



# Islamabad POST

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Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

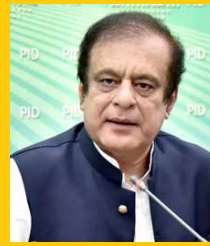
Price Rs. 20

**Kazakh president presents new political reforms**

Detailed News On Page-07

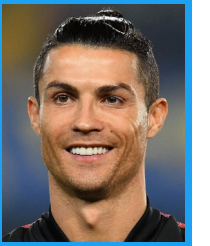
**Shibli opposes summoning of Chairman NAB**

Detailed News On Page-01



**Ronaldo becomes top goalscorer in football history**

Detailed News On Page-06



## Briefs

### PM for reforming criminal justice

A.M.BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan said Thursday that Pakistan's criminal justice system needs to be reworked as the current setup encourages crime. Addressing the launching ceremony of Letters of Administration and Succession Certificates, the prime minister said that "once the culprits face punishments for their crimes, the rates would eventually fall in the country." "A civilised society gives a message: Crime does not pay," he said, stressing the need for reforms in the criminal justice system.

### Foreign funding: 'A lot to be opened yet'

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz has said that Imran Khan has been requesting to keep the foreign funding case secret for seven years. Now he remembers the open hearing. "You have been changing lawyers for seven years, you have been appealing for seven years to stop the Election Commission from looking at the accounts," Maryam Nawaz said in a statement on Twitter on Thursday. Maryam Nawaz said that the founding member of the party has been asking for seven years but you are not presenting papers.

### Govt to bring Nawaz back, says Fawad

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Science and Technology, Chaudhry Fawad Hussain on Thursday said that Pakistan Tehreek e Insaf (PTI), government would utilize all available resources to bring Nawaz Sharif back to Pakistan. The ruling party would avail all options for ensuring presence of the former prime minister, he stated in an interview with a private television channel.

## China to give 0.5m vaccine doses by 31st

Chinese Foreign Minister informed him that Pakistan could send the cargo aircraft to airlift the batch of vaccine

ANSAR M BHATI / DNA

ISLAMABAD: China will provide 0.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to the government of Pakistan by January 31, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Thursday. "As goodwill gesture, China has pledged to handover the batch of vaccine free of cost," the Foreign Minister told media here, following his telephonic conversation with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi this afternoon. Qureshi said the Chinese Foreign Minister informed him that Pakistan could send the cargo aircraft to airlift the batch of vaccine. Terming it a "welcoming development" amid coronavirus situation, he said, "This is a very good news that we have received from our friend China," he said. Qureshi said as Pakistan would be needing another 1.1 million doses for its frontline population, for which Chinese FM Wang Yi today agreed to handover the required vaccine by the end of February. "In view of the strong strategic relations, China has considered Pakistan as the first country to be supplied with the COVID-19 vaccine," he said. The Foreign Minister said Pakistan had successfully fought the challenges of coronavirus and lauded the performance of National Command and Operation Centre (NCO) in this regard. He mentioned that the trials of COVID-19 were effectively being carried out in the country, with an objective to launch production at later stages.

### FM Qureshi addresses ACD meeting

NAVEED MIRAJ / DNA

ISLAMABAD: The 17th Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Ministerial Meeting was held in a virtual format on Thursday. Foreign Minister Mahmood Shah Mahmood Qureshi represented Pakistan in the Meeting. In his address, the Foreign Minister stated that ACD is a leading platform that has transformed into a robust institutional mechanism for dialogue and discussions among the member states on issues of mutual interest. Highlighting the devastating repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic on sustainable development and developing countries, Pakistan stressed the need to coordinate actions, benefit from each other's experiences, and pool resources for responding to the pandemic and financing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Foreign Minister stated that Pak is open to share its experience and internationally acknowledged approach in effectively combating the pandemic, and emphasized the need for the COVID-19 vaccine to become easily and equitably accessible to all.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Ulema called on Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday. (News on Back Page) - DNA

### 'Economy heading in right direction'

RANA FARRUKH

ISLAMABAD: Planning Minister Asad Umar says economic indicators are showing significant improvement, especially the large scale manufacturing witnessed an overall surge of 15 percent in last November. Addressing a news conference, along with Minister for Power Division Omar Ayub, and Prime Minister's Special Assistant on Power Tabish Gohar in Islamabad on Thursday, he said 10 out of 15 export sectors are showing upward trajectory in

Continued on Page 06

## Pak urges world to hold India accountable

The FO Spokesperson said the transcripts also illustrated the unholy nexus between the 'Hindutva' regime and its cronies in the Indian media

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday urged the world to hold India accountable for its actions vitiating the regional environment and endangering peace and stability in South Asia.

"The RSS-BJP regime in India continues to be exposed internationally for its negative propaganda against Pakistan and irresponsible actions, imperiling peace and stability in the region," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said at a weekly press briefing. Spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said the international community must take full cognizance of the situation and hold India accountable for its actions. He said the recent developments regarding Arnab Goswami's WhatsApp chats leaks had further exposed India's sinister designs against Pakistan and vindicated our long-held position. He said the latest revelations confirmed what Pakistan had consistently pointed out that the BJP government staged "false flag" operations, maligned Pakistan with terrorism-related allegations, stoked hyper-nationalism in the country and also deviously



Continued on Page 06

## Shibli opposes summoning of Justice (R) Javed Iqbal

Chairman Committee Javed Latif had asked the NAB chief to appear and explain why the money was paid to Broadsheet

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Thursday the Prime Minister has already constituted an inquiry committee to investigate the Broadsheet matter and determine the responsibility within 45 days. The minister said this during the meeting of the National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting chaired by Javed Latif, MNA. He said there was no point to summon the Chairman National Accountability Bureau (NAB) in the committee at this time. Chairman Committee Javed Latif had asked the NAB chief to appear and explain why and how the money was paid to Broadsheet however Information Minister Shibli Faraz

### Justice (R) Azmat Saeed to head inquiry committee

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz Thursday said Justice Sheikh Azmat Saeed, the retire judge of Supreme Court, had been appointed chairman of the inquiry committee constituted earlier to investigate the Broadsheet matter and determine the responsibility. He said in a tweet, posted on his twitter account. The inquiry committee was constituted by federal cabinet, on the recommendation of Ministerial Inquiry Committee led by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz. The committee has been tasked to investigate the Broadsheet matter, fix the responsibility on those who had illegally benefitted themselves, and submit its report within 45 days. - DNA

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## Joe Biden reverses Trump's Muslim ban

The US faces "a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront, and we will defeat," Biden said

DNA / POST REPORT

WASHINGTON: Soon after taking charge as the 46th president of the United States on Wednesday, Joe Biden issued orders to reverse a number of Donald Trump's divisive policies including returning to global health body, joining climate pact and rescinding Muslim ban. Biden pushed through a flurry of orders the moment he entered the White House, starting with rejoining the 2015 Paris climate accord, from which the US withdrew under Trump, an ally of the fossil fuel industry. "We are going to combat climate change in a way we have not done so far," the new US leader said in the



struction of Trump's cherished wall on the Mexican border and rescinded a ban on visitors from several Muslim-majority nations. "As a nation built on religious freedom and tolerance, we welcome people of all faiths and those of no faith at all. It is who we are," said the new State Department spokesman, Ned Price. In his inaugural address, Biden appealed to supporters of Trump, who shattered political norms by ruthlessly belittling rivals, denouncing entire ethnic groups and trying to cast doubt on basic facts. "I will be a president for all Americans," the veteran Democrat said. The United States faces "a rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism that we must confront, and we will defeat," Biden said.

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Deadly twin suicide attack hits Baghdad - Page 06

Kazakhstan president presents new political reforms for state - Page 07

Ulema's role vital in promoting harmony: PM - Page 08



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## Briefs

## Careem partners with UNDP

DNA

KARACHI: Careem has partnered with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to raise awareness on gender sensitization, traffic rules and civic sense through a series of animated videos.

The videos are going to be used for engagement of youth on social issues as well as being incorporated in the onboarding process for training Careem's Captains at time of registration. The animated videos were developed in close collaboration with the objective of educating the society and raising awareness of the issues which commonly exist but are taboed.

Commenting on the collaboration, Mohsin Zaka, General Manager Ride Hailing, Careem Pakistan said: "Our efforts for ensuring safety at Careem never stops. We are constantly working to enhance the overall experience for our customers. That being said, Captains are an integral part of the Careem family and we will continue to work on their capacity building by continuously educating them. This partnership will act as a catalyst in providing such training to our deserving Captains. Laura Sheridan, Programme Specialist, Youth Empowerment Programme, UNDP said: "Part of UNDP Youth Empowerment Programme's mandate is to engage youth in positive discourse and develop content for promoting positive social messaging."

