



# Islamabad POST

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**India backing ISIS to spread chaos in region, says PM**

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**Azerbaijan keen to promote trade with Pakistan**

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## Briefs

### Karim Khalili to arrive today

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ustad Karim Khalili, Leader of Hezb-e-Wahdat-e-Islami, Afghanistan, along with a delegation will be visiting Islamabad from 11-13 January 2021. During the visit, Ustad Karim Khalili will call on the Prime Minister and will meet Speaker National Assembly, Foreign Minister and other dignitaries. The visit of Ustad Karim Khalili is part of Pakistan's ongoing policy to reach out to political leadership in Afghanistan to forge common understanding on the Afghan peace process and deepen people-to-people linkages.

### 'It's a country, not a mobile phone'

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N secretary-general Ahsan Iqbal, while dishing out heavy criticism on the government over the major power failure that occurred across Pakistan the night prior, said Prime Minister Imran Khan "attempted to reboot the country". "The country's economy is in the doldrums. We have mounting deficits. Imran Khan thought: 'Why don't we reboot the country like a mobile phone? Maybe it'll work,'" Iqbal said, mockingly. "He tried to shut down the entire power system and restart it. 'Imran sahab, this is a country, not a mobile phone which will begin working after rebooting it."

### Opp spread fake news about power breakdown

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Special Assistant to Chief Minister of Punjab for Information and Broadcasting Firdous Ashiq Awan has said that seven out of nine divisions of the province have been energized; however, opposition parties are spreading fake news about the breakdown. Talking to media persons, Firdous Ashiq Awan said that power supply in small cities and villages will also be restored in few hours and CM is constantly in contact with federal government.

## India backing ISIS to spread chaos, says PM

He said that those making anti-military statements and attacking the national institutions would not be spared

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has said India is backing ISIS in the region to spread chaos in Pakistan by fanning sectarianism. Interacting with digital media publishers and broadcasters in Islamabad on Sunday, he said Pakistan's security agencies successfully preempted Indian plots to fan sectarianism. He said that those making anti-military statements and attacking the national institutions would not be spared. PM Imran said that opposition is targeting military leadership and pressurizing institutions to protect their corruption and loot. He said that they are telling the army to overthrow an elected democratic government. In the past the military leadership was criticized during the martial laws, but now, in the democratic era, why are they targeting the military. PM said that as soon as our government was formed, the opposition said that the country was ruined because they knew that they have destroyed the country's economy and institutions. Imran Khan said that they think that they will blackmail me. I am aware of the problems of the common man regarding inflation. Those who do not perform will be replaced. Referring to the new CCPO La-

### PM all praise for taxpayers

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan was told on Sunday that tax receipts had surpassed Rs 2205 billion during first six months of current fiscal, manifesting the fruition of government's taxation reforms. Chairing a meeting to review the tax reforms, the prime minister was briefed that owing to tax reforms, a growth in number of taxpayers had been witnessed. Federal Minister Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, Shibli Faraz and Hammad Azhar, Advisor to PM Dr Ishrat Hussain, Special Assistant on Revenue Dr Waqar Masood, Chairman of Federal Board of Revenue Javed Ghani and relevant senior officers attended the meeting, a PM Office press release said. - DNA

hore, he said that let's see how he performs. Prime Minister said that Khawaja Asif was working for a foreign company, while serving as defence minister and foreign minister of Pakistan. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, other Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leaders, including Ahsan Iqbal and Khawaja Asif, had residences abroad. They possessed the Iqamas.

## Registrations started for frontline workers

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The government's NCOC opened registrations Sunday for frontline healthcare workers, who will receive the first doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. Staff in both public and private health facilities will be vaccinated, NCOC announced on its website. Workers who will receive the doses include all staff of Covid-19 hospitals and healthcare workers appointed to inject vaccines. Staff assigned to testing, tracking and quarantine, including public health workers, lab technicians, screening and triage teams and ambulance staff, are also mentioned. Registered general practitioners will also receive the vaccines. Workers in Sindh, Punjab and KP are to register with the respective provincial health system, while workers in Islamabad, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir will have to register directly in the government's Resource Management System. Parliamentary Secretary for Ministry of National Health Services Dr Nausheen Hamid told Radio Pakistan earlier this week that the first shipment of vaccines is expected before the end of the month.

### Sinopharm seeks Pak approval

ISLAMABAD: China's Sinopharm has sought permission from Pakistan for emergency use of its COVID-19 vaccine in the country. Sinopharm has applied for registration of its coronavirus vaccine to the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), sources said. The Chinese vaccine firm has submitted the complete data of the clinical trials of its vaccine to the authority, sources at DRAP said. A session of the DRAP registration board is expected to be held the next week, the sources at the health ministry said. The registration board is likely to approve the vaccine for emergency use in Pakistan, sources said. The approval from the Drug Regulatory Authority will allow the use of the Chinese vaccine in Pakistan, according to sources. Earlier, Pakistan had announced to purchase 1.2 million doses of the corona vaccine from China. Sinopharm, a state-run Chinese firm, is developing two COVID-19 vaccines. - DNA

## UNSC members rebuff India's bid to join key committees

"The work of the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee is too important to be given in the hands of the Indians," an African diplomat remarked

DNA

NEW YORK: India's bid to assume the chairmanship of some of the most important subsidiary bodies of the UN Security Council could not muster support from other members of the 15-nation body, according to diplomatic sources. The sources said that the Indians pushed for, but failed, to secure the chairmanship of the powerful "1267" Al-Qaeda/Da'esh Sanctions Committee and the "1540" Non-Proliferation Committee and also to become the custodian of the Afghanistan file in the Security Council. Aware of India's narrow bilateral agenda to utilize the Al-Qaeda and Da'esh Sanctions Committee for its own purposes, the vast majority of Council members were opposed to giving India the chairmanship of this key committee. A Council source told APP that India tried its utmost,

### Pakistan gives sharp response to US' remarks

ISLAMABAD: In a sharp rebuke, Pakistan has "encouraged" the US State Department to reserve its concerns for the active aiding and abetting of terrorist activities by India. The strongly-worded statement, issued by Foreign Office on Sunday, comes in response to the US State Department's statement on the conviction of Zakir Rehman Lakhvi, one of the alleged founders of the banned Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT). Responding to the US State Department's statement, FO emphasised that Pakistan "is fully abiding by its own statutes and fulfilment of its international obligations". "The investigations, prosecutions and subsequent convictions, through due process, are a reflection of the effectiveness of Pakistan's legal system which operates independently of any extraneous factors or influences." FO stressed that the legal process in the "Mumbai case" remains stalled due to India's reluctance to send over witnesses for cross-examination in the Pakistani court. - DNA

until the very last moment, to get this position, lobbying intensively in New York and in the capitals of the Council's members, but it failed to convince them. According to the source, it is no secret that New Delhi's bid for the post was designed to



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister For Information And Broadcasting, Senator Shibli Faraz along with Federal Minister For Energy, Omar Ayub Khan addressing press conference. - DNA

### 2 injured in Indian firing

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Two people were injured on Sunday after Indian Army troops once again resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation in Baroh and Khanjar sectors situated along the Line of Control (LoC).

According to a statement released by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the Indian troops deliberately targeted the civilian population residing along the LoC with mortars and automatics. Due to the indiscriminate firing by the Indian troops, two elderly citizens of the same family sustained injuries, the statement read.

### Pak condoles death of Indonesian diplomat

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan condoled over the death of Indonesian Consul General in Karachi Totok Priyanto due to cardiac arrest. In a statement by Foreign office spokesperson, "We are deeply saddened. Our thoughts and prayers are with the late Consul General Totok Priyanto's family and friends." He conveyed "deepest condolences to the brotherly Government of Indonesia."



## 'Power distribution neglected in past'

Senator Shibli Faraz said a comprehensive plan is being pursued to upgrade transmission system and to enhance power generation

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Sunday that the present government was working on improvement of power distribution system which remained neglected in the past. Addressing a joint press conference along with Minister for Energy Omar Ayub here he said that the previous government focused on power generation only. He said the government was committed to bring improvement in power sector. He said a comprehensive plan is being pursued to upgrade transmission system and to enhance power generation. He said that the power sector was the

### Power is being gradually restored

ISLAMABAD: Restoration work is in progress after a major power breakdown plunged the entire country into darkness late Saturday, Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub Khan said in a statement early Sunday. The blackout occurred minutes before midnight across the country, with citizens taking to social media to report outages. As outages hit major cities, mobile and internet services were also affected. The energy minister said the power breakdown occurred when the frequency in the national power distribution system (NTDC) suddenly fell from 50 to zero, adding that the matter was being investigated and attempts were being made to restart the Tarbela Power Station and restore supply. - DNA

backbone of the country but the previous government did not introduce any new technology to improve the distribution system. He said that presently power generation capacity was more than 36,000 MW but

only 26000 mw could be distributed as distribution system was not compatible with it. He said that there were technical issues with the distribution system as it was not upgraded with the passage of time.

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## Briefs

18 deaths,  
798 cases  
reported  
in Punjab

LAHORE: Another 18 patients succumbed to coronavirus while 798 new cases of COVID-19 were reported during the last 24 hours in the province. According to the data shared by the spokesperson of Punjab Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department (P&SHD) here on Sunday, the number of coronavirus cases in the province reached 144,909 while the death toll was recorded as 4,260 altogether. The P&SHD confirmed that 492 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Lahore, 3 in Kasur, 3 in Sheikhupura, 9 in Nankana Sahib, 36 in Rawalpindi, 28 in Jehlum, 3 in Gujranwala, 2 in Hafizabad, 7 in Mandi Bahauddin, 8 in Sialkot, 32 in Gujrat, 28 in Faisalabad, 5 in Toba Tek Singh, 23 in Jhang, 14 in Bhakkar, 7 in Chiniot, 8 in Sargodha, 14 in Khoshab, 15 in Mianwali, 30 in Multan, 3 in Khanewal, 4 in Lodhran, 5 in Dera Ghazi Khan, 1 in Rajanpur, 5 in Rahimyar Khan, 8 in Bahawalpur, 2 in Bahawalnagar, 2 in Pakpattan, 3 in Okara and 1 in Sahiwal district during the last 24 hours. The Punjab health department conducted 2,598,930 tests for COVID-19 so far while 130,120 confirmed cases recovered altogether in the province. So far 2,896 front-line Healthcare workers got infected with the coronavirus during their duties. The Punjab health department has urged the masses to follow SOPs for their protection and cover their faces with masks. The people should wash their hands with soap several times in a day to protect themselves from COVID-19. — APP

Dolphin  
squad, PRU  
arrested 80  
POs last week

LAHORE: The Dolphin Squad and Police Response Unit (PRU) arrested 80 proclaimed offenders (POs), target-offenders and court absconders during the last week. SP Dolphins Squad Rashid Hidayat, while giving details of the weekly performance, said that crime-fighters of both wings of the police recovered weapons and narcotics including 21 pistols, two rifles, 15 magazines, 312 bullets and 15 bottles of liquor from the accused. The both wings responded to 324 calls received on helpline 15. Two cars, seven bikes, five mobile-phones and thousands of rupees were recovered from the criminals during action. While promoting community policing, they helped 60 people on different roads of the city. The Dolphin Squad and the PRU checked 3,382 vehicles, over 147,000 motorbikes and 161,226 persons. Fifty motorbikes and four vehicles were impounded and 171 persons were detained over incomplete documents. The police wings also arrested eight persons for violating the ban on one-wheeling, one for possessing firearm and four for indulging in firing into the air.

USPICC pinning  
high hopes on Biden

ISLAMABAD: World's second-largest stock exchange, Nasdaq Stock Market has congratulated the leadership of the U.S. Pakistan International Chamber of Commerce (USPICC) for opening its overseas office in Islamabad. Nasdaq displayed congratulatory message at the Nasdaq MarketSite Tower in Times Square, New York City. The Nasdaq MarketSite Tower stands seven stories tall in the middle of Times Square, New York City is approximately 1/4 acre and 10,000 square feet of signage; and consists of nearly 19 million light-emitting diodes (LEDs). The development came after the Chairman of USPICC M. Siddique Sheikh recently appointed Muhammad Ahmed as President of Pakistan Chapter while Malik Sohail Hussain has been appointed as Secretary-General. In a statement issued here today, both the leaders appreciated the great honour by Nasdaq, having about USD 22 trillion market capitalization of its listed companies. Both the leaders expressed strong commitment to play a role in building and expanding strong commercial ties between the US and Pakistan from the USPICC's platform. The US is one of the largest trading partners of Pakistan and USPICC's key mission is to facilitate expanding this relationship in various fields and sectors. USPICC is a member-based, not-for-profit, trade and business organization, based in the Washington DC Metro area and with an office in New York City, serving as an economic bridge between the United States, Pakistan and other countries. USPICC's predecessor (Pakistan American Business Association) was established in 1986. USPICC primarily serves businesses, non-profits, students, professionals, academics, educational institutions and trade bodies. Since its inception, USPICC has continuously pursued its key mission of promoting trade and investments to enhance job growth and economic prosperity between the United States and Pakistan through global trade delegation exchanges, collaboration and partnerships. Over time, USPICC has organized numerous business delegations to and from Pakistan and has also worked very closely with state and local governments to advocate for its US based members. Muhammad Ahmed and Malik Sohail also congratulated ratification of Joe Biden's victory and hoped that he will play his role in strengthening the relationship between US and Pakistan. Further, they hope that he will help reduce conflicts and miseries around the world. — DNA



HYDERABAD: Famous Sitar Nawaz Ustad Shahid performing his music during the Mach Kacheir. — DNA Photo by Jan Ali Laghari

CDA taking steps to restore  
basic structure of capital

Chairman CDA directed the environment department to establish a flower bed at Jinnah avenue to enhance the beauty

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) made surprised visits to various sectors of the city on Sunday and hailed the CDA's staff working despite the weekly off day. He directed the department of MPO, Street Lights, and Sanitation to fasten the pace of the work on beautification and restoration of the infrastructure. Speaking at the occasion, Chairman CDA said that the authority is taking steps to restore the basic structure of the city. Infrastructure of the whole city will be restored with in few



months. CDA is committed for providing best facilities to the citizens. While considering the natural beauty of the city, CDA has

initiated a number of projects regarding restoration of infrastructure, beautification of the city, and other developmental works.

