemic and poverty relief, adding, They talked about dealing with the impact of the pandemic, resuming economic and trade cooperation, dealing with non-traditional security challenges and advancing sustainable development and reached initial consensus. "It shows our strong will and confidence in dealing with challenges together and achieving cooperation," she said. - DNA

**Over 2400 virus cases reported**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 48 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 497,510. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 10,558 on Friday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCOC), 2,435 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Punjab has overtaken Sindh in most number of casualties. Till now 222,999 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 143,511 in Punjab, 60,536 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 18,314 in Balochistan, 38,842 in Islamabad, 8,430 in Azad Kashmir and 4,878 in Gilgit-Baltistan. Furthermore 4,221 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab, 3,670 in Sindh, 1,710 in KP, 186 in Balochistan, 436 in Islamabad, 234 in Azad Kashmir and 101 in GB.

**Hazara protest continues for sixth day**

DNA

QUETTA: Thousands of Hazara community members along with families and relatives of ten slain miners, who were shot dead in Machh area of Kachhi district on Sunday, continue their sit-in on Quetta's Western Bypass with dead bodies on the sixth consecutive day (Friday), media reported. The latest round of negotiations between government representatives and organisers of sit-in protests also remained unsuccessful. The sit-in protesters are still awaiting Prime Minister Imran Khan's arrival in Quetta to meet the bereaved families of victims of Machh coalmine massacre. Earlier on Wednesday, leaders of various political parties reached Quetta to express solidarity with the families and relatives of ten slain miners who were shot dead in Machh area of Kachhi district on Sunday. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) vice-president Maryam Nawaz, Pakistan People's Party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) leader Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri reached Quetta to express solidarity with the bereaved families. Meanwhile, one of the organizers of sit-in protest Syed Raza Ali has appealed to Prime Minister Imran Khan to come to Quetta to meet with and reassure the bereaved families of the victims.