## Opp campaign expenses to be disclosed soon

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Murad Saeed has claimed that the election campaign expenses of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will be disclosed very soon. Murad Saeed said that political circus was being set up in the streets every day to get NRO. PML-N and PPP have not submitted records to the Election Commission. Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Communications Minister Murad Saeed said that the rallies of PDM in Peshawar, Malakand and Lahore were proof that the people had rejected them in the political arena. He said that after PML-N was not given NRO in the assembly, they took to the streets. When the people rejected it, they staged a circus in front of the Election Commission. The federal minister said they feared that their companies would be exposed in the United States and other countries if the record was submitted. Murad Saeed said that Arnab Ghoswami's talk unveiled Pulwama drama. EU Disinfo Lab and the parliamentarians of England are exposing India on how India is spreading terrorism in Pakistan but the opposition is busy in staging its circus instead of discussing the real issues.

The communications minister further said that Mar-yam Nawaz alleged that two people from Israel and India funded PTI, turned out to be Pakistanis. He said PTI has provided data of 40,000 Pakistanis to the Election Commission, can PML-N and PPP provide data of 1000 people only.

## Waqar reaches Lahore on Mission Punjab

LAHORE: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka has reached Lahore, the capital of Punjab, where he will hold meetings with key provincial government figures on regularizing the cryptocurrency. Earlier, Waqar Zaka paid a successful visit to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa which resulted in the adoption of a resolution in favor of cryptocurrency in the KPK Assembly and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has also set up Pakistan's first crypto mining farm. Waqar Zaka said that he hoped that the ministers of the Punjab government would understand his position and they would also implement it. — DNA



LAHORE: German ambassador Bernhard Schlagheck calls on PML president and former Prime Minister Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain and speaker Punjab assembly Chaudhry Pervez Elahi. — DNA

## ECNEC approves various developmental projects

While congratulating the Ambassador-designate on his appointment, the President urged him to take steps for improving commercial relations with Libya and work for the welfare of Pakistani diaspora

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Dr. Abdul Hafeez Shaikh, chaired a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) at Cabinet Division today. Federal Minister for Planning, Development Reforms and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, Minister for Industries and Production Hammad Azhar, Adviser to the PM on Commerce Abdul Razak Dawood, Adviser to the PM for Institutional Reforms and Austerity Dr. Ishrat Hussain and Minister for Economic Affairs Khuro Bakhtiar participated in the meeting. ECNEC considered and approved

a summary regarding construction of Gwadar-Ratodero Road Project (M-8) sponsored by the Ministry of Communication and executed by NHA at a rationalized cost of Rs. 38,026.28 million. The ECNEC approved the project in view of its strategic importance as it will facilitate connectivity for CPEC projects through improved road linkages.

A summary was presented before ECNEC regarding provision of Advanced Skills Development through International Scholarship Phase-1 for Master and PHD programs to be executed by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). The project is part of a Prime Minister Knowledge Economy Task Force Initiative which will enable our youth to access higher educa-

tion opportunities in well-reputed international universities. ECNEC approved the project at a rationalized cost of Rs. 13.361 billion.

A summary regarding Greater Karachi Water Supply Scheme (K-IV) 260 MGD (phase-1) was presented before ECNEC. The project would provide additional 260 MGD water to Karachi at the total cost of Rs. 25,551.77 million. The expected period of completion is 04 years. ECNEC approved the project for provision of environment friendly water sanitation and waste management infrastructure / facilities to residents of Karachi. Similarly, a project titled 'Solid Waste Emergency and Efficiency Project (SWEEP)' was presented before the Committee sponsored by the Local government, Housing

and Town Planning Department, Government of Sindh with total cost of Rs. 16,800 million including IBRD-World Bank loan of Rs. 16,000 million. The project is designed to mitigate the risk of widespread flooding caused by inadequate solid and liquid waste management during monsoon season and to improve the Solid Waste Management (SWM) infrastructure and service delivery with a view to transform Karachi into an eco-friendly city in the long run. ECNEC considered and approved the "Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Human Capital Investment Project" (KPHICIP) (Education Component) at the total cost of Rs.18910.255 million (\$115 million). The Project has been financed by the World Bank/IDA.

The Project is envisioned to upgrade basic education infrastructure in the districts of Peshawar, Haripur, Noshera and Swabi of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

The project for the "Construction of 100 Dams in Balochistan-Package IV (23 Dams)" was approved by ECNEC at the total cost of Rs.13,512.725 million. Irrigation Department, Government of Balochistan will execute the project and it will complete in 03 years. Realizing the water scarcity in the Province of Balochistan, the project is designed to harness flood flows for direct irrigation, ground water recharge and agricultural development through construction of small dams throughout the Province.



KARACHI: Ambassador of Yemen to Pakistan Mohammed Motahar Alashbi called on Governor Sindh Imran Ismail at Governor House. — DNA

## Use of digital media vital to counter Indian lies: Masood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) President Sardar Masood Khan has said that the nation will have to rise above all political, factional and personal interests, in order to effectively and vociferously present Kashmir issue before the international community.

He urged the youth to use the digital space to counter India's false propaganda considering it their national obligation. The AJK President made these remarks while addressing the

Re-launching Ceremony of the Digital Component of Jammu and Kashmir Self-Determination Movement-International (JKSDMI), co-organized by Youth Parliament Pakistan and Pak Affairs. The event was also addressed by Mr Shehryar Afridi, Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir and Raja Najabat Hussain, Chairman JKSDMI.

Video messages of Chairperson AP-PKG Debbie Abrahams MP, Andrew Gwynne MP, former MEP Julie Ward, Shadow Deputy Leader of the House of Commons Afzal Khan MP, Lord Timothy Kirkhope, former MEP Shafiq Muhammad, former MEP Anthea

McIntyre, Lord Wajid Khan, Mike Woods MP were also played.

The Parliamentarians expressed their support for the Kashmir cause and condemned human rights violations in IOJK. The AJK President said that the issue of Kashmir is above partisan politics, factional interests and beyond personal interests.

He said that as a nation must synergies our efforts in highlighting the Kashmir issue in a selfless manner. He added that the most pressing issue right now is the demographic change taking place in IOJK. "We have to focus on such themes to help emphasize the gravity of the issue", he said.

## Pak US Business Council congrats President Joe Biden

DNA

LAHORE: Founder Chairman Pak-US Business Council and veteran trade leader Iftikhar Ali Malik Thursday congratulated Democrat Joe Biden on becoming 46th president of the United States.

He expressed these views while talking to media here today. He also further extended greetings to Kamala Harris first ever woman Vice President and hoped new leadership will focus on bringing durable peace worldwide especially in South Asia besides restoring the confidence of entire Muslim Ummah in addition to fully ensuring equal rights to all irrespective of color, creed, religion and caste.

He further hoped that under new era, Pakistan will be provided free market access to United States at zero duty in the wake of war on terror in the region and the US private sector will further enter into joint ventures in economic sphere. Iftikhar Ali Malik said what Pakistan needs is to opt the model of joint ventures on the pattern of Egypt and some African countries to enhance trade ties with biggest economies like the US.

He said Pakistan has been keen to explore potential trade concessions as it could import more US cotton in return for preferential US market access for its apparel

export. A preferential Trade Agreement (FTA) could be a long goal because of complexity involved in the process, he further said and added that the Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) provided an institutional mechanism to carry forward those discussions and come up with new ideas.

Iftikhar Ali Malik was of the considered view that the US should remove the bottlenecks in bilateral investment treaty and efforts should now be made to better FTA and it is now imperative that the new US leadership should offer same package and incentives which it offers to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in textile exports, such as duty concessions and market access.

"There must be an incentive package for Pakistan for being a front-line state in combating terrorism with the US. He said that Pakistan is time tested friend and suffered colossal irreparable economic losses running in billions of dollars in war on terrorism in the region. He further said visa restrictions should be eased for the Pakistani businessmen and exporters and joint efforts are needed to further cement the existing economic ties between Pakistan and US private sector. He said Pakistan and US are enjoying amicable relationship and coalition partners against war on terror.

## NA body decides to summon Chairman NAB

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's Standing Committee on Information and Broadcasting has decided to summon Chairman NAB Justice (ret'd) Javed Iqbal for a briefing on the Broadsheet case. Chairman Committee Javed Latif has asked the NAB chief to appear and explain why and how the money was paid to Broadsheet however Information Minister Shibli Faraz opposed the decision and exchanged harsh words with Javed Latif over the decision.