Officers should fasten the ongoing works including restoration of the street lights, repairing of roads, carpeting, kerb stones, lane

marking, sanitation, environment and others, he added. Chairman CDA directed the environment department to establish a flower bed at Jinnah avenue to enhance the beauty. Department of Sewerage and Sanitation has been directed to ensure the cleanliness of all the gutters and main holes in the city. Best sanitation services should be provided to the citizens. There will be no compromise on cleanliness. Chairman directed the department of street lights to restore all the street lights of the city within 02 months. He asked the environment department to upgrade the parks, cleanliness at green belts, and to plant more saplings for enhancing the beauty.

## Sania launches survey in S. Waziristan

RAJA PERVAIZ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: SAPM Dr. Sania Nishtar visited Tank and South Waziristan today to meet the four tribal jirgas. She launched the Ehsaas survey registration in South Waziristan. The survey is 65% complete in Tank district. She briefed the elders and influential of tribal jirgas on the purpose and approach of ongoing Ehsaas survey. "Ehsaas has launched a new digital survey in southern districts of KP including Tank and South Waziristan to benefit deserving households through Ehsaas. Tank and South Waziristan are the most underprivileged districts of KP with high rates of poverty, malnutrition and infant mortality. To address the needs of the vulnerable, the survey approach is being accelerated across the southern tribal districts of KP. With the support of local teachers under the technical handholding of Ehsaas, we are trying to complete the survey in these areas at the earliest", said Dr. Sania. According to Ehsaas policy, the survey will ensure the inclusion of poor families in several Ehsaas initiatives- Kafaalat, Wa-seela-e-Taleem Digital, Undergraduate Scholarship, Amdan, Interest Free Loan and Nathonuma. "I appeal to tribal Jirgas to facilitate survey teams when they go door to door in the region to collect household data. Poverty profiling of the households is being done through a com-



puter aided digital system and would be completed in the next few months," Dr. Sania stated while addressing Jirgas, adding that government has executed the new Ehsaas survey on apolitical basis so that no deserving family is left out from the flagship social protection programme. Replying a question, Dr. Sania said that the "Ehsaas National Socio-economic Registry Survey is apolitical and nondiscriminatory in nature and has been rolled out nationwide to benefit the vulnerable irrespective of their religion, ethnicity or area. Tribal people should participate in the survey to get benefits from a multitude of conditional and unconditional cash transfer programmes under Ehsaas." She thanked the local teachers for doing a commendable job in executing survey enumerations. They are responsible citizens, which is why we have engaged them in this very sensitive responsibility of household data collection. "Helping the vulnerable populations and lifting the lagging districts is one of the main priority goals of Ehsaas," Dr. Sania concluded. Earlier in the morning, Dr. Sania held a press conference with the local press and media in Tank to describe the methodology and digital approach adopted for the Ehsaas survey. She also answered the questions of the local media regarding Ehsaas survey and several cash transfers under Ehsaas for the underprivileged. The trip also featured visits to households in Wana, South Waziristan and Christian Hospital Colony, Tank to examine the digital registration of families through the survey. — DNA

Sarwar foundation  
providing drinking  
water to 2 million

M ISHFAQ MUGHAL / DNA

FAISALABAD: Governor Punjab Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar has said that Sarwar Foundation was providing clean drinking water to two million people daily and water filtration plants were being set up in jails, hospitals, educational institutions and police lines. He said that the first water project under Punjab Aab Pak Authority is being implemented in Chak Jhumra in a few days which would provide clean drinking water to 16 villages. He said this while talking to media after inaugurating the water filtration plant at Chief Traffic Officer Office. Provincial Minister for Colonies and Culture Mian Khayal Ahmed Kastro, Parliamentarians Mian Farrukh Habib, Raja Riaz Ahmed, Firdous Rai, RPO Raja Rifat Mukhtar, SSP Operations Kashif Aslam, Chief Traffic Officer Shahzada Umar Abbas Babar, Assistant Commissioner Sadar Umar Maqbool, Political Advisor to Governor Punjab Zafar Sindhu, Chairman Overseas Committee Mirza Muhammad Asghar, police officers and leaders of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf were also present. Governor Punjab said that after being Governor Punjab in 2013 worked had been started for clean drinking water and where water plants are installed, the rate of disease has come down. He said that an agreement has been signed with the Sailani Welfare Trust to run the closed plants.

Power  
shutdown  
being  
investigated

ATHAR SUFI

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Political Communication Shahbaz Gill on Sunday said investigations were underway about the matter of the interruption of power supply as it was taking effective steps to stop such type of incidents in future. Talking to a private news channel, he said the Minister of Energy Omar Ayub Khan himself was analyzing and monitoring the matters of interruption of electricity supply. The SAPM said that non-upgradation of transmission lines made cause of power interruption across the country. He said that during the previous governments no work was done for improving the system of transmission lines as the concerned authorities were busy in the construction of power house. Replying to a question, he said the present government was focused to improve transmission system of the electricity as it had spent Rs 50 billion for the purpose.

Railways  
closes 58  
unmanned  
level crossing

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to control train accidents across the country, Pakistan Railways(PR) has closed down around 58 unmanned level crossings in Lahore division. "Pakistan Railways was going to revamp and upgrade the existing railway infrastructure through Main Line-I project of CPEC which would transform the overall organization and ensure safety of the travelling public," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP here on Sunday. He said that Pakistan Railways was taking several measures to prevent accidents in future including up-gradation of 550 vulnerable unmanned level crossings in collaboration with the respective provincial governments. The official said that the department had closed 58 out of the total 76 unmanned level crossings in various districts of the Lahore division. He said the level crossings were closed in collaboration with the departments concerned headed by the deputy commissioners in various districts falling within territorial jurisdiction of the railways Lahore division. — APP

Overseas  
Pakistanis  
confident on  
PM's policies

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said on Sunday that for the first time in the country's history, overseas Pakistanis from Britain and other countries had remitted record money to the country. Talking to party workers here, he said that in six months, the volume of remittances remained 14.2 billion dollars. Pakistanis living abroad were showing complete trust on the incumbent government, he added. — APP

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Briefs

Research Award Competition announced

ISLAMABAD: The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has invited Pakistani scholars/researchers to submit applications for HEC Research Award Competition. The official sources from HEC told APP that the objective of these award is to recognise and reward excellence in research, contributions to intellectual development and social welfare and promote publications with higher impact. The award will be given in three categories including best researcher, best young researcher and best publication, they added. They said the student have been asked to submit their applications on prescribed application template along with requisite documents via HEC online portal. HEC asked the applicants to submit their applications till Monday, February 1, 2021. According to them the students have also been asked to visit HEC website <http://www.hec.gov.pk/site/awards> for further information. – APP

Schedule of annual elections of JAP announced

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The schedule for the annual elections of Journalists Association of Pakistan for 2021-22 has been announced. In the first phase, the election of central office bearers will be carried out. Founder Chairman S. A. Sehbaï is in office for life while applications for election of Central President Senior Vice Presidents, Secretary General, Finance Secretary, Joint Secretary, Broadcasting Secretary and members of Governing Bodies will be received till January 20. Requests from internationally qualified Pakistani anchor persons, intellectuals, columnists and editors will be accepted for key officials and members of the governing bodies. In the second phase, applications will be received from eminent working journalists, anchors, intellectuals, columnists and editors from all five provinces of Pakistan including Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Will be collected and the membership process will be expedited at the international level.

Chairman of the Journalists Association of Pakistan S. A. Sehbaï asked Dr. Shahid Masood, Patron General of the Journalists Association of Pakistan, and Mubashir Luqman, Leading Journalist in charge of JAP, Governing Body in charge of Central and Provincial Leadership Elections and Membership for the election of Central Officials and Governing Bodies. Guidance and full interest is requested for a successful election process. Dr. Shahid Masood Mubashir Luqman and S.S. A. Contact Sehbaï. Final decision After mutual consultation, Chairman of Cherylists Association of Pakistan S. A. It will belong to Sehbaï. Leading Pakistani journalists from all over the world to participate in the Central Elections and Governing Bodies Elections and to participate in the Central Elections. – APP

CDA restored 10,000 street lights during 2020

Prior to this, 70% lights in the city were not functional. 53% street lights are currently functional in the city

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) restored 10,000 street lights during the year 2020. 53% lights of capital city have been restored. 100% lights will be functional in the city within the time period of two months. According to detail, CDA's work on repairing of street lights is underway in the

‘Rawalpindi Ring road project to facilitate CPEC route’

The long-awaited Rawalpindi Ring Road Project, a scheme that is the harbinger of a new era of development and prosperity in the region, is going to be launched soon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Ring Road (RRR) project will facilitate the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) route as it will be linked with Hakla-DI Khan (M14) Interchange. According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Saturday, all industrial materials and freights can move to and from CPEC route through this ring road. This connection also explains the development of new industrial zones, warehouses, and dry ports along the ring road economic corridor. And the CPEC zone included in the project will be developed near Hakla-D. I Khan Inter-

change, which will comprise Industrial Estate II, Logistic Hub II, Dry Port, Ware Houses, and a Truck Terminal. The long-awaited Rawalpindi Ring Road Project, a scheme that is the harbinger of a new era of development and prosperity in the region, is going to be launched soon. Recently the administration has completed the survey of land for 40 kilometers long Rawalpindi Ring Road track while identification of the land for the project has also been completed. Commissioner Rawalpindi Capt. (r) Muhammad Mehmood said earlier that the main objective of the ring road is to improve economic connectivity and road trans-

port efficiency in the twin cities. According to the Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) chairman, Prime Minister Imran Khan will lay the foundation stone of Rawalpindi Ring Road Project (RRRP) early this year. Efforts will also be made to develop economic zones along Rawalpindi Ring Road on public-private partnership basis. Fruit and vegetable wholesale markets, goods and public transport terminals, and cattle markets will be part of the project. As per the latest reports on the Rawalpindi Ring Road alignment, the highway will start at the Radio Pakistan Building on National Highway 5 (GT Road) and merge with the Margalla Road near Sang-

jani Interchange on the Peshawar-Islamabad Motorway. Taking the route through M-1 Motorway, Rawalpindi Ring Road will lead to Islamabad International Airport and then loop around the eastern route of CPEC initiative to head towards Margalla Road while passing close to Sangjani Interchange. The project will have interchanges at eight different locations including Radio Pakistan, Rawat, Chak Beli, Adyala, Chakri, M2 Mor, Islamabad International Airport (IIA) and Sangjani. As per sources, the Government of Punjab has approved the finalized alignment and funds have been released for land acquisition. Everything related to planning

including ring road route, alignment, interchanges, designs, and economic zones have already been finalized and approved. The Ring Road is a much-needed project for the twin cities as the citizens face difficulties on daily basis due to traffic gridlock at several roads including Rawalpindi city's main artery, Murree Road. Apart from diverting the heavy flow of traffic, it will also boost economic activities in the city by providing direct access to Lahore-Islamabad Motorway and Islamabad International Airport. Owing to its geographical and strategic importance, the Rawalpindi Ring Road project has already been dubbed as an economic game-changer.