According to sources Shibli Faraz said that why Chairman NAB should be summoned, if that happens, any committee will summon any former prime minister in future. Committee Chairman Javed Latif said that due to a mistake of an institution, Pakistan had to pay billions of rupees from tax money. When the second committee called the chairman NAB, its meeting was adjourned. The government is reluctant over the NAB issue. Information Minister Shibli Faraz said that the Prime Minister has formed a committee. All the questions will be answered, so it is not right to summon the Chairman NAB.

## Govt decides to launch billion dry fruits project

DNA

PESHAWAR: After Billion Tree Tsunami and Billion Honey Projects, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) government has decided to launch Billion Dry Fruits Project.

Well-informed sources said that saplings would be planted to boost the production of the dry fruits under the project. The agriculture department has been directed to launch the Billion Dry Fruits Project soon.

The project will be monitored by Governor KP, Shah Farman. Underlining the importance of the project, Shah Farman said that Billion Dry Fruits Project will increase the income of the people living in the tribal districts of the province and will big revolution. Last year, Prime Minister Imran Khan had launched the Billion Tree Tsunami Honey Project. Under the project, one million hectares of Pakistan's forests would produce seven types of honey. Whereas, the production of honey would increase from 12,000 metric tons to 70,000 metric tons. Pakistan would be able to export honey worth Rs 45 billion annually to different countries.

IG appreciates invaluable services of Tahir Rai

DNA

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Inam Ghani said that Muhammad Tahir Rai and Dr. Masood Saleem are highly professional, capable and hard-working officers of Pakistan Police Service who have fulfilled every responsibility assigned by the department with utmost diligence, honesty and duty. He further said that Muhammad Tahir Rai has a key role to play in strengthening the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) as an institution and thanks to his excellent leadership and tireless work, terrorism has been eradicated from Punjab province. The elements and their facilitators had to flee, and significant successes were achieved in minimizing the graph of terrorism, sectarianism and extremism.

He further said that the appointment of Muhammad Tahir Rai as IG Balochistan is very welcome as he has the vast experience to meet the challenges of his new post and meet the government and public expectations due to his vast experience. Expressing good wishes for CTD, he hoped that Muhammad Tahir Rai will be successful in eradicating terrorism from Balochistan as in Punjab. He expressed these views while addressing a farewell ceremony held at Central Police Office today on the appointment of Additional IG CTD Muhammad Tahir Rai as IG Balochistan and the retirement of DIG Crimes Dr Masood Saleem.

## CM announces Rs2bn package for Harappa



LAHORE: Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar and Governor Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar visited Harappa and announced development package at a cost of two billion rupees. According to hand out, Punjab Chief Minister Sardar Usman Buzdar has said that a strategy had been devised to resolve public problems at grassroots level. He said that half of the amount would be used for roads repair while rupees 500 million would be used for water supply and sewerage improvement. Similarly, rupees 500 million would be spent on construction of overhead bridge and underpass at railway crossing. The CM further announced to develop 2000 villages, including that of Sahiwal, as model villages, adding that Sahiwal teaching hospital would be made functional soon. — DNA



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan Mansoor Khan called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House. — DNA (Detailed News on Page 8)



## Briefs

## ICC's delegation meets Mayor of MCI

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Islamabad Citizens Committee (ICC) led by its President Syed Sadiq Hasan had a meeting with the Mayor, Metropolitan Corporation, Islamabad (MCI) Adil Shah in his office. They discussed ways and means to get improved the civic conditions in the Federal Capital. According to a ICC's press release issued here on Thursday, the President apprised the Mayor of various problems being faced by the citizens of the capital city. The following areas came under discussion: Water Supply, Sewerage System, Parks, Cleanliness of Markets, Encroachments in Markets and Residential Areas, Citizens Club in Fatima Jinnah Park and Roads and Footpaths. The Mayor was very receptive and assured that he will see to it as to what could be done in the shortest possible time. It was agreed that a follow up letter would be delivered to his office, highlighting all those areas which required his immediate attention.

## Gang of burglars busted, 6 arrested

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Golra police busted a gang of burglars on Thursday, arrested six of them along with recovering five pistols and ammunition from their possession. According to Police spokesman, the accused were living on rented houses at various areas in the city and used to do recce in daytime and committed thefts at night.

The 'Gul Zaman Gang' usually targeted locked house in the area of Saddar, the spokesman added. A police team constituted by SP (Saddar-Zone) Muhammad Sarfraz Virk, comprising SHO Golra Sub-Inspector Shokat Abbasi including ASI Rana Saleem and others busted the gang with its ring leader. The arrested were identified as Gul Zaman Ali-as Guloo (leader) of Dera Ismail Khan, Khawar Shahzad of District Chaniot, Nabeel Qaiser of Faisalabad, Muhammad Arshad of Multan, Shehzad Ahmed of village Sultan and Qaiser Ali of Chaniot. The spokesman added that teams have been constituted to arrest the co-accused, while investigation was underway on arrested persons for recovery of stolen items. SSP (Operations) Mustafa Tanvir has appreciated the performance of police team and directed all zonal officers to enhance the security in their respective areas. "No laxity will be tolerated in safety and security of the citizens," the spokesman quoted SSP as saying. - APP

## UNCHR starts small business support

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has started small business support programme for the refugees, said an official of UNCHR. Talking to APP here on Thursday, he said that Pakistan UNCHR in collaboration with Afghan Embassy has also provided six month vocational training skills in 10 trade areas. He said the participants successfully passed the examination and provided the certificates and machine as part of UNCHR support programme, and as part of its initiative to provide earning skills to Afghan refugees the UNHCR in Hassan Abdal, Islamabad and Attock cities. He said that certificates, toolkit and sewing machines were distributed among the men and women who had completed the course. A large number of male and female becomes the beneficiary of this opportunity of UNHCR. Briefing the guests, project manager Shoukat Kakar said that 55 men and women living in the camp had been taught skills of handicraft and tailoring, Vegetable and fruit carts, he added. - APP

## FAO, WFP and IFAD to support Government

As part of Pakistan's commitment to achieve SDGs by 2030, the Government is keen to amplify its participation in the Food Systems Summit in close consultation with the UN organizations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations will host a Food Systems Summit in October 2021 to identify the problems we must solve so that no one goes hungry, and to radically transform the way we manage food on the planet. The Summit will be the turning point in achieving the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. With only 10 years remaining, many of the 17 SDGs remain distant. Unsafe or unsustainable food systems are part and parcel of the development challenge.

Rebuilding the food systems of the world enables us to answer the UN Secretary-General António Guterres call to "build back better" from COVID-19 and to leave no one behind.

As part of Pakistan's commitment to achieve SDGs by 2030, the Government is keen to amplify its participation in the Food Systems Summit in close consultation with the UN organizations.

With this aim, a consultative meeting was held by the Secretary of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research (MNFSR) Ghufuran Memon and attended by the Representatives and Country

Directors of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations a.i. Rebekah Bell, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Chris Kaye and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) Mohammad Fida.

Under the convenorship of the Secretary Ministry of National Food Security and Research, the partners discussed how to organize dialogues at the provincial and national levels based on five identified action tracks i.e. ensure access to safe and nutritious food for all; shift to sustainable consumption patterns;

boost nature-positive production; advance equitable livelihoods and build resilience to vulnerabilities, shocks and stress. The recommendations generated through these dialogues will be presented in a pre-Summit in July in Rome, Italy and final recommendations will be presented in the Summit in October in New York. The Summit actions and commitments will be informed by the best evidence, ideas, initiatives and alliances from around the world. The Summit will develop principles to guide the national and local governments, companies and citizens seeking to leverage their food

systems to support sustainable development. These principles will set an optimistic and encouraging vision in which food systems play a central role in building a fairer, more sustainable world.

The Food System Summit also aims to create a system of follow-up and review to ensure that the Summit's outcomes continue to drive new actions and progress across all member states.

With the call to build back better, transforming our food systems is among the most powerful ways to change course and make progress towards all 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

## Gold prices increase by Rs400

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: The price of 24 karat per tola gold increased by Rs400 on Thursday and was sold at Rs113,400 against its sale at Rs113,000 the previous day, Karachi Sarafa Association reported. The price of ten gram 24 karat gold also increased by Rs342 and was traded at Rs 97,222 against its sale at Rs 96,880 while ten gram 22 karat gold was sold at Rs89,120. The price of per tola and ten gram silver also witnessed no change and was sold at Rs1300 and Rs1114.54 respectively. The gold price in the international market witnessed increase of \$17 and was sold at \$1870 against its sale at \$1853, the association added.

## RCB confiscates 4 truckloads goods

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) on Thursday confiscated four truckloads goods from different markets under its campaign against encroachments. According to RCB Enforcement Wing In-charge, the anti-encroachment operation on the special instruction of Cantonment Executive Officer (CEO) was being conducted on daily basis. He said, the grand clean-up operation against encroachments had further been accelerated. He said the encroachments were removed from Tench Bhatta, Peoples Colony, Bakra Mandi Road, Chor Chowk and Allahabad and four truckloads goods were confiscated while enforcement teams also removed illegal banners from different areas.

The vendors found selling their products while displaying on footpaths and different roads were imposed fines with warnings, he said adding, the encroachments both temporary and permanent were being removed.

## Leather goods exports surge 6.42%

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The exports of leather goods witnessed an increase of 6.42 percent during the first half of ongoing financial year (2020-21) as compared to the exports of corresponding period of last year. Pakistan exported leather worth US \$292.280 million during July-December (2020-21) against the exports of \$274.657 million during July-December (2019-20), showing growth of 6.42 percent, according to the PBS. Among the leather products, the exports of leather garments increased by 1.49 percent, from \$150.638 million last year to \$152.889 million during the current year. The leather gloves exports also rose by 10.34 percent by going up from \$118.378 million to \$130.622 million. Likewise, the exports of all other leather commodities also increased by 55.45 percent during the period under review as these went up from \$5.641 million last year to \$8.769 million during the current fiscal year. Meanwhile, year-on-year basis, the leather exports also witnessed increase of 10.05 percent during the month of December 2020 compared to the same month of last year. The leather exports during December 2020 were recorded at \$52.180 million against the exports of \$47.413 million in December 2019. During the period under review, the leather garments and leather gloves exports also rose by 8.13 and 9.20 percent respectively. In addition, the exports of all other leather goods increased by 94.41 percent. On month-on-month basis, the exports of leather products increased by 5.94 percent during December 2020 as compared to the exports of \$49.253 million in November 2020, the PBS data revealed.



ISLAMABAD: Hamad Obaid Alzaabi, UAE Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, received Sho Sanghyo, Ambassador of the Republic of South Korea in Islamabad, and discussed general situation, bilateral coordination and cooperation between embassies of two friendly countries. - DNA

## IHC seeks report on missing persons

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A division bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday suspended the decision of single member bench for imposing fine on high officials in missing person case and sought report from sub-committee of cabinet. A division bench comprising Justice Aamer Farooq and Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri heard the appeal of federation against the decision of single member bench in missing person's case. Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) and Secretary Interior appeared before the court in person. AGP Khalid Javed said that it was a matter of basic human right, we

were aware that it was the responsibility of the government. The government was taking concrete measures in this regard and a sub-committee of cabinet had also been constituted to view the missing persons' matter, he said. The committee was responsible to submit its report comprising the reasons of forced disappearances and recommendations, the AGP added. He said that the executive had taken notice of the issue and prayed the court to grant some time in this regard. He also prayed the court to suspend the contempt of court proceeding against secretary interior and defence. The AGP said that the committee could take one or two months to prepare its report.

## Islamabad records 130 new corona cases

ISLAMABAD: COVID-19 cases continued to surge in the federal capital as 130 new Corona cases were reported from the city during the last 24 hours, National Command and Operation Center (NCOC) said on Thursday. According to an official of NCOC, as many as 102 cases were reported on Wednesday while 132 cases were reported on Tuesday. He said so far 40,430 cases were reported from the federal capital while 460 deaths were reported from Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). He added 38,278 patients had been recovered completely. Meanwhile, on the direction of Ministry of National Health Services, the district administration of Islamabad had continued smart lockdown in different streets of the capital to reduce transmission of the infection in the selected streets and other sectors. - DNA

## CDA speeds up building plan approval process

According to detail, the department of Building Control of CDA received 121 plans for approval from January 01 to January 20. Out of these, 107 were the residential plans. 35 plans have been approved

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) approved building plans of 41 commercial and residential buildings out of 121 total buildings during last 20 days. The authority also issued completion certificates to 10 out of 87 buildings. CDA generated tax of Rs 80,063, 953 in this regard. According to detail, the department of Building Control of CDA received 121 plans for approval from January 01 to January 20. Out of these, 107 were the residential plans. 35 plans have been approved. There are objections on 33 plans and 29 plans are delayed. Similarly, 06 out of 14 commercial building plans were approved. There are objections on one plan and 7 plans are still in the final stages of their completion. The approval of the said building plans were delayed due to none payment of security fee, no clearance from state, and building violation. The current administration of CDA received applications for completion certificates of 76 residential buildings during last 20 days. 10 of them have been given the certificates. There are objections on 18 and 48 are still in their final stages of completion. The authority received applications for the completion certificates of 11 commercial building plans. There is objection on 01 of them and work is underway for the approval of other 10. BCS 1 issued notices to 25 buildings, BCS 02 to 18, and BCS 03 to 31 buildings. Showcase notices have been issued to the owners of two buildings. 03 buildings have been sealed. BCS 01 collected the tax revenue of Rs 11,809,457; BCS 2, Rs 38,302,865; and BCS 03 collected tax of Rs 63129,951 in this regard. - DNA

## Daniel Pearl case adjourned

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday adjourned Daniel Pearl murder case till January 27 and directed the Sindh government to facilitate counsel of accused Umer Ahmed Sheikh for holding a meeting with his client. A three member bench headed by Justice Mushir Alam heard the appeal of Sindh government in Daniel Pearl case. During the course of proceeding, the counsel for the accused, Mehmood Sheikh argued that it was necessary to give the reasons for delay in registration of first information report (FIR) in any case. - APP

## Lok Virsa arranges Sufi Sangat on poet Mian Baksh

ISLAMABAD: National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) on Thursday arranged Sufi Sangat to pay tribute to sufi mystic poet Mian Muhammad Baksh. Special programmes including poetry symposium, sufi kalams were also arranged to highlight contributions of sufi poet Muhammad Baksh towards Punjabi poetry. Speaking on the occasion, author of great Sufi wisdom Saeed Ahmed said that he wrote 18 books, all in the Punjabi language except one in Persian. He said that Hazrat Mian Mohammad Baksh was such a great and God gifted soul to this region who did not indulge in worldly affairs for the sake of noble cause adding that he passed a celibate life. He further added that he devoted his whole life writing such powerful spiritual thoughts in a versified form whose beauty now must be admired in a sincere and honest way. His major work is Saif-ul-Malook which he wrote at the age of 33 (Hijra year) adding that the book is equally popular in all parts of the world where Punjabi is understood. He said that "today they are millions of his admirers and hundreds of readers of the Saif ul Maluk". People of the Punjab and Kashmir respect these saints a lot and love their poetry (arfana kalam) from the core of their hearts, he stated. He said that Mian Mohammad Baksh not only talks about the various social evil diseases such as greed, lust, violence, arrogance and negative trends in the society but also gives solutions for the ailments, he stated. Saeed Ahmed read some verses of his poetry from Saif ul Maluk in which the beautiful story of love between a prince and a fairy was written. Many other well known poets and intellectuals shed lights on his poetic vision. - DNA

## Medical research is obligation not option, Dr. Khalid

Dr. Khalid emphasized general public to take part in the research process, it is beneficial for you and the generations to come

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Current pandemic, COVID-19 has made it clear that knowledge in text books being taught is something of past and not sufficient to help tackle with the current pandemic. Research in medical is not an option, it is an obligation on us all to find new ways and means to tackle with current and future health crisis, said Prof. Dr. Khalid Saeed Khan, in his lecture delivered at COMSTTECH. He emphasized general public to take part in the

research process, it is beneficial for you and the generations to come. Dr. Khalid talked about the difference between factual knowledge and the fake one.

He delved deep in the research process to find fact based implementable beneficial knowledge for the humanity. He said that the health and economic development are related and both go side by side. Dr. Khalid said that good decisions can only be made when they are research based. Decisions made on the basis of untested fake information cannot be beneficial.

He said that medical research is limited in Pakistan and the infrastructure is not available at ground level. He stressed the need of the engagement of citizens in the research process and the dissemination of research information to the masses through the internet and all other available means.

Answering to a question asked by Dr. NM Butt, a physicist and expert in nanomedicine, he stressed the need of the curriculum balance with regard to theory and practice. He totally agreed with Dr. Butt to add a research semester at MBBS level to engage the

doctors in research at very early stage of their career.

More than 115 people attended this lecture in person as well as virtually on Zoom from Pakistan and other OIC member states. The lecture was delivered by Prof. Dr. Khalid Saeed Khan, Distinguished Investigator - Beatriz Galindo programme - at University of Granada, Spain. He has published over 400 peer-reviewed research papers with current h-index >70.

Dr. Khalid has so far supervised 25 higher-degree theses. He has contributed to many trials and meta-analyses by conducting 48

primary research trials, recruiting 979,242 participants, and has published 149 systematic reviews, collating data from 6415 studies with 68,798,079 participants. Dr. Khalid is lead author of 'Systematic Reviews to Support Evidence-Based Medicine', which won a BMA Medical Book award. He remained Editor of BJOG an international Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

His "Core Outcomes in Women's and Newborn Health" (CROWN) initiative was awarded a BMA Strutt and Harper grant to help reduce research waste.