RAWALPINDI: A blood camp was organized by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industries for thalassemia patients. – DNA

SOPs to be implemented during anti-polio drive

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Health Authority Dr Faiza Kanwal has said that COVID-19 Standard operating procedure (SOPs) would be followed in letter and spirit during five-day anti-polio drive being commenced from January 11. Talking to APP, the CEO said that to make the Polio campaign successful, training of Union Council Incharges of mobile polio teams has been completed under the supervision of health officers of Health Authority. During the campaign 2964 polio teams would go door-to-door and administer polio drops to 885,000 children less than five years in all Tehsils and Union Councils of the district. Dr Faiza said that SOP's regarding COVID-19 would be implemented to ensure safety during the drive while wearing of face masks and use of sanitizer would also be mandatory for polio teams. Meanwhile Incharge anti-polio drive Chaudary Muhammad Hussain informed that 396 area incharges, 204 medical officers, and allied hospitals and Tehsil Headquarter hospitals would participate in the campaign. He said all possible steps have been taken by the concerned to make the campaign a success. "307 fix centers would also be set up to administer drops", he added. Sufficient quantity of vaccine is available, and no stone will be left unturned in our effort to make the campaign a success. He urged the citizens, particularly the parents, to come forward and play their role for the elimination of the crippling disease from society. "The parents should cooperate with special teams so that the set target could be achieved," he added. – APP

MoHW facilitates low income people

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Housing and Works was taking various steps to facilitate low income people of the country by restarting stalled schemes, constructing new apartments worth Rs 109 billion during the last two. The Ministry has started several schemes worth Rs 5 billion for interest free loans for the low income people for constructing 3 to 5 marla low cost housing units. Some 5,137 housing units are at various stages of completion, an official told APP. The MoHW revived some stalled projects including Kurri Road Islamabad, Waqai Colony Lahore, G-10/2

Islamabad, I-16/3 Islamabad and I-12/1 Islamabad. These long stalled projects have been put on track and completed by the Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA), however, the work on I/16-3 and I/12-1 projects were in progress. Regarding the initiatives taken in Balochistan, the report said Kuchlak road Quetta project consists of 1,350 housing units, which was inaugurated in 2019 on the land provided by Government of Balochistan. The official said the membership drive was executed and over 7,700 applications were received and automated balloting was also held successfully. – APP

SC forms benches for next week

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed has constituted a larger bench, three special benches and six regular benches at the principal seat Islamabad to hear a number of important cases during the next week, starting from Monday. On Monday, a five-member larger bench headed by the CJP and comprising Justice Mushir Alam, Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijaz Ul Ahsan and Justice Yahya Afridi will hear the reference filed by President Dr Arif Alvi under Article 186 of the Constitution of Pakistan regarding elections for the members of the Senate of Pakistan. – APP

RCCI organizes blood camp

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) President Mohammad Nasir Mirza has said the business community is fully aware of its social responsibilities. RCCI has arranged a blood camp for Thalassemia patients as they are facing a lot of difficulties due to COVID-19. RCCI President Nasir Mirza also informed that amidst prevailing COVID -19 spread and closure of Universities and Colleges in the city, patients of thalassemia are facing acute shortage of blood after reduced blood donations are being observed from citizens. Anticipating the difficulties and problems of thalassemia patients, RCCI arranged a blood donation camp, in which as many as 50 members, staff and civil society donated blood for patients of thalassemia, he added. RCCI chief also appealed to the business community and citizens to come forward and be a part of its ongoing campaign for relief activities including blood camp for thalassemia patients. It's the responsibility of all the stakeholders of the society as lives of thalassemia children depend on blood transfusion, he added. He said RCCI is closely working with Thalassemia society and other agencies to play its full role in the fight against thalassemia and would continue to work with other agencies and organisations to alleviate the plight of the patients.

PR earns Rs 214m through leased land

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has generated around Rs214 million during last year through short and long term lease of railway land in different part of the country to make the department a profit earning entity. "An area of 172.36 acres of land has been licensed and leased out for various purposes included premium shops, stacking, agriculture and parking stands etc," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. Giving detail about the conditions and criteria for leasing land to agricultural purposes, he said the department has licensed land through competitive bidding by fixing Ousat Bay rate as reserve price for open auction. The official said that Pakistan Railways has leased its cultivated land for the period of four years and barren land for five years. He said the department has licensed for the premium shops through competitive bidding by fixing the reserve price of premium and monthly rent on the basis of market rate of the locality. The official said that now Pakistan Railways has reduced the period for lease land only for five years after decision of the Supreme Court in 2020. About the parking stands, he said the lease term was one to five years in different categories through competitive bidding on benchmark fixed by Divisional Assessment Committee. – APP

CDA restores STP Plant after 4 years

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Capital Development Authority (CDA) Aamir Ali Ahmed visited a restored water treatment plant (STP) in I-9 and inspected the water recycling process on Saturday night. Speaking at the occasion, the chairman said the water plant was not functional for last four years but, the current administration of CDA repaired STP in just two months. STP was treating two Million Gallon per Day (MGD) sewerage water in past but now it has the ability to treat six-seven MGD sewerage water. He said STP treated water would be utilized in gardening, department of environment, and for construction purposes, adding that this step would reduce the water necessity of the city. He said that prior to this, sewerage water was being wasted and of no use for consumption in any form. He added that10-12 MGD sewerage water would be recycled in coming three months through this treatment plant. Sewerage pipelines were also being improved, he informed adding a tank having capacity of 20,000 gallons water would also be constructed. Cameras and heavy lights would also be installed to ensure the security of the STP, the chairman said. – APP

PAL to hold seminar on Ahmed Faraz on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) in collaboration with Ahmed Faraz Trust would organize a literary seminar on Ahmed Faraz in connection with 90th birth anniversary of the great Urdu poet. The seminar will be held at 4:00 pm in the conference hall of PAL, said a news release issued here on Sunday. Senator Shibli Faraz, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Shafqat Mahmood, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, National Heritage and Culture and will be the chief guests on the occasion. Renowned literary figures Prof. Fateh Muhammad Malik, Iftikhar Arif and Mohammad Izhar-ul-Haq will be in the Presidium. Saadi Faraz will be the Guest of Honor while Dr. Yusuf Kushk, Chairman, PAL, will present the introductory remarks. Hafeez Khan, Muhammad Hameed Shahid, Khawaj Najam-ul-Hassan, Akhtar Usman, Ayesha Masood, Dr. Abid Siyyal, Dr. Ravish Nadeem and Dr. Humaira Ishaq also speak on the occasion. – APP



QUAID-I-AZAM UNIVERSITY

ISLAMABAD

Master of Business Administration (MBA)

(Spring Semester-2021) Evening Programme (Monday to Friday Afternoon)

Requirement

16 Years of Education BS(4Years)/MA/MSc or its equivalent degree in any discipline from HEC Recognized University.

Students with 16 years of education in business or related subjects such as BBA (4 Years), BBS (2 years), B.COM (4 years), MBA (16 Years), M.COM, ACMA, ACA and other relevant equivalent qualifications will be given exemptions as per School / University Policy.

Eligibility Criteria:

M.A/M.Sc/BS (4-Years) in Economics from HEC Recognized University with at least 60% Marks.  
At least 60% marks in MA/M.Sc/BS or BA/B.Sc and no third Division in F.A/F.Sc or B.A/B.Sc or M.A / M.A /M.Sc/BS.  
In case of third division in F.A/F.Sc (or equivalent), the candidate should have obtained at least 60% in B.A/B.Sc (or Equivalent) and M. A/M. Sc/BS. All other requirements as per QAU rules.

HOW TO APPLY

- The applicants can apply through Online Application System from the QAU website [www.qau.edu.pk](http://www.qau.edu.pk) along with a Challan of the Habib Bank Ltd. OR Askari Bank Ltd. (Online Admission Facility will be available up to 08-02-2021 due to special circumstances of COVID-19).
- The applicants are advised to deposit Rs.2115/- in any branch of Habib Bank Ltd. OR Rs.2100/- in any branch of Askari Bank Ltd. in favour of the Treasurer, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. The applicants are required to scan & attached the required documents with Online Application for verification of data and determination of merit, otherwise the application will not be entertained.

SUBJECT TEST/INTERVIEW

Applicants seeking admission in the following subjects are required to appear in the Entry Test on the date, time and venue mentioned below.

S. No.	DISCIPLINES	DATE	DAY	TIME	VENUE AT QAU
1.	MBA (Evening Programme) (NTS GAT-General Test result can be accepted)	11-02-2021	Thursday	10:30 AM	Quaid-i-Azam School of Management Sciences

In case of the continuation of COVID-19, the online subject tests will be conducted by the respective department on the above said date & time.

For further details, please visit QAU website [www.qau.edu.pk](http://www.qau.edu.pk)

Prof. Dr. Zahid Asghar, Registrar

## Briefs

## Three-year old boy reunited with parents

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Shahzad Town police on Sunday reunited three-year old missing boy with his family, a police spokesman said. According to details, a woman informed Shehzad town police that her three-year old son Muhammad Toheed had been missing and could not be traced despite hectic efforts by family members. Following this information, SP (Rural) Farooq Amjad Butar constituted special team under supervision of DSP Mubarak Ali to trace the missing boy. This team including SHO Shahzad Town police station Kamal Khan searched various under-construction buildings, houses and garbage heaps. Various people were inquired about the missing boy Muhammad Toheed and finally police team succeeded to recover him safely from Shakrial area following which he was reunited with his parents. The family has thanked the police team over safe recovery of the boy. IGP Islamabad Muhammad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed have appreciated the performance of police team.

## New Kashmir map getting recognition globally

ISLAMABAD: The world map on World Health Organization (WHO) website shows India and Jammu Kashmir as separate entity from India, which are as per the guidelines provided by the United Nations. According to WHO spokesman, the WHO in a color-coded world map posted on its official website depicts India in blue color, while Jammu and Kashmir including Ladakh is marked with gray color, Kashmir Media Service reported. Chairman Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (JKMC) Shabbir Ahmed Dar said this map shows that the world accepts the new map provided by Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This kind of realistic approach by the United Nations would help build a peaceful, secure and prosperous world which has been threatened by neo-expansionist countries like India and Israel, he added. While discarding the objection by India as unrealistic, he urged the United Nations to take concrete steps to implement its resolutions to ascertain the wishes of Kashmiri people about their political future. While on the other hand, India's English newspaper 'Times of India' while commenting on the map confirmed that Jammu and Kashmir along with Ladakh has been shown in gray, while India is seen in a different blue color in the map. Aksai Chin is also shown in gray color, with blue stripes on it. - APP

## Railways generates Rs 214m

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Railways has generated around Rs214 million during last year through short and long term lease of railway land in different part of the country to make the department a profit earning entity. "An area of 172.36 acres of land has been licensed and leased out for various purposes included premium shops, stacking, agriculture and parking stands etc," an official in the Ministry of Railways told APP. Giving detail about the conditions and criteria for leasing land to agricultural purposes, he said the department has licensed land through competitive bidding by fixing Ousat Bay rate as reserve price for open auction. The official said that Pakistan Railways has leased its cultivated land for the period of four years and barren land for five years. He said the department has licensed for the premium shops through competitive bidding by fixing the reserve price of premium and monthly rent on the basis of market rate of the locality. The official said that now Pakistan Railways has reduced the period for lease land only for five years after decision of the Supreme Court in 2020. - APP

## Business community lauds services of outgoing IGP

Former president ICCI, Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari also addressed the farewell dinner. He said that the enemies of the country are busy in giving hike to the crime rate, we should join hands with police to reduce the crime index of the country



DNA

ISLAMABAD: In my 2-year tenure, we took initiatives for the better coordination between police and the public. On the best security arrangements of the police in Islamabad, UN resumed family stations after 12 years, said Ex Inspector General Islamabad, Mr. Amir Zulfiqar Khan while addressing his farewell dinner arranged by Ex vice president Islamabad chamber of commerce,

Mr. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. Furthermore, he said that the appointment in Islamabad is very sensitive and I am grateful to almighty Allah that I survived more than two years in Islamabad. Which is the second highest stay for any IG Islamabad. He also said that this farewell dinner is the most memorable event of his life and would share this to his friends and next generation. In his tenure, the crime rate was dropped and Islamabad is ranked 70th safest city in the world.

He obliged to PM Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan for being a part of the Police parade and for giving shuhada package to the families of martyred police officers who embraced shahadat while keeping peace in the city. Former president Islamabad chamber of commerce, Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari also addressed the farewell dinner. He said that the enemies of the country are busy in giving hike to the crime rate, we should join hands with police to reduce the crime index of the

country. Moreover, he said that Amir Zulfiqar is humble, friendly and hardworking police officer and citizens of Islamabad would remember him always. FIA director, Mr. Waqar Chauhan expressed his feelings and said that Mr. Amir Zulfiqar is having a very professional career and he topped in every exam, Pakistan police is proud of such brilliant officer. He has also learned a lot from Mr. Amir and he believes on a team work. President of Islamabad Chamber

of Commerce, Mr. Yasir Ilyas Khan said that he will always extend his support to the police for a better Liaison. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari former Vice President ICCI, said that the security institutions are very important in a country like Pakistan, which is facing terrorism since long. We must respect armed forces and police personnel and to contribute to boost their morale to make safe and secure Pakistan. In this farewell, Saif ur Rehman khan and sardar Tahir also addressed.