## Briefs

**'Foreign funding case cannot be broadcasted'**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday said that proceedings of scrutiny committee in PTI foreign funding case cannot be broadcasted.

Spokesperson of ECP, in a statement, urged people to avoid making unnecessary statements and analysis about the case without any evidence. ECP further said that decision in the foreign funding case will be taken on merit without any fear and pressure. ECP said the scrutiny committee will present its comprehensive recommendation to the commission after taking stock of all the aspects. Earlier Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said that foreign funding case must be opened and challenged to broadcast case proceedings live on television. Talking to media in Waziristan, he said that the foreign funding case should be heard in the presence of party leaders. He said that political fundraising was done only by the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), while the country is run on the remittances sent by overseas Pakistanis.

Imran Khan said that Shaukat Khanum's funding came from overseas Pakistanis. "These (opposition) parties and I know what foreign funding is. A number of countries gave funds to these parties. I cannot name those countries because of the relations." The prime minister went on to say that he was grateful to the opposition for raising the issue of foreign funding, adding that everything should come clean that from where the PTI and opposition parties get their funding.

**Govt pays Rs 473 bln subsidy to power sector**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Omar Ayub on Thursday said the government had paid Rs 473 billion subsidy to power sector during last year despite economic crunch. Addressing a press conference accompanied by Minister for Planning and Development Asad Umer and Special Assistant to Prime Minister for Power Tabish Gohar, he said the PTI government inherited capacity payments from PML-N government. The agreements inked by the PML-N government with power sector were on bad intentions and corrupt practices, he added. The minister said due to these agreements, the increase in electricity tariff was Rs 2.18 but the present government had decided to increase the rates by Rs 1.95 in per unit. He said that the annual capacity payments to IPPs were Rs185 billion in 2013, Rs 468 billion in 2018, Rs 642 billion in 2019, Rs 860 billion in 2020 and would reach Rs 1455 billion in 2023. "These are the land mines, I am talking about," he said. Omar Ayub said that the major reason of the recent power breakdown was technical (earthing). According to a preliminary investigation, six to seven officers/officials have been suspended. He said report when finalised, should be submitted to the Power committee besides sharing with media.



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, president ICCI pose for a group photo with Shehzad Shabir Abbasi, president traders association Super Market Islamabad and delegation members during their visit to ICCI. – DNA

**CDA asked to complete remaining development works in Super Market**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the efforts of ICCI, the CDA had initiated development works in markets including F-6 Markaz, Super Market, Islamabad, which was laudable and it should complete the remaining development works in Super Market including installation of filtration plant, addressing sanitation and sewerage issues to upgrade this important business centre of the federal capital at par with well-developed commercial areas. This demand was made by Shehzad Shabir Abbasi, President, Traders Welfare Association (TWA), F-6 Markaz, Islamabad while speaking at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry.

He visited ICCI along with a delegation of TWA, Super Market and apprised the ICCI Office Bearers of the key issues of his market. Sheikh Dawood Senior Vice President, Amir Rahim Qureshi Vice President, Saqib Taj Abbasi Secretary General, Chaudhry Muhammad Usman Mazhar Additional Secretary General, Asif Ahmad Khan Joint Secretary, Tabish Iftikhar Malik Finance Secretary, Muhammad Sajjad Papu Press Secretary and other members of TWA Super Market, Islamabad were in the delegation. Amir Rahim Qureshi Vice President, Saqib Taj Abbasi Secretary General, TWA Super Market said that the National Assembly has already passed the amended bill of rent control act for Islamabad, which was a very positive

development and urged that the Senate of Pakistan should also pass this bill as soon as possible to address this long-standing issue of the trading community. They said that the small businesses have suffered huge losses due to Covid-19 pandemic and stressed that the government should provide them small loans so that they could revive their businesses. Addressing the delegation, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that he along with Chairman CDA Amir Ali Ahmed has already conducted visits to various markets in Islamabad starting from the Super Market, F-6 Markaz, Islamabad to assess the needs of development works. He said that CDA has started

the development works in various markets, which would facilitate the better growth of business activities. He said that ICCI would organize a top notch shopping festival in Islamabad in the coming Ramadan in which markets and commercial centres of the federal capital would participate. It would provide traders a good opportunity to boost their businesses by offering discounts to customers, he added. He said ICCI would also try to organize an arts and crafts exhibition to promote business activities of this sector. He further said that ICCI would organize a digital summit in near future to register the businesses of this region on e-commerce platform so that they could promote their business activities through this business

model. It would also support the PM's vision for promoting digital economy. He assured that ICCI would extend all possible cooperation to the TWA, Super Market for resolving problems of the traders. Fatma Azim Senior Vice President, Abdul Rehman Khan Vice President ICCI, Muhammad Ejaz Abbasi, Ajmal Baloch, Ch. Nadeem ud Din, Muhammad Hussain, Sheikh Abdul Waheed, Saeed Khan, Khalid Chaudhry and others also spoke at the occasion and stressed that Senate of Pakistan should pass the bill of rent control act before its coming elections to make it into a law that would help traders in promoting activities with more confidence and sense of security.

**Eighteen signs Adnan Siddiqui as brand ambassador**

He is undoubtedly amongst the much loved and popular figures of the industry and much liked by the masses in the country and overseas Pakistanis all over the world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Eighteen, the luxury real estate project, signs renowned actor Adnan Siddiqui as their brand ambassador. The actor is set to appear in Eighteen's mainstream campaigns, alongside other top celebrities who have been and are still associated with the brand, including the likes of Fawad Khan and Mahira Khan. Eighteen has signed with Adnan Siddiqui, due to his phenomenal work as an actor. He is undoubtedly amongst the much loved and popular figures of the industry and

much liked by the masses in the country and overseas Pakistanis all over the world. Eighteen is a project worth over 2 billion US dollars located just 10 minutes from the New Islamabad International Airport, themed around an international standard Eighteen-hole golf course. The destination offers a range of Villas and apartments, complemented by a five-star hotel, business parks, hospitals, schools and high-end office buildings. It is an exclusive joint venture between Egypt-based Ora Developers, Saif Group and Kohistan Builders (KBD) of Pakistan.

**PepsiCo kicks off plastic waste recycling initiative**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: PepsiCo Pakistan has kicked off the largest plastic waste collection and recycling initiative in Pakistan under the Clean, Green Pakistan program. The announcement was made by PepsiCo Chief Executive Officer Pakistan and Afghanistan Mr. Furqan Ahmed Syed during a project kickoff ceremony held in Islamabad yesterday. Mr. Malik Amin Aslam, Prime Minister's special assistant on Climate Change and Mr. Hammad Naqi Director General WWF-Pakistan

were also present on the occasion. Under the project, PepsiCo through its partnership with Green Earth Recycling (GER) and WWF Pakistan will collect 4,750 tons (4.75 million kgs) of plastic waste and focus on recycling the collected waste in purposeful ways. The initiative is consistent with PepsiCo's global sustainability goal of fundamentally changing the way the world interacts with its packaging to deliver on its vision of a world where plastics need never become waste. As part of this commitment, PepsiCo is investing to increase recycling rates in key markets through campaigns that

encourage consumers to recycle and partnerships to increase and improve recycling infrastructure. During the ceremony, PepsiCo unveiled a snacks display rack made of recycled flexible plastic packaging the company intends to put into market. The key breakthrough that PepsiCo and its partner GER have been able to achieve, working together on this initiative for over a year, is the ability to convert flexible plastic packaging into plastic sheets. This enables anyone to produce numerous types of utility products for example waste bins, benches, tables and chairs, from re-usable plastic.



ISLAMABAD: Delegation of RCCI led by President Mohammad Nasir Mirza met Minister of Inter Provincial Coordination Dr. Fehmida Mirza and had a meeting on various upcoming events. – DNA

**IGP Islamabad visits CTD**

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Qazi Jamil ur Rehman on Thursday visited the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of Islamabad police and appreciated its overall performance. He said that CTD has the eligibility to curb activities of anti-social elements and Islamabad police is proud of it. Deputy Inspector General (DIG) (Operations), Assistant Inspector General (AIG) (Establishment), AIG (Operations), AIG (General), Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP)(Headquarters), SSP (CTD), Director Safe City and Superintendent of Police (CTD) also accompanied him during this visit. SSP (CTD) briefed the IGP about the performance of the department. The IGP said role of CTD was very crucial in maintaining law and order and prevention of terrorism related activities.