## RCB issues 5800 notices, resolves 12,010 complaints

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) issued as many as 5800 notices to shopkeepers and food outlets for violating the rules including 3850 for businesses without trade licenses and 1950 for unhygienic and poor cleanliness conditions while the board also accelerated its special campaign launched against defaulters of property tax, water charges and Transfer of Immovable Property (TIP) tax and collected over Rs 1220 million in 2020. According to RCB spokesman Qaiser Mehmood, the RCB teams on the directives of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) Muhammad Umar Farooq Ali Malik accelerated their operations and took action in accordance with the rules against the violators. He said Trade License Branch served warning notices to over 3850 bakeries, general stores, dairy shops, med-

ical stores, chicken shops and others in different areas. The branch also received a large number of applications and issued new licenses to 7300 shopkeepers who had met all requirements. The Food Branch checked over 2300 food outlets during 2020 and issued noticed to 1950 for unhygienic and poor cleanliness conditions. He informed that the RCB teams conducted raids in different areas and collected thousands of food samples which were sent to the lab for quality test while over Rs 3.6 million fines were imposed on the rules violators. He said the teams also imposed fines on the stall holders and vendors for unhygienic food and poor cleanliness condition. He further informed that the board collected over Rs 1220 million including Rs 283 million TIP tax, Rs 737 million property tax and Rs 200 million water charges from the defaulters during last year. To a question, he informed

that the board had accelerated its operation against illegal construction and issued several notices to the violators. The RCB Land Branch/ Building Control Cell was conducting raids and the owners of the buildings and structures erected illegally were being issued notices. Replying to another question, the spokesman told APP that the Public Facilitation Centre of RCB received as many as 12,010 complaints regarding electricity, water supply and sanitation problems during last year and made all out efforts to resolve them. The center received total 12,010 complaints including 4460 of sanitation, 2050 water supply and 5500 electricity which were addressed on urgent basis. He informed that RCB approved 1049 maps of illegal buildings and collected revenue amounting to over Rs 31.44 million under amnesties scheme launched in 2020 to facilitate the residents.

## CTP advise motorists to drive carefully during fog

RAWALPINDI: The City Traffic Police (CTP) have urged the motorists to drive carefully on the roads observing road safety rules and avoid unnecessary travel on motorways and highways during foggy weather. The motorists should avoid applying sudden brakes and use headlights, parking lights or fog lights during traveling, said the CTP spokesman. He said the Education Wing of CTP was holding on ground training workshops to spread awareness about driving during foggy weather. He informed that the motorists were being guided on different roads including Airport Road, Mall Road, Peshawar Road and other main roads of the city to exercise more caution when driving in adverse weather conditions such as fog. The motorists should be more attentive during the season because of an increased likelihood of traffic accidents due to fog, he said. - APP

## BARI efforts for establishment of olive farms

RAWALPINDI: Owing to the hectic efforts of the first Center of Excellence for Olive Research and Training (CEFORT) established at Barani Agriculture Research Institute (BARI), over 800 olive farms have been established in Potohar region. According to BARI Director Muhammad Rafique Doggar, the institute has provided over 1.2 million olive saplings to the farmers while the new research and innovation facility (CEFORT) was increasing olive production and employment opportunities in the region. BARI had imported a state of the art machine from Italy to extract olive oil and the service was available for the growers free of cost, he said adding, the demand of olive oil is increasing day by day as it has great medicinal value. He said CEFORT was supporting scientific and technical research and serving as a resource center in the region. BARI is making all out efforts to enhance olive cultivation considerably in Potohar region which was declared an 'Olive Valley'. Trees of olive laden with fruits at BARI are the proof that Potohar can be turned into Olive Valley easily. The olive saplings were provided free of cost to the eligible farmers of the region including Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Jhelum, Attock and Khurshab districts. The programme was launched for promoting local production of olive and curtailing import bill of edible oil sector, he said and informed that the growers are offered subsidy in accordance with the set rules and procedure and they are bound to fully comply with the recommendations of the Provincial Agriculture Department. - APP

## MoHW facilitates low income people

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Housing and Works was taking various steps to facilitate low income people of the country by restarting stalled schemes, constructing new apartments worth Rs 109 billion during the last two. The Ministry has started several schemes worth Rs 5 billion for interest free loans for the low income people for constructing 3 to 5 marla low cost housing units. Some 5,137 housing units are at various stages of completion, an official told APP. The MoHW revived some stalled projects including Kurri Road Islamabad, Wafaqi Colony Lahore, G-10/2

Islamabad, I-16/3 Islamabad and I-12/1 Islamabad. These long stalled projects have been put on track and completed by the Pakistan Housing Authority (PHA), however, the work on I/16-3 and I/12-1 projects were in progress. Regarding the initiatives taken in Balochistan, the report said Kuchlak road Quetta project consists of 1,350 housing units, which was inaugurated in 2019 on the land provided by Government of Balochistan. The official said the membership drive was executed and over 7,700 applications were received and automated balloting was also held successfully. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Newly posted IG police ICT Qazi Jameel ur Rehman calling on minister for interior, Sheikh Rashid Ahmed. - DNA

## Businessmen want focus on further lifting exports

FPCCI former President Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also the Businessmen Panel Chairman, stated that Pakistan's trade deficit widened nearly one-third in Dec 2020 despite a much-trumpeted increase in export but it was not sufficient to match the surge in imports that jumped to \$5 billion

DNA

ISLAMABAD: As the Pakistan's trade deficit has widened by 32 percent to \$2.683 billion in Dec, the businessmen on Sunday urged the government to focus on further enhancing exports, because the declining imports have now started picking up, indicating the growing economic activities but signaling the widening of trade deficit too which is not good for the economy. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) former President Mian Anjum Nisar, who is also the Businessmen Panel Chairman, stated that Pakistan's trade deficit widened nearly one-third in Dec 2020 despite a much-trumpeted increase in export but it was not

sufficient to match the surge in imports that jumped to \$5 billion. He said that the economic managers were boasting of their performance on the plea of current account balance, increasing to \$447 million in Nov 2020 for the fifth month in row. He pointed out that with a view to achieve consistency in current account surplus for a long period without compromising industrial growth the government will have to focus on increasing the exports and put the business and trade issues on priority, otherwise, the economic problems and balance of payment could further disturb with the growing trade deficit, he warned. The chairman of the BMP, the ruling group of the FPCCI, observed that the economic managers will have to chalk-out a long term

plan for import substitution and increasing exports so that Pakistan becomes self reliant. He also emphasized the need for adoption of international best practices for priority sectors and consultations with international experts to achieve success. He stressed upon the need to enhance inter-ministerial coordination and public-private partnership for increasing exports. It should be kept in mind that the current account surplus emerged on the back of a sustained increase in remittances and a smaller trade deficit. He said that the country's current account has been helped by a significant increase in remittances during the current fiscal year. So far, remittances from overseas Pakistanis during Dec 2020 rose by 16.2 percent year-on-year to

\$2.436 billion, clocking in above \$2 billion mark for the seventh consecutive month. The FPCCI ex-president warned that the pace of growth in imports is projected to increase further in the coming months following the abolishment of regulatory duty on imports of raw materials and semi-finished products. The trade deficit between July-Dec increased to \$12.42 billion, up by 6.44 percent. Earlier, the country's trade deficit during FY20 had narrowed to \$23 billion from \$31.82 billion. He said that in absolute terms, Pakistan's export proceeds edged up to just \$2.35 billion in Dec 2020 from \$1.98 billion last year, which should be accelerated further to bridge the widening trade deficit. Mian Anjum Nisar said the low exports volume and rising trade defi-

cit were chronicle issues which should be resolved permanently. He said exportable items should be produced in accordance with the international demand to fully exploit the benefit of GSP-Plus status. He said that several industries and sectors were neglected in past. He said decisions should be made in national interest, keeping aside the personal agenda. The FPCCI President said the government has to formulate long-term and consistent policies for the revival of industry and considerable improvement in exports, as contrary to regional countries, Pakistan's exports have remained stagnant during the past 40 years, and unless attention was paid to all factors that hamper industrial and exports growth, the country might not be able to achieve desired results.

## 4 robbers held after prompt action

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Aabpara police station nabbed four robbers red handed when they were looting a house in sector G-6 and recovered gold ornaments, cash and weapons from them. According to police, the relevant police station received an information that four robbers had stormed in the house at street No. 30, Sector G-6. Following this information, the SP (City) Muhammad Omer Khan, SDPO, SHO, teams of CRT, CTD and police personnel from the police stations reached the scene and cordoned off the area. The robbers whipped out weapons and made hostage an old man present in the house. DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed also reached the scene and led the policing efforts to nab the robbers. Police teams headed by DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed conducted the operation after adopting an elaborate strategy forcing the robbers to surrender. The nabbed robbers have been identified as Mursaleen, Mujtaba, Bilal and Haseeb residents of Haripur while police also recovered the looted gold ornaments, cash and weapons from their possession. Cases have been registered against the nabbed persons while their criminal record is being checked. IGP Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman and DIG (Operations) Waqar Uddin Syed have appreciated those policemen who participated in this operation. They further directed all police officials to ensure vigilance in their respective areas for protection to the lives and property of the citizens. - APP

## NAB Sukkur files 323 ref; recovers Rs 26 billion

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Sukkur had filed 323 corruption references besides depositing a sum of over Rs 26 billion in national exchequer after recovering from the corrupt elements in the last three years. According to NAB's three years performance report, the Sukkur bureau had recovered Rs 748.672 million in 2018, Rs. 8.5 billion in 2019 and Rs. 16.882 billion directly or indirectly. Similarly, NAB Sukkur has filed 89 references in 2018, 108 in 2019 and 136 in 2020 in respected Accountability Courts. NAB Sukkur has received 20,575 complaints in 2018, 26,161 in 2019 and 29,208 in 2020 and all were disposed off after due scrutiny, adding, currently no complaint is under process. The bureau had authorized 520 complaint verifications in 2018, 628 in 2019 and 701 in 2020. It had also authorized 280 inquiries in 2018, 357 in 2019 and 401 in 2020. Similarly, NAB held around 75 investigations in 2018, 119 in 2019 and 142 in 2020. In total, the NAB had recovered Rs 714 billion directly or indirectly from the corrupt since its inception. - APP

## 'Strategic Underground Gas Storages' in August

ISLAMABAD: The government has planned to construct the Strategic Underground Gas Storages (SUGS) in August this year to meet the increasing gas demand in future, which were considered mandatory along with the import of LNG as per international practices. "Feasibility study of the SUGS is scheduled to be completed in May, while construction on these facilities will start in August 2021," a senior official privy to petroleum sector developments told APP. He said it was unfortunate that the previous government had introduced the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) in Pakistan's market without constructing any storage facility and declaring it a petroleum product, due to which it cost almost double than the locally produced gas. In the given scenario, the official said every LNG shipment had to be consumed within four to five days, in the absence of storage facilities, for berthing of another cargo ship. "Whenever LNG terminals are installed in any part of the world where Pakistan-like gas infrastructure exists, the storage facilities must be constructed there," he added. - APP

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## State empathy

WITH the protests following attacks on the Hazara community spilling over into other cities across Pakistan, it was important for the government to find an early resolution. The compromise was agreed to on Friday night; the state agreed to demands put forth by the grieving families and promised that the Prime Minister would visit Quetta to mourn with them on Saturday. The bodies would be buried beforehand. The PDM alliance had also seen this as a potential opportunity to make the government feel some pressure. The way the opposition party leaders rushed to join the mourners a day after being castigated on social media tells us that political parties on all sides need to treat tragic losses such as this with a more humane approach. Not standing by the people in their time of mourning is not so easily forgotten, or forgiven.

This is exactly why Prime Minister Imran Khan and his government had been receiving flak for comments that were seen as insensitive by many. Using the word 'blackmail' to describe the refusal of families to bury their loved ones was certainly avoidable, as was the general tone and approach of the government; it was the state's job to listen at this point, instead of making comments about what should be done. However, none of that matters anymore; thankfully the government changed tack and the stalemate has now been resolved.

If the government can learn one lesson out of this potential crisis of its own making, it would be to be to share the pain and sorrow of its citizens. It must approach legitimate protests from a place of compassion. The state has a habit of perceiving demonstrators through an inequitable lens. Those that display the propensity to violence are often ignored, while innocent teachers and grieving families are dismissed outright at the first instance, unless public pressure causes the government to reconsider. This attitude must change.

## Price monitoring

THE Decision Support System for Inflation (DSSI) is the new mechanism through which PM Imran Khan has instructed the government to keep a check on inflationary trends in the country. Through the surveillance of the prices of commodities, and evaluating individual performances of Deputy Commissioners (DC), creating data-driven policies becomes much easier. Given that the prospects of this method seem promising, it is important for the authorities to create an elaborate structure that is void of loopholes and inefficiencies.

The DSSI is set to target 17 major cities in the first wave. The information retrieved is then expected to provide information about the market, allow for inter-city comparisons to be made and enable DCs to be ranked in accordance to their implementation success. Not only will this empower bodies like the National Price Monitoring Committee by highlighting certain trends and pointing out gaps in governance but it will also inculcate an inherent system of accountability for the DCs—forcing them to pull their socks up. Weekly rankings are sure to be pressure inducing, ultimately leading to more careful application of nationwide policies. As such, transparency is ensured on two fronts; within the decision-making process and through the evaluation of local DCs. Considering that the pandemic induced such high rates of inflation, Pakistan was in dire need for such a system. With the masses being unable to afford basic goods, a serious lapse in oversight and regulatory policies was noted with regards to price control. However, the DSSI is sure to allow the government to investigate abnormal spikes in inflation and move towards creating a solution that takes into account the particular needs of respective cities. This is the right step forward. The only thing left is to address concerns of the DSSI being a superficial policy through ensuring that a comprehensive structure is created through which all potential mishaps are accounted for.

# Has the GCC crisis been resolved?

Kristian Coates Ulrichsen

The communique of the GCC summit, which was named in honour of the two great balancers of regional politics – Sheikh Sabah and Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, who also passed away last year – contained little detail about specific commitments made by the parties to end the blockade or move forward. Therefore, there is a risk that the Al-Ula declaration may suffer the same fate as the 2014 Riyadh Agreement, which lacked safeguards to monitor and verify compliance by all signatories, and itself became an issue of contestation and mutual recrimination after the 2017 crisis began

EXACTLY 43 months to the day since Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt severed political and economic ties with Qatar on June 5, 2017, the Al-Ula declaration signed at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit in Saudi Arabia brought the blockade of Qatar to a formal end. The “solidarity and stability” agreement, the text of which has not been made public, is a significant advance in the efforts to overcome the deepest rift in the 40-year history of the GCC, ahead of Joe Biden taking over the presidency of the United States from Donald Trump on January 20. However, while a crisis that began with Trump coming into office is ending just before he leaves the White House, the longer-term impacts of the regional rift are likely to take considerable time to heal and cannot be merely signed away with the stroke of a pen. It is hard to disentangle the blockade of Qatar from the trajectory of Trump's highly unconventional and transactional approach to foreign policy. Differences on regional issues between Qatar and some of its neighbours, especially the UAE, long predated the 2017 blockade and were manifested in the nine-month withdrawal of the Saudi, Emirati, and Bahraini ambassadors from Doha in 2014. That earlier rift was resolved by patient Kuwaiti mediation that resulted in the signing of the Riyadh Agreement in November 2014. Over the next two and half years, Qatar sent forces to join the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen, hosted King Salman on a state visit to Doha in December 2016 and ratified GCC-wide security cooperation agreements. After all this, the outbreak of the 2017 blockade, two weeks after Trump visited Riyadh on his first foreign trip as US president, took many observers of regional politics completely by surprise. This includes the emir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah, who later commented that “suddenly, this dispute came into existence” after “we met in Riyadh, in the presence of President Trump,

and there was no one to say that there was a dispute between us”.

The feeling that something had transpired in Riyadh that contributed to the blockade was subsequently given credence by Trump himself, as he tweeted: “During my recent trip to the Middle East I stated that there can no longer be funding of Radical Ideology. Leaders pointed to Qatar – look!”

Although Sheikh Sabah of Kuwait was instrumental in preventing the situation from escalating further, going so far as to declare in September 2017 that “what is important is that we have stopped any military action”, he died in September 2020 with the crisis still unresolved. In recent months, it was Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, who pushed most strongly for a deal that would assist the administration in its attempts to further isolate Iran through a campaign of “maximum pressure”. Kushner and his aides visited Saudi Arabia and Qatar in early December to flesh out the outlines of a deal and are said to have smoothed over issues that reportedly arose at the last minute.

Kushner's role and his presence at the signing ceremony in the Saudi heritage site of Al-Ula upended assertions by the blockading quartet that the crisis would be “resolved in Riyadh” rather than by the US.

The communique of the GCC summit, which was named in honour of the two great balancers of regional politics – Sheikh Sabah and Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, who also passed away last year – contained little detail about specific commitments made by the parties to end the blockade or move forward. Therefore, there is a risk that the Al-Ula declaration may suffer the same fate as the 2014 Riyadh Agreement, which lacked safeguards to monitor and verify compliance by all signatories, and itself became an issue of contestation and mutual recrimination after the 2017 crisis began.

There is an opportunity for the GCC to ensure that its own settlement dispute mechanism is utilised to manage any future dis-

putes that may arise among member states, and that regional power plays, like that of 2017, cannot be repeated.

There have been suggestions that the UAE was more resistant to an agreement than Saudi Arabia and it was noticeable that neither King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain, nor President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt chose to attend the summit or sign in person the agreement.

At the very least, there was an acknowledgement by the Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs, Anwar Gargash, that the maximalist 13 demands made by the blockading quartet of Qatar in June 2017 had given way to “general outlines that govern relations” between the GCC states. Gargash added that “we [the UAE] are very satisfied with this outcome”.

But it remains to be seen whether the lifting of the blockade fully equates to an ending of the rift in the Gulf or corresponds more to a bilateral reconciliation between Saudi Arabia and Qatar. It is unclear how much the UAE, especially Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain will buy into the new era in regional relations. Ties of trust and people-to-people connections between these states and Qatar may well take more time to recover.

What has made this crisis different from previous disagreements is that it went far beyond the confines of a political dispute among elites to hit directly on families and individuals who endured years of separation and often vituperative finger-pointing and name-calling on social media. The social legacy of the Qatar blockade is likely to be the hardest issue to resolve, even after the disruptive effects of the pandemic dissipate and people are able to travel throughout the Gulf again.

At the political level, an agreement made with an eye on Washington and on positioning vis-à-vis the upcoming Biden administration may at most only paper over the deeper cracks that the Gulf crisis has exposed.

– *Courtesy: Al Jazeera*

# AlUla summit is a healing moment of reunification

Dr. Hamdan Al-Shehri



These points were clearly stated by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who opened the summit on behalf of King Salman. The statement read out by him emphasized the importance of “Gulf, Arab and Islamic solidarity and stability, and strengthening the bonds of friendship and brotherhood between our countries

THE Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Summit in AlUla this week will surely be remembered as the summit of reunification. It will be recognized as the moment when the countries of the GCC finally turned the page on a crisis in the region that had gone on for three years. The supreme interest of the peoples of the council's six member nations has prevailed and the process of cooperation has been relaunched, paving the way for a new future. What distinguishes this entity – formed 41 years ago to counter challenges and threats to Gulf security and stability – has been its efforts to develop economies and foster cooperation in various other fields. There are ties that bind the GCC countries and link them together that are not found in other similar entities, or even among other Arab countries.

Working as a single system, therefore, the GCC countries can confront the urgency of the surrounding crises and take necessary actions and steps, despite their differences, to pursue the greater interests of all.

If we weigh the size of the challenges facing the GCC against the scale of the differences between its members, we find the challenges are greater. At the same time, the awareness of all GCC leaders has led them to rise above the problems of the past and put them aside as they work to realize the hopes and aspirations of their people. These are mainly based on advancing the pace of development, which is naturally tied to economic progress. The circumstances the GCC countries find themselves in today include threats from Iran, including terrorism carried out by Tehran's sectarian militias. This makes the

political and security file the most pressing and the most important due to the potential consequences. This issue initially represented a point of disagreement and then came full circle to form the point of agreement after GCC members unanimously agreed to counter the challenges and threats.

These points were clearly stated by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, who opened the summit on behalf of King Salman. The statement read out by him emphasized the importance of “Gulf, Arab and Islamic solidarity and stability, and strengthening the bonds of friendship and brotherhood between our countries and peoples in order to serve their hopes and aspirations. There is a need to unite our efforts to advance our region and confront the challenges that surround us, especially the threats posed by the Iranian regime's nuclear program, its ballistic missile program, and its destructive sabotage projects that it and its proxies adopt through terrorist and sectarian activities which aim at destabilizing security and stability in the region.”

The GCC has always played many roles; the liberation of Kuwait in the 1990s after Saddam Hussein's invasion is one example that clearly illustrates its joint work toward a common goal.

In the same way, the threat to Bahrain posed by militias supported by Tehran was confronted and halted. Had no action been taken, Manama would have been thrown into a downward spiral of chaos and devastation. Thanks however to the Peninsula Shield, which supported Bahrain, the efforts of Tehran's saboteurs and militias were thwarted. Today, too, the Arab Coalition – the strength

of which comes from the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia – is working to restore Yemeni legitimacy and return the country to its citizens after Iranian-backed Houthi militias hijacked and terrorized it.

The region remains in conflict. Tehran is on one side with its ideology of terror that exports malicious sectarian revolution, using terrorism and terrorist militias, as well as anything else it can, to destroy the region's security and stability.

The other side is represented by the GCC countries that export wealth and aim to build economies that lead to prosperity. They support economic improvement and utilize every available means of development in a quest for projects, incomes and revenues that are not dependent only on oil, in an effort to achieve prosperity for all the people of the region.

The two sides – Iran and the GCC – are very different. One is linked to death, destruction and terrorism, while the other is linked to growth, prosperity and life. This simple fact is what made the leaders of the region realize that the destructive Iranian plans would destroy everyone and everything if the GCC is not united in its efforts.

The leaders must work together to close the files on the other disputes that Tehran fosters and benefits from. There is no doubt that after the AlUla Agreement, Tehran will find itself isolated and alone.

The GCC has united against Iran and acted to neutralize the danger and terror it promotes. This new action will see the region and its people blessed, and the member nations will enjoy security, stability and economic prosperity.

– *Courtesy: Arab News*

## Briefs

## Azerbaijan expresses condolences over plane crash

DNA

BAKU: Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov expressed condolences in connection with the crash of a passenger plane in Indonesia.

"Deeply saddened by the news on tragic plane crash near Jakarta. Expressing our most sincere condolences to the families who lost their loved ones in this tragic plane accident. Our support and solidarity is with brotherly People of Indonesia!" On January 9, a passenger plane crashed into the Java Sea near Jakarta. It is noted that there were more than 50 passengers on board.

## Iranian govt working hard to for vaccine

WEB DESK

TEHRAN: The Iranian government would provide Coronavirus vaccine to people as soon as possible, a vaccine that is trusted by the Health Ministry, and hopefully, we could reach a result, said the Iranian President. "The National Headquarters to Fight Coronavirus recent meeting have led to good decisions, good actions are ongoing in the country and we hope to provide a good vaccine from abroad as well despite limitations and money transfer problem good actions have been made," said Hassan Rouhani, Trend reports citing ILNA.

"People's cooperation and compliance to health protocol have led to 80 percent decline in mortality rate in last month in this regard a new zone would be installed. It is expected that some regions that are transitioning toward a white zone would be dubbed as a blue zone. In the blue zone the scale of individuals that are positive for Covid is 0.0002%," he said. Rouhani went on to say that preventive measures should be implemented to avoid the fourth wave.

## Turkish police seize 479 ancient coins

WEB DESK

ISTANBUL: Turkish police seized 479 ancient coins in an anti-smuggling operation in Turkey's largest city of Istanbul and detained one suspect, local media reported on Sunday. Gendarmerie forces launched an operation against the suspected smuggler and raided his residence in the Gaziosmanpaşa district on the European side, the state-run Anadolu agency said. The suspect was preparing to put the coins on sale, according to the report. Anadolu reported that bronze, lead, and copper coins belonging to the Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and Ottoman periods were handed over to the Istanbul Archeology Museum.

## PCB Cricket Committee to meet on Jan 12

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board's Cricket Committee's first meeting of 2021 will take place here on January 12 at the High Performance Centre. The committee will review the 2020-21 cricket season to date, including Pakistan men's cricket teams' recent performances as well as the domestic events held under difficult conditions. The meeting will be chaired by former Test wicketkeeper Saleem Yousuf and will also be attended by Umar Gul, Urooj Mumtaz (both members), Wasim Khan, Zakir Khan and Nadeem Khan (co-opted members of the committee). Wasim Akram will join the session online, while Ali Naqvi will not be available as he is refereeing in the Pakistan Cup One-Day Tournament.

Pakistan head coach Misbah-ul-Haq and fast bowler Waqar Younis will separately brief and update the PCB Cricket Committee on the men's sides performances against England, Zimbabwe and New Zealand, while Nadeem Khan will talk members through the events held and matches delivered since the commencement of the season on 30 September 2020. — APP



MILAN: AC Milan's Theo Hernandez vies with Torino's Sasa Lukic during a Serie A soccer match between AC Milan and Torino in Milan, Italy. — DNA

## Ukraine eyes participation in restoration of Karabakh

Stressing Azerbaijan's support for the creation of new mechanisms that could contribute to the development of economic relations, the minister suggested creating a working group on economic cooperation

FOREIGN DESK

BAKU: Ukrainian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Vladislav Kanevsky has expressed his country's willingness to participate in the restoration of Azerbaijani lands recently liberated from the Armenian occupation during the meeting with Azerbaijan's Economy Minister Mikayil Jabbarov on January 8. The Economy Minister underlined Ukraine's firm stance against Armenia's aggressive policy and support for Azerbaijan's territorial integrity. Touching upon economic relations between the two countries, Jabbarov stated that the agreements reached during the visit of Ukrainian President Volodymyr



Zelensky to Azerbaijan in December 2019 and the 12th meeting of the Inter-governmental Commission on Economic Cooperation between the two countries in January 2020 have further increased the economic activity.