**Licensed individuals allowed to act as Securities Advisors**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: To broaden investor base and enhance capital market outreach, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has notified key amendments in the Securities and Futures Advisors (Licensing & Operations) Regulations, 2017. Through these amendments, the SECP has made the advisory regulatory regime more inclusive and broad-based by allowing licensed individuals to act as securities and futures advisors. They will also be permitted to work as distributors of mutual funds units for multiple Asset Management Companies.

**25 lawmakers' membership restored**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Monday restored the membership of 25 parliamentarians on fulfilling legal requirement of submitting statements of assets and liabilities. According to ECP notification, earlier these parliamentarians were stopped to function as members on not submitting their statements of assets and liabilities by due date of January 15. All those who have now been allowed to function as member parliament included one member Senate, 13 members National Assembly, five members Punjab assembly, two Sindh assembly, two Khyber Pakhtunkhwa assembly and two Balochistan assembly members. Under Section 137 of the Elections Act, 2017, every member of an assembly and Senate have to submit to the Commission, on or before December 31st each year, a copy of statement of assets and liabilities including assets and liabilities of his spouse and dependent children as on the preceding thirtieth day of June on Form B. The commission, on the first day of January each year through a press release, publishes the names of members who failed to submit the requisite statement of assets and liabilities within the period specified under sub-section (1).

**Ehsaas Catastrophic Health Expenditure Policy on anvil**

ISLAMABAD: The members of the Ehsaas Tahafuz Steering Committee in its second meeting held here on Thursday approved various policy measures for expansion of Tahafuz Pilot project. The committee, chaired by Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection, Dr. Sania Nishtar approved the beneficiary eligibility determination mechanism; treatment packages to be covered; and selection of service provider hospitals in line with programme assessment criteria for expanding Tahafuz pilot. The committee also deliberated on the 'Ehsaas Catastrophic Health Expenditure

Policy' that is currently in the pipeline to dovetail Tahafuz with the Sehat Sahulat programme of the government. The Tahafuz Steering Committee has the mandate to provide managerial and strategic oversight to the Tahafuz programme. Chairing the meeting, Dr. Nishtar stated that extensive one-year long work has been done on Ehsaas Tahafuz, Pakistan's first shock-oriented precision safety net. She said the programme was aimed at protecting the vulnerable populations from catastrophic health expenditures and is being pilot tested in one hospital, this quarter, following which it will be scaled later this year.

Dr. Nishtar said, "Once fully operationalized, Tahafuz will establish a one window paperless and web-based precision safety net. It will also have funders' empowerment features in terms of micro-transaction alerts, and personalized login credentials for detailed web-viewing right down to the micro-transaction level". "It is hoped that such a system's ability to determine eligibility and categorize beneficiaries, based on pre-configured rules, adopting the national poverty database system will guard against abuse and pilferage. For efficiency and integrity of operations, the systems are being built",

she further added. Later, Dr. Sania inaugurated the "Ehsaas Tahafuz Project Management Unit" to manage the execution of Ehsaas Tahafuz. As part of institutional arrangements for effective programme management and implementation, the Ehsaas Tahafuz unit is housed at Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division (PASSD). The team working on the Tahafuz pilot phase also briefed Dr. Nishtar on the progress of the programme. A 12-member team has been hired following hiring procedures of the government to fulfill the technical demands of the programme. – APP

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## The case of Ertugrul

By MUHAMMAD OMAR IFTIKHAR

The popularity of the TV show, *Dirilis Ertugrul*, a Turkish historical fiction, and adventure television series, swept across Pakistan. Perhaps no other TV show in recent memory could match the excitement viewers had when they were watching this drama. Social media remained abuzz when aficionados of the show and its characters shared posts and commented on the aspects they liked. The case of *Dirilis Ertugrul* should be taken up by the producers and directors who have been delivering drama series to Pakistan's various TV channels. They should study why did it gain such immense popularity. One must wonder what led to the meteoric rise of *Dirilis Ertugrul* among the masses of Pakistan, especially those residing in the metropolis. Perhaps it was the story and the plot that kept evolving with every episode. There was the evolution of the characters as well. Engin Altan Düzyatan who played the role of Ertugrul Bey and Esra Bilgic who played Halime Hatun became superstars in Pakistan. People began following the style these characters portrayed in the TV series. One must wonder if the drama's international actors had an impact on the viewers in Pakistan? Perhaps it is in our mindset to accept, acknowledge, and respect all content that has a foreign tag associated with it. Pakistan can create its own Netflix where episodes of classic drama series and sitcoms produced in yesteryear can be uploaded. The current trend observed on electronic media, however, is appalling. The morning shows are filled with self-glorification, the drama series show mediocre social issues, while the talk shows do not add value to the viewers' thought process. One may wonder why aren't there any programs produced and telecasted on Pakistani TV channels that could amass a fan following akin to the one enjoyed by *Dirilis Ertugrul*? There could be one answer: commitment. The writers and producers need to show their commitment to producing TV series that could uplift the social consciousness instead of producing mediocre content that makes them slaves to morning shows and senseless drama series that only glorify the actors.



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## The new variant

There is a new variant of the coronavirus which is taking over the UK and Europe, which has caused the government to ban flights from the UK in the hope of stopping its spread. The first case of the variant has now been confirmed in Karachi. It should be noted that the new variant is cropping up all over the world, which implies that it is a variant which is better than the original strain at replicating itself. The first information about the new strain is that it is more infectious, but not directly more deadly. Of course, greater infectiousness would give the impression of greater deadliness, because the fatality rate remains the same. This greater infectiousness means a faster spread, and thus the greater number of infections and thus deaths. An increased rate of infections would also place a greater strain on medical resources, as the same number of medical professionals would have to face a greater surge in infections with the same amount of equipment. The government needs to learn from past experience, and needs to throw its memory back less than a year, when quarantine measures taken on pilgrims returning from Iran, which was a centre of infection, were rendered ineffective by the release of people into the general population who had not yet proven their freedom from infection. One problem with inadequate quarantine provision, including near impossible living conditions, is that people seek premature escape. This time around, there must be strict quarantine, without exception based on how powerful is the person asking for premature release, or the healthcare system may just collapse. It should not be forgotten that this new variant, which represents a new challenge, is coming at a time when the weather conditions are such that an increase in the number of infections is certain. Though there has never been a relaxed time since the pandemic began, this is perhaps a worse time than, say, midsummer. The government must ensure that this time it is part of the solution. That way, it may make up for the past sins which led to such fumbling when the coronavirus arrived.

# Changing demography of Indian Occupied Kashmir

Justice © Ali Nawaz Chowhan



This had to stay until resolution of this dispute. Jammu & Kashmir is an occupied territory. People there are subjected to crimes against humanity and their voices suppressed and movement curtailed through prolonged curfews

On 5th August the Indian government revoked Articles 370 and 35A of its Constitution without any recourse to the Kashmiri people making material breach of the Instrument of Accession, the negotiations conducted in the Delhi Agreement of 1952, the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly, the UNSC Resolutions

as well as its own constitution and judicial precedents. Subsequently, the Indian parliament passed the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganization Bill of 2019 which abolished the State of Jammu & Kashmir, further dividing the region into two 'union territories' of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. Since Article 35A emanates from Article 370 it also got revoked pursuant to the Jammu & Kashmir Reorganisation Bill. Even before the partition Jammu & Kashmir enjoyed semi-autonomy.

This autonomy was recognised in Indian Constitution through Article 370 and 35A. Providing safeguards from demographic change. Indian Parliament could only legislate in limited areas as defined in the instrument accession. Any change could only be brought with the concurrent consent of the Jammu & Kashmir constituent assembly. In 1958, the constituent assembly stood dissolved. Article 370 was interpreted as a temporary arrangement but the Jammu & Kashmir High Court declared it to be a permanent rule.

This had to stay until resolution of this dispute. Jammu & Kashmir is an occupied territory. People there are subjected to crimes against humanity and their voices suppressed and movement curtailed through prolonged curfews. A near million security forces are deployed for this purpose. Jammu and Kashmir is an international conflict area. The perpetrators of war crimes will one day face justice.

Anyway the purpose of these changes is to tilt the demographic balance against the Kashmiris. Therefore under section 96 of the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation Act of 2019 a new domicile rule has been promulgated and would take the place of abrogated Article 35A. Under the new



rules a domicile certificate is to be issued to anyone for Jammu and Kashmir. This is in violation of Hereditary State Subject Definition of 1927, UN resolutions and Delhi Agreement of 1952. The purpose of demographic change is to bring in aliens and overwhelm the Kashmiri population. India cannot do this in the disputed territory under occupation. India also has a criminal intention against Azad Jammu & Kashmir and maybe the Northern Areas of Pakistan who have already acceded. The intention seems to be to demand a plebiscite for the whole region after the influx of Non-Kashmiri aliens in the occupied territory and to later create a fuss after this

happens. Pakistan has to be vigilant and should pursue for legal remedies to check Indian designs under the International law which prohibits demographic changes. The Author is a Honorary Chairman of Legal Forum for Oppressed Voices of Kashmir (LFOVK), a former International Judge of the UN at The Hague, Chief Justice of the Gambia, First Chairman of National Commission for the Human Rights Pakistan, Judge of the superior judiciary, Co-Chairperson UNESCO, Professor of International Law etc.