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## Baku urges Yerevan to stop provocative actions

BAKU: Azerbaijani Ministry of Foreign Affairs has urged Armenia to stop provocative military actions that counter the November 10 peace deal signed after the 44-day war. "We remind that as a result of a joint operation carried out by the State Security Service and the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a group of 62 Armenian terrorist-saboteurs purposefully deployed by Armenia in the liberated territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan was detained and handed over for investigation," the ministry's press service has reported. "All the detainees were called up from the Shirak region of Armenia to serve in the Armenian armed forces and were deployed in the territories of the Republic of Azerbaijan to commit acts of sabotage and terrorism against the military personnel of the Armed Forces of Azerbaijan and civilians. — DNA

Business Council within the framework of the Inter-governmental Commission. The sides further discussed the possibility of expanding Azerbaijani-Ukrainian economic cooperation. The sides noted that special attention is paid to the devel-

opment of cooperation, and relations in various fields of economy are successfully developing. It should be noted that Ukraine was Azerbaijan's second-largest trade partner among the CIS countries with a trade turnover

amounting to \$700.9 million during the period of January-November 2020. Of the total turnover, export from Azerbaijan to Ukraine amounted to \$320.4 million, while import from Ukraine amounted to \$380.5 million.

## Protests restart in Israel

Israel has seen a recent surge in cases despite unleashing one of the world's fastest vaccination campaigns

FOREIGN DESK

TEL AVIV: Thousands of people demonstrated against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu calling on the long-serving leader to resign over corruption charges against him and his alleged mishandling of the coronavirus crisis. Protesters early on Sunday held signs reading "Go," and "Bibi, let my people go," referring to Netanyahu by his nickname. The protest in a Jerusalem

square near Netanyahu's official residence came as Israel is in the middle of its third national lockdown, which was recently tightened to shutter schools, and as the country presses forward with a world-leading vaccination drive. Netanyahu's trial was set to resume this week but was postponed indefinitely amid the tighter restrictions. The 71-year-old leader has been indicted on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of trust connected to three long-running investigations.

He has denied any wrongdoing and says he is the victim of a "witch hunt" by hostile media, law enforcement and judicial officials. He has in recent months faced near-weekly protests calling on him to resign over the allegations and the government's handling of the coronavirus crisis. Israel has seen a recent surge in cases despite unleashing one of the world's fastest vaccination campaigns. The country has given the first of two vaccine doses to

nearly 20 percent of its population, and Netanyahu said Thursday it has secured enough vaccines to inoculate the whole adult population by the end of March. Netanyahu has placed the vaccination drive at the centre of his campaign for re-election that month, when Israel will hold its fourth nationwide vote in less than two years. He has called the third national lockdown "one last big effort" to halt transmission by adhering to the tightened restrictions.

## UK women cricketers excited over Pakistan tour

SPORTS DESK

LONDON: England women's cricket team players have shared their excitement over visiting Pakistan for two limited-over series scheduled for October this year.

Heather Knight, England's captain, on Twitter said that the series would be important for both countries. "Pretty excited about this! Important for both us and Pakistan women's cricket," she said in response to the tour announcement.

Earlier on Thursday, Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed that England women's cricket team will tour Pakistan alongside their men's team, for three One-Day Internationals and two T20Is. This is the first time in cricket's history that England women's cricket team, who are currently the World ODI champions, would visit Pakistan.

Renowned former English player Sarah Taylor appreciated the news and said, "How good is this!"

Taylor is one of the most successful players in women's cricket having bagged ICC Women's T20I Cricketer of the Year award three times in 2012, 2013 and 2018 and ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award in 2014. She represented England in 126 ODIs and 90 T20Is. Many other English players also welcomed the news and showed their eagerness for the tour.

Fast bowler Kate Cross shared her excitement over the news by saying, "Exciting bit of news today, what a great opportunity it will be to play cricket in Pakistan."

## PCB Cricket Committee to meet on Tuesday

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Cricket Committee's first meeting of 2021 will take place at the High Performance Centre in Lahore on Tuesday (January 12). The committee, which will gather at 1030 PST, will review the 2020-21 cricket season to date, including Pakistan men's cricket teams' recent performances as well as the domestic events held under difficult conditions. The meeting will be chaired by former Test wicketkeeper Saleem Yousuf and will also be attended by Umar Gul, Urooj Mumtaz (both members), Wasim Khan, Zakir Khan and Nadeem Khan (co-opted members of the committee). Wasim Akram will join the session online, while Ali Naqvi will not be available as he is refereeing in the Pakistan Cup One-Day Tournament.

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## London: 16 nabbed in anti-lockdown protests

FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: Around 16 people were arrested and 22 fixed penalty notices were issued on Saturday afternoon after a crowd of anti-lockdown protesters marched on south London, local media reported Sunday.

A group of around 30 people took to Clapham High Street on Saturday afternoon chanting "take your freedom back", according to some British media reports. They were arrested and fined for breaking the restriction rules designed to stem the spread of the coronavirus in London and other parts of the country, said the police.

British Home Secretary Priti Patel defended the police crackdown on those COVID-19 rules breakers in south London, underlining the "need for strong enforcement" of the lockdown rules. The protest took place after London mayor Sadiq Khan declared a "major incident" as the rising tide of coronavirus cases threatens to "overwhelm" the British capital's hospitals.

## PSL: Islamabad draft Hasan, Quetta get Gayle

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: The player draft for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2021 is currently underway at the High Performance Centre in Lahore, with the six franchises trying their best to pick players according to their needs. The draft consists of 18 rounds – 16 regular and two supplementary – for all six franchises to make their picks. Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Ehsan Mani and CEO Wasim Khan delivered their speeches before the drafting began.

Platinum Round:

1- Islamabad United select in-form Hasan Ali as their first pick. He last played for Peshawar Zalmi and was released just days before the draft.  
2- Multan Sultans pick Australia's Chris Lynn. He last played for Lahore Qalandars and was not retained.

3- Lahore Qalandars pick Afghanistan's Rashid Khan.  
4- Peshawar Zalmi pick South Africa's David Miller.  
5- Quetta Gladiators pick West Indies superstar Chris Gayle. The Gladiators becomes Gayle's third PSL team after Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings.  
6- Quetta Gladiators pick England's Tom Banton.

Diamond Round:

1- Karachi Kings pick Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi.  
2- Peshawar Zalmi pick Afghanistan's Mujeeb-ur-Rehman.  
3- Karachi Kings pick Australia's Dan Christian.  
4- Peshawar Zalmi pick West Indies' Sherfane Rutherford, who played for defending champions Karachi Kings in last year's PSL.  
5- Islamabad United pick England's Lewis Gregory.

Gold Round:

1- Lahore Qalandars retain their own Samit Patel. The England

all-rounder played a massive role in the team's maiden run to the PSL final last year.  
2- Peshawar Zalmi pick Amad Butt.  
3- Quetta Gladiators pick Usman Shinwari.  
4- Karachi Kings retain West Indies' Chadwick Walton.  
5- Islamabad United retain Wales' Phil Salt.

Silver Round:

1- Karachi Kings pick England's Joe Clarke.  
2- Quetta Gladiators pick South Africa's Cameron Delpert.  
3- Multan Sultans pick Sohail Khan.  
4- Peshawar Zalmi pick Umaid Asif.  
5- Islamabad United pick Rohail Nazir.  
6- Lahore Qalandars pick England's Tom Abell.  
7- Lahore Qalandars pick Zeeshan Ashraf, who last played for Multan Sultans.  
8- Karachi Kings pick local Sindh

starlet Danish Aziz.  
9- Multan Sultans pick Pakistan vice-captain Mohammad Rizwan. He was on Karachi Kings' books last year but was not first choice.  
10- Islamabad United pick Reece Topley.

11- Peshawar Zalmi retain England's Saqib Mahmood.  
12- Quetta Gladiators pick Afghanistan's Qais Ahmed.  
13- Peshawar Zalmi retain Imamu-Haq.  
14- Multan Sultans pick Sohaib Maqsood.  
15- Islamabad United pick Iftikhar Ahmed.  
16- Quetta Gladiators pick Abdul Nasir.  
17- Karachi Kings pick Mohammad Ilyas.  
18- Lahore Qalandars pick Salman Ali Agha.  
19- Lahore Qalandars pick Mohammad Faizan.  
20- Peshawar Zalmi pick Mohammad Imran.  
21- Multan Sultans pick Sohaibullah.

22- Karachi Kings pick Zeeshan Malik.  
23- Multan Sultans pick Adam Lyth.  
24- Peshawar Zalmi pick Mohammad Irfan.

Emerging players round:

1- Quetta Gladiators pick Saim Ayub.  
2- Multan Sultans pick Shah Nawaz Dhani.  
3- Peshawar Zalmi pick Ibrar Ahmed.  
4- Karachi Kings pick Qasim Akram.  
5- Lahore Qalandars pick Maaz Khan.  
6- Islamabad United pick Mohammad Wasim Jr.  
7- Lahore Qalandars pick Zaid Alam.  
8- Peshawar Zalmi pick Mohammad Imran.  
9- Multan Sultans pick Mohammad Omar.  
10- Islamabad United pick Ahmed Saifi Abdullah. — DNA

## Briefs

## UK corona cases top 3 million

## FOREIGN DESK

LONDON: The number of confirmed coronavirus cases recorded in the United Kingdom has now surpassed three million, as the human cost of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to mount amid growing fears about the fast-spreading new variants of the virus.

UK authorities on Saturday announced another 59,937 new infections and 1,035 related fatalities, taking the total death toll to 80,868 – one of the highest in Europe, alongside Italy.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson imposed a third stay-at-home order at the start of the week as alarm deepens that hospitals could be overwhelmed, while London Mayor Sadiq Khan on Friday declared a “major incident” in the capital and said the spread of COVID-19 was “out of control”. Reporting from London, Al Jazeera’s Neave Barker described the situation as “extremely bad”. “Before the majority of the population receive the vaccine, there might be a significant impact on how hospitals are able to cope ... [as well as] the death toll and the rate of infection,” he said. To date, more than 1.5 million people in the UK have received coronavirus jabs, with the elderly, their carers and health workers prioritised during the immunisation drive.

## Deadly snowstorms cause chaos across Spain

## WEB DESK

MADRID: Snowstorms across much of Spain left four people dead and caused chaos across much of the country, trapping motorists and closing the capital’s air and rail links, with more snowfall to come.

The bodies of a man and woman were recovered by the southern Andalusia region emergency service after their car was washed away by a flooded river near the town of Fuenigrola. The Interior Ministry said a 54-year-old man was also found dead in Madrid under a big pile of snow. A homeless man died of hypothermia in the northern city of Zaragoza, the local police department reported. On Friday, Madrid experienced its heaviest snowfalls since 1971 after what the AEMET weather agency described as “exceptional and most likely historic” conditions caused by Storm Filomena. It warned that another 20cm (nearly 8 inches) snowfall was expected on Saturday in Madrid and central Spain’s lower plains, with up to 50cm (20 inches) at higher altitudes. “Even if, despite the extremely difficult weather conditions, the number of incidents is relatively limited, we have three deaths to mourn,” Interior Minister Fernando Grande-Marlaska told a news conference.

## Swiss school closures cut Covid spread: study

GENEVA: Switzerland’s decision in the spring to shutter schools was one of the most effective measures in reducing mobility and thus also transmission of Covid-19, a study showed Sunday. Researchers at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, ETH, determined that the closure of Swiss schools last March was responsible for cutting mobility by more than a fifth. “School closures reduced mobility by 21.6 percent,” Stefan Feuerriegel, an ETH professor of management information systems who headed the study, told AFP in an email. “School closures reduce mobility, (which) then reduces new cases” of Covid-19, he said. His team analysed some 1.5 billion movements in Swiss telecommunication data between February 10 and April 26 last year to evaluate the impact on mobility as various anti-Covid measures were introduced. In decentralised Switzerland, its 26 cantons introduced measures at different paces before a country-wide partial lockdown, including school closures, was ordered on March 16. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Mustafa Yurdakul in a group photo with Turkish and Pakistani showbiz celebrities. – DNA

## Kazakhstan heads to the highly anticipated polls

In a referendum that runs alongside the election, people will decide whether they prefer the current parliamentary system, a presidential one, or neither – an option that remains unclear

## FOREIGN DESK

BISHKEK: Voters cast their ballots on Sunday in arguably one of the most polarising elections since this Central Asian nation’s independence from the Soviet Union 30 years ago. Amid a freezing winter breeze, people will choose not only its next president but also the political system they want to live under. The stakes are high. Seventeen candidates will run against Sadyr Zhaparov, who has run the country since the unrest that broke out as a result of a rigged parliamentary election on October 4 that led to the cancellation of results. Zhaparov has been agitating in favour of switching to a presidential form of government, which would give the president excessive legislative and executive powers. In a referendum that runs along-

side the election, people will decide whether they prefer the current parliamentary system, a presidential one, or neither – an option that remains unclear.

As snow melted under the warm afternoon sun, ever-present policemen with cameras monitored a group of a few dozen activists who marched to Ala-Too square, which only four months ago was drenched in revolutionary fervour. The protesters denounced Zhaparov’s plan to change the constitution, which opponents say will put the country on a path to authoritarianism. “I’m here to show my support for the constitution, the rule of law and parliamentarism,” said Aizhamal Bektenova, 23.

“I’m against what is happening in my country. It is a usurpation of power, disrespect towards the law. People came here in protest against the corrupt leadership that wants to take the power away

from the people,” she added.

According to Zhaparov, a populist and nationalist, for the past 30 years Kyrgyzstan – which since 1991 has been through three revolutionary upheavals – has been run by irresponsible elites who led to the destruction of its economic, social and political potential. A strong leadership, in his view, is the only way to right the wrongs. Zhaparov remains a highly divisive figure. Amid the October revolt, he was freed from prison where he served an 11 and a half year sentence for kidnapping a local official. His supporters, however, say he was a political prisoner, persecuted for his activism to nationalise Kumtor, the country’s biggest gold mine.

After getting out of prison, he was acquitted in a hasty trial and nominated to the position of interim prime minister. After the resignation of president Sooronbay Jeen-

bekov, he also became interim president, but resigned from both positions in November to be able to run for president.

The opposition fears the proposed constitutional changes might lead to the concentration of power in the hands of one individual, whose rise to power has been deeply suspicious. Many point to Zhaparov’s unclear connections to organised crime and continuing attempts to curtail civil liberties.

According to analysts, the new constitution that the current parliament has drafted – despite having no legal mandate to do so – is not only full of gaps but also fails to ensure protections such as freedom from slavery and freedom of speech. It also does not specify the country’s electoral system.

While in recent weeks Bishkek has seen a number of protests by activists, lawyers and civil society calling on Zhaparov to respect the coun-

try’s laws, the vote will most likely be decided outside of the capital.

Supporters say Zhaparov is a man of the people, the disenfranchised youth of the countryside, migrant workers and Kyrgyz speakers who have felt abandoned by the Russian-speaking Bishkek elites. Zhaparov, many believe, is Kyrgyzstan’s last hope.

“I feel sorry for Zhaparov,” said supporter Ulijan, 46. “If he becomes president and the system changes to presidential, he will be done. Already now the parliament is constantly criticising him. They will not leave him in peace. I hope he will fulfill his promises. Probably not all of them but at least some. It will already be a lot.” Meanwhile, opposition candidates are aiming for a second round of voting. If Zhaparov does not secure 50 percent of the vote on Sunday, the opposition will vouch for the candidate with the highest percentage of votes.

## Indonesia says located black box recorders

JAKARTA: Authorities have pinpointed the location of two black boxes from a crashed Indonesian jet, they said Sunday, referring to cockpit voice and flight data recorders that could help explain why the aircraft went down with 62 people aboard. The announcement came as divers pulled body parts, wreckage and clothing from waters off Indonesia’s capital Jakarta. “We have located the position of the black boxes, both of them,” said Soerjanto Tjahjanto, head of Indonesia’s transport safety agency.

“Divers will start looking for them now and hopefully it won’t be long before we get them.” The Sriwijaya Air Boeing 737-500 went into a steep dive about four minutes after it left Soekarno-Hatta international airport in Jakarta on Saturday afternoon. Indonesia’s President Joko Widodo expressed his “deep condolences”, and called on citizens to “pray together so that victims can be found”. But the frantic search involving helicopters and a flotilla of warships appeared to offer no hope of finding any survivors. The search and rescue agency said it had so far collected five body bags with human remains as well as debris from the crash site in the Java Sea. A piece of child’s clothing, a broken tyre and wheel, life jackets and wreckage from the plane’s body were found, according to authorities and AFP reporters on the scene. Among the passengers were Beben Sofian, 59, and her husband Dan Razanah, 58. “They took a selfie and sent it to their kids before taking off,” the couple’s nephew Hendra told AFP. All 62 people on board, passengers and crew, were Indonesian, authorities said. The count included 10 children. Distraught relatives waited nervously for news at the airport in Pontianak, the city on Indonesia’s section of Borneo island which had been flight SJ182’s destination, about 90 minutes flying time over the Java Sea. “I have four family members on the flight – my wife and three children,” Yaman Zai said on Saturday evening as he sobbed. “(My wife) sent me a picture of the baby today... How could my heart not be torn into pieces?” – DNA

## India promises to return missing soldier: PLA

BEIJING: China has called on India to immediately return its soldier who went astray in the China-India border area and was found by Indian troops. Due to darkness and complicated geography, a soldier of the Chinese PLA frontier defense force went astray in the China-India border early Friday morning, and the PLA frontier defense force notified the Indian side of the information the first time, hoping the Indian side could assist in search and rescue of the lost Chinese soldier, according to a statement issued by PLA Daily.

Nearly two hours later, the response from the Indian side came, confirming that the missing soldier had been found and would be returned to the Chinese side after receiving instructions from the superior authority. Certain Indian media’s hyping of the incident didn’t square with the facts. The Indian side should strictly adhere to relevant agreements reached by the two countries and waste no time to return the lost soldier to the Chinese side, so as to add positive factors for de-escalating the border tensions between the two countries. – APP

## Momentum builds to impeach Trump

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump, the president of the United States, faced a renewed push by Democrats to remove him from office, as federal agents arrested more Capitol Hill rioters on Saturday, including a man who carried off the House speaker’s lectern.

Representative Ted Lieu said on Twitter that Democratic members of the House of Representatives will introduce formal articles of impeachment on Monday. The California Democrat, who helped draft the charges, said the articles had drawn 180 co-sponsors as of Saturday afternoon. A spokeswoman for Lieu said no Republicans have yet signed on.

The impeachment declaration accuses Trump of engaging “in high Crimes and Misdemeanors by willfully inciting violence against the Government of the United States”, according to a copy Lieu posted on Twitter on Friday. It states that Trump “has demonstrated that he will remain a threat to national security, democracy



and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office, and has acted in a manner grossly incompatible with self-governance and the rule of law”. A vote could be held as soon as Wednesday. The new push comes after Trump incited his supporters to storm the US Capitol on Wednesday as legislators met to certify the election victory of President-elect Joe Biden. Trump urged the crowd to march there in force during remarks in which he repeated his bogus claim that his election defeat was fraudulent.

The four-hour occupation of the seat of the US legislature shocked the country and raised questions about security preparations ahead

of the well-planned and publicised event. Five people, including a rioter shot by police as she attempted to enter the House chamber and a Capitol Police officer struck by a fire extinguisher, died during the incident. Nancy Pelosi, the House speaker, accused the Trump supporters who invaded the Capitol of choosing “their whiteness over democracy”. Addressing her hometown San Francisco constituents during an online video conference, Pelosi on Saturday said Trump’s actions “cannot be exaggerated”. She added, “The complicity, not only the complicity, the instigation of the president of the United States, must and will be addressed.”

## STZs establishment to boost IT sector in Pak

“Therefore, I believe that Pakistan is striving to build core technology industry ecology, to realize the coordinated development of the industrial chain, value chain and innovation chain, and promote the rapid development of the digital economy,” he added

## DNA

BEIJING: The announcement of the development of Special Technology Zones (STZs) in Pakistan is a revolutionary move and a strong indicator of Prime Minister Imran Khan’s government commitment towards the technological development and sustainability of the country’s digital landscape. The main objective of the establishment of STZs is to give incentives to the information technology sector to make it flourish for the benefit of the country. This was stated by Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law in his article published

by China Economic Net (CEN) on Sunday. Information technology is a revolutionary sector that needed to be exploited to meet the demands of the contemporary world, said Prime Minister Imran Khan, while addressing the launching ceremony of the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) in Islamabad.

As mankind has experienced the agricultural revolution and industrial revolution, now it is going through the information revolution. In the process of coping with the COVID-19 pandemic, we have clearly seen the importance of information technology. Prime Minister Imran Khan pointed out that only those companies that adapted to information technology

well in time have gained during the coronavirus pandemic.

In his latest article, Cheng Xizhong mentioned that Pakistan is committed to the development of digital economy. Information technology and digital economy are closely related and the new generation of information technology is the booster of digital economy. The development of cloud computing, big data, Internet of things, mobile Internet, artificial intelligence and other new-generation information technologies is accelerating global industrial division, economic restructuring and reshaping the pattern of global economic competition.

“Therefore, I believe that Pakistan is striving to build core technol-

ogy industry ecology, to realize the coordinated development of the industrial chain, value chain and innovation chain, and promote the rapid development of the digital economy,” he added.

He said the information technology industry is a labor-intensive industry, which can create tens of thousands of employment opportunities. It is the most suitable for young people with higher technical education. With the second-youngest population in the world, Pakistan can utilize the information technology sector in employing its youth. Also, the Pakistani nationals working in other countries can benefit from the STZs.

China’s information technology and the digital economy are de-

veloping rapidly. Pakistan is China’s second-largest source of foreign students, with about 28,000 students studying in China. We should encourage these students to return home after graduation, to make contributions to the development of information technology and digital economy, and to the realization of the four ‘zations’, namely, informatization, digitization, industrialization and modernization in their own country.

Now as the construction of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has entered the second stage, the industrial cooperation between China and Pakistan with Special Economic Zones and Special Technology Zones as the carriers will become the focus.

## Landslides kill 11 in Indonesia

## WEB DESK

JAKARTA: Two landslides triggered by heavy rains have killed at least 11 people and injured 18 others in western Indonesia, according to officials.

The landslides at Cihanjuang village in West Java, about 150km (95 miles) southeast of the capital, Jakarta, took place at 4pm (09:00 GMT) and 7:30pm (12:30 GMT) on Saturday, a spokesman for the Indonesian National Board for Disaster Management (BNPB) said in a statement on Sunday. “The first landslide was triggered by high rainfall and unstable soil conditions. The subsequent landslide occurred while officers were still evacuating victims around the first landslide area,” Raditya Jati said. Rescuers were among the victims, he said.

The death toll was preliminary as of Sunday morning, Jati said, adding that potential rain and thunderstorms through the day may hamper rescue efforts.

Seasonal rains and high tide in recent days have caused dozens of landslides and widespread flooding across much of Indonesia, a chain of more than 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains close to rivers. Authorities struggled to bring in heavy equipment to clear the debris in West Java as landslides had blocked roads and a bridge.

President Joko Widodo in October warned Indonesia that heavy rains from the La Nina weather system could trigger flooding and landslides, and affect the nation’s agricultural output.

## Half of Swiss hotels, risk bankruptcy

GENEVA: Nearly half of Switzerland’s restaurants and hotels risk bankruptcy within months failing financial support to weather devastating Covid-19 measures, the sector’s employer group warned Sunday.

The Swiss government is expected this week to extend the closure of bars, restaurants and leisure facilities across the country until the end of February to control stubbornly high Coronavirus case and death numbers. But industry federation GastroSuisse warned in a statement that if done without providing significant financial support, around half of businesses in the restoration and hospitality sector could go belly-up by the end of March.

The group polled around 4,000 restaurant and hotel owners, and determined that 98 percent of them already are in urgent need of financial support. “The very existence of many of them is threatened,” GastroSuisse president Casimir Platzer said in the statement.

While restaurants and other businesses quickly received financial support when Switzerland went into partial lockdown during the initial wave of infections, GastroSuisse has complained that support during subsequent sporadic closures has lagged. Before the crisis, more than 80 percent of Swiss restaurants and hotels were in a good or very good position of liquidity, the study showed. – APP

## Belgium virus deaths top 20,000: official

BRUSSELS: The number of fatalities in Belgium from the new coronavirus crossed 20,000 on Sunday, health officials said, with more than half the dead from retirement care homes. The country, with a population of 11.5 million, has recorded 662,694 cases and 20,038 deaths since the pandemic broke out, the Sciensano public health institute said.

Belgium counts all deaths of people who have had a positive Covid-19 test among virus fatalities, giving it one of the world’s highest death rates with 1,725 per 100,000 people, according to an AFP tally. During the first wave of the pandemic Belgium also included people who died and may have had the virus but did not necessarily have a test. Covid-19 vaccinations began in Belgium on January 5. Virus deaths in retirement homes reached 10,270 on December 18, the authorities said. Amnesty International had the previous month alleged the authorities had “abandoned” care homes. – APP

## Briefs

Pakistan's  
coronavirus  
cases cross  
500,000

ISLAMABAD: The number of novel coronavirus infections in Pakistan crossed the 500,000 mark on Sunday with 2,899 new cases being reported in the past 24 hours. Forty Six corona patients had lost their lives out of which 41 were under treatment in hospitals and five others in their respective homes or quarantines, according to the latest update issued by the National command and Operation Centre (NCOC).

During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in Punjab followed by the Sindh. It added that out of the total 46 deaths during last 24 hours 24 patients died on ventilators.