The writer is former Chairman, National Commission for Human Rights, Government of Pakistan

# Regional realignments around Pakistan

Iqbal Khan

Pakistan and Azerbaijan have a relationship that has a long history based on mutuality of respect and mutuality of trust, one which is "also bound by a common faith, a common desire to progress and develop as strong, independent, and peace-loving nations"

Speaking at a joint press conference after the meeting, titled 'Islamabad Declaration', Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi reiterated the brotherly relations of Pakistan with Turkey and Azerbaijan, saying the three countries had resolved to enhance cooperation amongst them. Pakistan, Turkey, Azerbaijan are members of Economic Cooperation Organization—an Asian political and economic intergovernmental organization which was founded in 1985 in Tehran by the leaders of Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey. In 1992, in the aftermath of the collapse of Soviet Union, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and six former Soviet Republics, namely, Republic of Azerbaijan, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and the Republic of Uzbekistan also joined the Organization, forming one of the biggest regional blocs in Asia and beyond. ECO provides a platform to discuss ways to improve development and promote trade and investment opportunities. Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan have resolved to enhance cooperation on mutual support. Three

countries agreed to strengthen cooperation in diverse fields and people-to-people ties, as well as continue to support each other on all issues involving the three countries' national interests. The understanding was reached at the second Pakistan-Turkey-Azerbaijan trilateral meeting, hosted by Islamabad. It is indeed a good rebuke to Narendra Modi's tall talk of isolating Pakistan in the region and beyond. Azerbaijan-Turkey relations have always been strong with the two often being described as "one nation with two states", due to both being Turkic countries and having strong cultural, historical and ethnic ties. Likewise Turkey-Pakistan relationship is multidimensional enterprise. Turkey has played key role for bringing Pakistan and Azerbaijan closer, leading to formation of a well-knit trio. Pakistan and Azerbaijan have a relationship that has a long history based on mutuality of respect and mutuality of trust, one which is "also bound by a common faith, a common desire to progress and develop as strong, independent, and peace-loving nations."

Pakistan was among the first countries which recognised Azerbaijan as an independent state and also played an instrumental role in the adoption of various UN resolutions at the Security Council which created a legal framework for Azerbaijan's stance on the issue of Nagorno Karabakh. Turkey was the one of the first countries to recognize Azerbaijan's independence in June 4, 1918 (Treaty of Batum) and the first to recognize Azerbaijan's restoration to independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Since then, Turkey has been a staunch supporter of Azerbaijan in its efforts to consolidate its independence, preserve its territorial integrity and realize its economic potential arising from the rich natural resources of the Caspian Sea. The two countries share an 11-kilometer border, with the Aras River separating Turkey from the Nakhchivan exclave of Azerbaijan. The three foreign ministers exchanged views on trade, investment, people-to-people relations, security and other subjects. They also discussed how to deal with common challenges such as

the coronavirus pandemic and Islamophobia, as well as human rights violations against Muslim minorities across the region. Turkey and Azerbaijan have been the vocal supporters of Pakistan on the longstanding issue of Kashmir dispute with India. Both these countries are also part of the OIC Contact Group on Kashmir which time to time issues strong statements on Kashmir. People of Pakistan and Kashmir remain "profoundly grateful" to Turkey and Azerbaijan for their principled and steadfast support on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. Visiting foreign ministers were briefed about the evolving situation and the "dire situation of human rights violations" in Indian-occupied Kashmir, including the prolonged military siege and "deliberate, unilateral and illegal actions" to make demographic changes in the valley.

Pakistan has always shown resolute support for efforts towards a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus issue on the basis of "political equality of the two communities". Pakistan has also consistently called for the resolution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions. Turkish and Azerbaijani ministers were also briefed on "state-sponsored terrorism in our region in an attempt to destabilise Pakistan", as well as the anti-Pakistan Indian disinformation campaign exposed by EU Disinfo Lab. Pakistan and Azerbaijan both have ambitious regional integration visions. Although Pakistan hasn't formally announced it, Islamabad aspires to expand CPEC along the northern, western, and southern directions via the CPEC+ paradigm for turning the South Asian country into the global pivot state. Azerbaijan formally announced its intention late last year to create a regional integration platform between itself and its five neighbours. Trilateral meeting discussed the pairing of Pakistan's CPEC+ vision with Azerbaijan's regional integration platform. If that happens, then Pakistan-Azerbaijan Strategic Partnership could move forward at a good pace.

Pakistan and Turkey have agreed to pursue a joint

strategy at the international level on matters of mutual interests, in order to further strengthen the bilateral relations between the two countries. The two foreign ministers expressed concerns over the rising trend of Islamophobia and stressed for joint efforts to protect the Islamic values. Both the foreign ministers also emphasised the need for implementation of the 71-point Pakistan-Turkey Strategic Economic Framework at the earliest.

Moreover, Pakistan and Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding for promotion of cooperation in the education sector. Pakistan has launched an e-visa facility for the Turkish businessmen in order to bolster trade relations between the two countries. The two countries have Pak-Turkey Strategic Economic Framework aimed to boost trade and commercial ties. The bilateral trade between the two countries stands at around \$800 million which according to the Turkish foreign minister did not reflect the close ties between the two countries.

The Azerbaijani foreign minister said the people and government of Azerbaijan were thankful to Pakistan for standing alongside with their country in their time of need. He said people waved the Pakistani and Turkish flags during the victory parade in Baku. Political World Order and International System are passing through interesting times. Ensuing stresses are causing cracks in previously existing interstate alliances and breeding new alignments.

Countries of our region are relocating themselves to new slots of global chessboard as suited to serve their respective national interests. Evolving new alliances in our region have prompted Pakistan, Turkey and Azerbaijan to upgrade their relationship. Morphing of the two overlapping bilateral relationships into a vibrant trilateral is an encouraging development. This is not against any other country.

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## Briefs

## Pak urges world to hold India accountable

From Page 01

manipulated national sentiment in its bid to win elections. "We had, at the outset, rejected India's malicious propaganda against Pakistan and highlighted that the biggest beneficiary of the Pulwama attack in February 2019 was the BJP government, as it secured landslide victory in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections," he said. The FO Spokesperson said the transcripts also illustrated the unholy nexus between the 'Hindutva' regime and its cronies in the Indian media.

On situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), he said the military siege, communications blockade, media blackout and every possible violation of the human rights of Kashmiri people continued for 535 days since India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5th August 2019. "In a new low, the RSS-BJP regime has merged the civil services in IIOJK with civil services of certain other Indian states in violation of the international law," he said. The FO Spokesperson said India could not hide its true intention behind such decisions, which was further disempowerment of the Kashmiris through weeding out of Kashmiri civil servants from IIOJK.

He said Pakistan firmly condemned the framing of Shabbir Ahmad Shah, by the Indian authorities in a fake (six-year-old) case under the draconian Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). "It is immediately obvious that Mr. Shah's prosecution has nothing to do with the maintenance of justice but is being undertaken by the RSS-BJP combine to muzzle the Kashmiri voices," he said. Zahid Chaudhri said Pakistan demanded that the fake charges against Shabbir Shah be immediately withdrawn, the political victimization of Kashmiri political leaders be seized and he along with other incarcerated Kashmiris leadership be released without further delay. He mentioned that Pakistan had approached the United Nations Secretary General in New York to seek immediate release of Kashmiri leader Muhammad Yasir Malik.

"Mr. Malik has been charged on counts of terrorism under the notorious Public Safety Act (PSA), without due process and in violation of his fundamental human rights," he said. The FO Spokesperson said independent voices continued to call out India on its gross and systemic violations of human rights in IIOJK and the minorities' rights inside the country. He mentioned that Human Rights Watch in its report of 11 January 2021 underlined that seven human rights and humanitarian organizations had called upon the European Union to take a strong stand and press India to immediately end systemic human rights violations. He said the report also called upon India to free all detained human rights defenders and others arrested on politically motivated charges. The Spokesperson said India continues to remain evasive on the horrific incident of killing of 11 Pakistani Hindus in Jodhpur, where eleven members of a Pakistani Hindi family died in India under mysterious circumstance.