No COVID affected person was on ventilator in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Balochistan and Gilgit Baltistan (GB) while 304 ventilators were occupied elsewhere in Pakistan.

The maximum ventilators were occupied in four major areas including Multan 51 percent, ICT 33 percent, Bahawalpur 41 percent and Lahore 34 percent.

Some 44,410 tests were conducted across the country on Saturday, including 14,572 in Sindh, 17,613 in Punjab, 5,993 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 4,998 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), 511 in Balochistan, 350 in GB, and 373 in AJK. Around 456,969 people have recovered from the disease so far across Pakistan making it a significant count with over 86 percent recovery ratio of the affected patients. – APP

Govt switches  
towards  
online mode,  
says Shafqat

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Federal Education and Professional Training Shafqat Mehmood said the government has transformed towards distance education learning mode to tackle the pandemic impacts and established a separate wing in that regard in the ministry. Talking to media persons, he said the government while taking prompt action had adopted Distance Education Programmes due to wake of pandemic COVID-19 that has effected all sectors. He said although the education sector in Pakistan had to face huge challenges due to surge of COVID-19 pandemic, but on the other side, it had also produced many new opportunities to make improvements in the field of education. He expressed the hope that the pandemic would end soon but the projects of Distance learning will be continued. Further elaborating government's initiative in education sector, he went on saying that we had introduced Blended Learning Project in Islamabad with cooperation of World Bank. In this project, he said, technology had been used for further effectiveness of educational processes and making it understandable. Shafqat also highlighted the injustice in the current education system of country and briefed about the development of uniform education system that will be implemented by next year for the eradication of classification in education system. – APP

Five-day anti-  
polio drive  
to start today

ISLAMABAD: A five-day national polio immunisation drive will start from tomorrow to vaccinate over 40 million children under the age of five across Pakistan. A supplementary dose of Vitamin A drops will also be administered to children aged 6 to 59 months during this campaign to help build general immunity among susceptible children to protect them from polio and other diseases. According to Pakistan Polio Eradication Program, around 285,000 polio frontline workers will visit parents and caregivers at their doorstep, adhering to strict COVID-19 precautionary measures and protocols while vaccinating children. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas, President ICCI is presenting a souvenir to Ali Alizada, ambassador of Azerbaijan during his visit to ICCI. Fatima Azam SVP, Abdul Rehman Khan VP ICCI are also seen in picture. –DNA

Azerbaijan keen to promote  
bilateral trade with Pakistan

The envoy said that Pakistani pharma companies have huge potential in his country and they should set up manufacturing plants in Azerbaijan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ali Alizada, Ambassador of Azerbaijan has said that his country was keen to further promote bilateral trade with Pakistan as both countries have tremendous scope to enhance trade and economic cooperation in many fields.

He said that Azerbaijan and Pakistan enjoyed excellent relations at political level, but trade and economic relations were not matching with them, therefore, there was a great need to focus on promoting trade relations that would yield highly beneficial results for the economies of both countries.

He was addressing the business community during his visit to Islamabad Chamber of Commerce &

Industry (ICCI).

Ali Alizada said that the people of Azerbaijan have great love for Pakistan and feel comfortable in doing business with it, therefore, Pakistan should seriously consider to expand trade cooperation with it.

He said that Azerbaijan has signed free trade agreements with 10 countries of the region including Russia, therefore, by investing in Azerbaijan and increasing trade cooperation with it, Pakistani investors could promote exports to all these regional countries.

He said that Covid-19 pandemic has caused some slowdown in trade activity between the two countries, but after the coronavirus was over, bilateral trade was expected to get a boost.

He said that Azerbaijan was

interested in developing railways links and direct flights with Pakistan soon after the end of Covid-19. He identified agriculture, industry, tourism, mining, hospitality and defense as potential areas of bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

The envoy said that Pakistani pharma companies have huge potential in his country and they should set up manufacturing plants in Azerbaijan. He said that Azerbaijan was establishing a free economic zone next to the port of Baku and Pakistani investors should explore JVs and investment in this facility.

He said that an online business forum between the two countries was planned in March and said that Pakistani business

community should attend it to explore business collaboration with the counterparts of Azerbaijan.

He said that ICCI should take a delegation to Azerbaijan to explore its market and he would cooperate in connecting them with right partners in his country.

Speaking at the occasion, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the bilateral trade of around US\$ 16-17 million between Pakistan and Azerbaijan was quite nominal given the actual potential of both countries and more serious efforts were needed from both sides to improve it. He said that many good quality Pakistani products including pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, surgical instruments,

sports goods, cutlery, electrical appliances, textile & leather products, furniture, home-made crafts, food and fruits products, engineering & consumer goods, rice have great scope in Azerbaijan and it should increase imports of these products from Pakistan.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said that Pakistan was setting up many special economic zones under CPEC that offered 10 years' tax holiday, therefore, investors of Azerbaijan should explore opportunities of JVs and investment in these SEZs that would help in further strengthening bilateral business cooperation between the two countries.

He said that Azerbaijan was quite rich in energy and it can help Pakistan in this sector as well. He assured

that ICCI would try to take a business delegation to Azerbaijan in March 2021 to explore business collaboration with counterparts in Azerbaijan and analyze the market potential for Pakistani products.

He said the delegation would also interact with investors of Azerbaijan and inform them about the potential business opportunities for them in various sectors of Pakistan's economy.

Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Aslam Khokhar and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that steps should be taken to bridge the gap between the private sectors of both countries to increase two-way trade up to the real potential of both countries.

11th death anniversary  
of Engineer Hamiddudin

NAZIR SIYAL / DNA

KARACHI: Countrywide events to pay rich tributes to former Pakistan Democratic Front (PDF) leader of Khaksar Tehreek late Engineer Hamiddudin Ahmed Ibn Allama-Mashriqi on his 11th death anniversary here at various locations on Sunday.

Former Chief Khaksar Tehrik late Engineer Hamiddudin Ahmed Al-Mashriqi, was died of cardiac arrest on January 10, 2010 at the age of 54. He was born on November 16, 1956 in Lahore Ichraa. He was graduated from Mehran University Jamshoro Sindh and decided to work for Khaksar Tehreek to reorganize, he was elected as Chief Khaksar Tehreek on 1993 and further unanimously selected Qaid Khaksar Tehreek Pakistan at Meenare-e-Pakistan 2-day Khaksar Camp.

Khaksar Tehrik activists, educationists, Journalists and politicians all over country organized events to pay rich tributes on his services and recitation of Holy Quran here at Karachi, Larkana, Ratodero-Dhamra, Lahore, Gujranwala, Havelian, Kot Radha Kishn, Phalia and other parts. Khaksar Tehreek leaders, civil society workers threw lights on the rendered services of Hamiddudin Ahmed Al-Mashriqi for the workers, bonded labour and national issues, particularly, struggle for the hunger strikes, struggle during national movement for the restoration of Chief Justice of Pakistan's long March, and Jailed in Attock and Kot Luckhpatt also.

SC to hear  
Senate  
elections'  
references

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

China and Pakistan could  
promote digital economy

DNA

BEIJING: High-level and high-quality cooperation between China and Pakistan could boost the sharing of technologies and experience of the digital economy. It will also facilitate the building of a community of digital economy under the framework of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), said a Chinese scholar Prof. Cheng Xizhong, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

Cheng Xizhong stated that Pakistan is known as the land of opportunity as it has tremendous and unmatched potentials. While technology-enabled innovation is the major spur to productive growth, rapid advances in technology are enabling new business opportunities.



As in the case, Pakistan's efforts on the digital growth path will improve the business environment, attract domestic and foreign investment, and accelerate the development of the national economy. As he pointed earlier, it was the right choice to go ahead with "Engage Africa". Prof. Cheng reaffirmed that Pakistan's commitment to the development of the digital economy is another right choice.

One right choice after another entails the wisdom and correctness of the policies

made by the Imran Khan administration, which gives Pakistan great hope for fast economic development.

Why has China's economy recovered so quickly and so did that of Pakistan's? He believed the digital economy is the answer. In the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic, the digital economy with its strong vitality and great development potential has effectively hedged the downward pressure of economy in some countries including China and Pakistan.

## COMSATS invited to establish varsity in Yemen

In the meeting, it was agreed that the Executive Director COMSATS, with the support of Yemeni Ambassador, would hold various virtual meetings with Yemen's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research

STAFF REPORT / DNA

ISLAMABAD: During his visit to the Headquarters of the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS), the Ambassador of the Republic of Yemen, H.E. Mohammed Motaah Alashabi, handed over a letter from Yemen's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, to the Executive Director COMSATS, Dr. S. M. Junaid Zaidi, in which COMSATS' support has been invited to establish a university of science and technology in Yamen. A Pakistan-based inter-governmental/international organization of 27 developing countries, COMSATS had established the COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) in Pakistan, which has now become a leading public-sector university in the country. Yemen, which is one of the member countries of COMSATS, wishes to benefit from



the experience of COMSATS for establishing a similar university. In his letter, the Yemen's Minister also pledged to participate in the virtual meeting of COMSATS Consultative Committee, which is expected to be held during 2021. While exchanging views on Yemen's potential collaboration with other developing countries from the platform of COMSATS, the Ambassador pledged to facilitate in the induction of

a suitable R&D Centre / University of Yemen in COMSATS' Network of International Science and Technology Centres of Excellence. COMSATS' Network currently has membership of 24 reputed research centres or universities belonging to the developing countries, working in various fields of science and technology, and serves as the organization's technical resource-base for South-South and Triangular cooperation programmes in the Member States.

The induction of a Yemeni Center in COMSATS Network would facilitate various collaborative undertakings including joint research and development projects, capacity building activities, expert-exchange and technology transfer arrangements, etc. In the meeting, it was agreed that the Executive Director COMSATS, with the support of Yemeni Ambassador, would hold various virtual meetings with Yemen's Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in order to take the ongoing collaboration forward.

High-density  
farming vital  
for guava  
production

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Farmers in Pakistan's most fertile Punjab province are getting enormously enhanced yield after experimenting with high-density plantation of the centuries-old local variety of guava, a case showcasing the scope of the agricultural economy in the country.

According to a report published by Gwadar Pro on Sunday, Rao Arshad, a fruit farmer in the Faisalabad district of the province cultivated 1,000 guava plants over 8 acres of land two years ago and was amazed to see the results. His farm started yielding guava within 9 months of planting 9-month old saplings. The size of guava bulbs and the number of bulbs on each plant were even more amazing. On average, ready-to-pluck guava weighed around half kilograms.

"In only two years, we had a bulb as big as 622 grams", Rao said, wondering how far the bulb size could grow when his farm matures. The vendor told Gwadar Pro that these plants could yield guavas for over 35 years. He looked as if saying that it was just the beginning and more marvels could be waiting for him.

Rao purchased the saplings from a nursery in Sharaqpur Sharif, Lahore for Rs35 each. Waseem Malik, the owner of the nursery, said that with ultra-high-density technique, over 2,000 plants of a specific guava variety could be planted in one acre of land while keeping plant-to-plant and line-to-line distance as 4 feet.

However, Rao opted for planting only 1,000 saplings per acre in his 8-acre guava farm, with a plant-to-plant distance of 6 feet and a line-to-line distance of 8 feet. It's more cost-effective, he said. "It saves labor cost as we do most of weeding with the tractor. It also keeps the plants healthy and produces quality fruits", he said.

Dense fog  
likely in  
plain areas

ISLAMABAD: Dense fog is likely to grip plain areas of Punjab and upper Sindh whereas cold and dry weather is expected to continue over most parts of the country with very cold in Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan, upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and north Balochistan during next 24 hours.

Continental air is prevailing over most parts of the country, Met office reported.

In last 24 hours cold and dry weather prevailed over most parts of the country, while very cold in north Balochistan and upper areas.

However, rain occurred at isolated places in upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Kashmir during this time span. Rainfall recorded during this duration remained

Kashmir: Muzaffarabad (City, AP 08mm), Garhduppatta 06mm, Rawalakot 04mm and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: Balakot 06mm.

Lowest temperatures recorded on Sunday remained Leh -14°C, Ziarat, Kalat -11°C, Quetta -09°C, Kalam -08°C, Dalbandin, Parachinar, Hunza -07°C, Malam Jappa -06°C, Nokundi, Panjgur and Zhob -04°C. – APP

At least five  
injured in  
Turbat blast

TURBAT: At least five people were injured in an explosion at the Cinema Bazaar in Turbat, Balochistan on Sunday. Police officials said the injured have been moved to District Headquarters Hospital in Turbat for medical treatment while the Frontier Corps (FC) personnel have cordoned off the area to investigate. The officials said that the nature of the blast is yet to be ascertained. Last week, 11 coal miners were killed in the Machh area some 60 kilometres south-east of Quetta city.

Security officials who did not want to be named told APP that the attackers first separated the miners before tying their hands and feet and taking them into the hills to kill them. In October, a soldier of the Pakistan Army was martyred and three others suffered injuries in an attack on a patrolling party of the security forces near the Jhaki post in Turbat. – APP