## Hafeez sides with under-fire Misbah, Waqar

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Veteran all-rounder Mohammad Hafeez has thrown his weight behind under-fire coaching duo of Misbah-ul-Haq and Waqar Younis in their public spat with disgruntled fast bowler Mohammad Amir. Addressing an event, the all-rounder maintained that he was only against Amir's action and not the pacer himself. "I stand against those who defame Pakistan, and they should not be given the chance to represent the country on an international level again." Hafeez, contrary to Amir's allegations of being discriminated against, said that he has experienced no issues with the current management. Moreover, he stressed that Misbah and Waqar formed the "best" coaching due he had seen in his entire career.



KARACHI: Players of Pakistan Cricket team busy in training and practice session in connection with upcoming test match with South Africa. (Inset): Tabish Khan bowls during a practice session. — DNA

## Deadly twin suicide attack hits Baghdad

"The area of the bombing is back to normal, as if nothing has happened. The movement around the market place is restored. It is busy and the vehicles are moving freely"

## FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: A rare twin suicide bombing killed at least 28 people and wounded 73 others on a bustling commercial street in the heart of Baghdad on Thursday, the military said, rupturing months of relative calm. Brigadier General Hazem al-Azzawi, the director of Baghdad Operations Command, told the Iraq News Agency (INA) that a "double explosion" hit a crowded market

in the Bab al-Sharhi area near Tayaran Square. Medical sources told media they feared the death toll could rise. The health ministry said it had mobilised medics across the capital to respond to the deadly attack.

Military spokesman Yahya Rasool said two suicide bombers detonated their explosives as they were being pursued by security forces. Al Jazeera's Abdelfattah Fayed, reporting from the site of attack, said defence units have cleaned up the area, washing away the blood and

clearing the debris. "According to the latest statistics, 28 people were killed and 73 injured," he said. "The injured were rushed to the nearby hospitals. Local reports suggest that the number of fatalities will rise as the large number of those injured are in very critical condition."

"The area of the bombing is back to normal, as if nothing has happened. The movement around the market place is restored. It is busy and the vehicles are moving freely." After years of deadly sectarian violence following the 2003 US invasion,

suicide bombings have become relatively rare in the capital. The last such attack took place in June 2019 and left several people dead. Militias have routinely targeted the US presence with rocket and mortar attacks, especially the US embassy in the heavily fortified Green Zone. The pace of the attacks has decreased since an informal truce was declared by Iran-backed armed groups in October.

No group claimed the attack immediately, but suicide attacks have mostly been used by ISIL (ISIS).

Iraq declared ISIL defeated at the end of 2017 after a fierce three-year campaign. But the group's sleeper cells have continued to operate in desert and mountain areas, typically targeting security forces or state infrastructure with low-casualty attacks. "This kind of attacks bears the hallmark of IS who have targeted crowded civilian areas in Baghdad with suicide attacks many times in the past," said Sajad Jiyad, an Iraq analyst and fellow at The Century Foundation think-tank.

## GB scouts lifts alpine ski cup

## SPORTS DESK

GILGIT: Waqar Junior's outstanding run in both Slalom and Giant Slalom events helped Gilgit Baltistan Scouts lift the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Alpine Ski Cup at PAF Ski Resort, Naltar. He was in supreme form in both Slalom and Giant Slalom races, and clinched gold and a silver medal in both categories. In the Slalom category, former Olympian Mohammad Abbas

from Pakistan Air Force had a fabulous day on the slope and earned the Gold medal in the category. The silver medal in Slalom was won by GB Scouts's Waqar Junior, while Noor Muhammad from Pak Army claimed the Bronze medal. The Giant Slalom category was dominated by the Skiers of GB Scouts as besides Waqar Junior's Gold, the Silver and Bronze Medals were also won by his teammates Sajjad Ahmad and Waqas Azam respectively.

## 'Turkey, EU need concrete steps for positive atmosphere'

## FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: The Turkish foreign minister said Thursday it is important to establish a positive atmosphere in Turkey-EU ties and that concrete steps are needed to make it sustainable.

Mevlut Cavusoglu arrived in Brussels Wednesday evening for a two-day visit for talks with top EU and NATO officials. Speaking at a joint news conference with the EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell, Cavusoglu said: "It's very important to create a positive atmosphere but in order for that agenda to be sustainable we need concrete steps

by both sides." Adding that 2020 was a problematic year for Turkey-EU relations Cavusoglu said both sides showed their will for a more positive atmosphere after the joint statement released following the EU leaders summit in December. "Since then both sides have expressed will, in order to create a positive atmosphere for the developments of ties between the two sides."

Cavusoglu said he and his EU counterpart Borrell will discuss a wide range of issues concerning the EU-Turkey relations ahead of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's planned meeting with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission

President Ursula von der Leyen.

"We are going to talk about the migration deal that Turkey has already proposed for the renewal. We are also going to talk about the details of a multilateral conference on the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean," he told reporters.

Some other issues such as visa liberalization, modernization of Turkey's 1995 Customs Union with the EU, and "other concrete steps which will build the future of the EU and Turkey together" will also be on the agenda, Cavusoglu said. Turkish and the EU officials will also discuss developing joint solutions for other regional challenges.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi in a group photo with Nepalese mountaineers. — DNA

## President Alvi lauds Nepalese mountaineers

## ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: A ten-member Nepalese K-2 Winter Expedition team called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. While welcoming the Nepalese mountaineers, the President said that their remarkable achievement would project Pakistan's soft image as well as boost tourism in the country. The President congratulated the team on surmounting K-2 in harsh winter. He appreciated the courage and strength of Sherpas which had done a marvellous job

by conquering the second highest peak of the world. The President said that both countries enjoyed excellent relations and such activities would further increase goodwill between the two countries.

Nepalese Ambassador to Pakistan, Mr. Tapas Adhikari, and leader of the expedition team, Mr Nirmal Purja, expressed their deep gratitude to Pakistan for the support provided by the Government of Pakistan. They also praised the natural beauty and wide range of mountaineering opportunities in Pakistan.

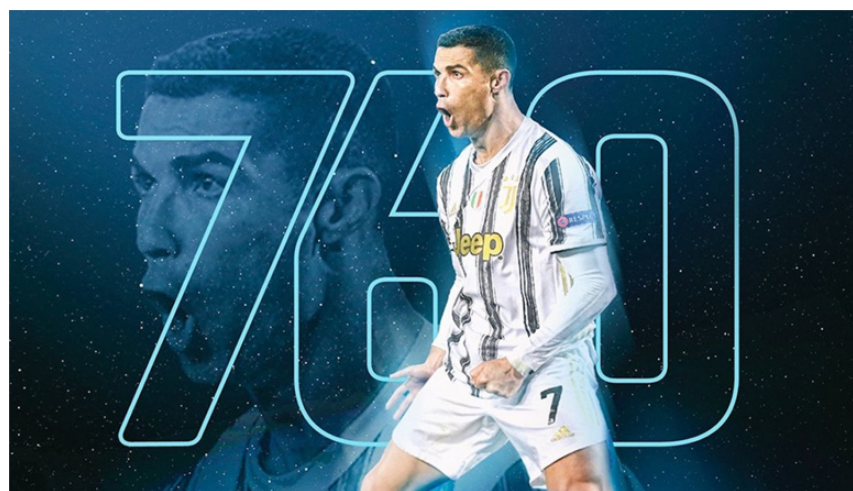
## Ronaldo becomes top goalscorer of football

The five-time Ballon d'Or winner recently went ahead Brazilian legend Pele (757), who moves down to third on the all-time list while Romario is fourth (743) and his rival Barcelona's Lionel Messi is at the fifth spot (719)

## SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: Portugal and Juventus' forward Cristiano Ronaldo has surpassed Josef Bican (759) for the most goals scored for club and country in football history.

The 35-year-old has now scored 760 goals in his 19-year career. He reached the landmark after a strike in the 64th minute against Napoli in the Italian Super Cup on Wednesday. The five-time Ballon d'Or winner recently went ahead Brazilian legend Pele (757), who moves down to third on the all-time list while Romario is fourth (743) and his rival Barcelona's Lionel Messi is at the fifth spot (719). He netted whopping 450 goals during his nine-year run with Real Madrid while he scored 118 for Manchester United, 102 for



his country Portugal, 85 for current club Juve and five at Sporting Lisbon.

Ronaldo has the best record against Sevilla as he scored 27 times against them, more than any other club. He has scored 488 goals with his right foot, 139 with his left, 131 with headers while two came from other parts of the body.

Former Man United star has 46-hat-tricks to his name while he has scored twice on 136 occasions. There were eight instances where he scored four times while on two occasions he scored five.

His total tally in La Liga stands at 311, 134 in the UEFA Champions League, 84 in English Premier League, 67 in Series A, 30 in FIFA World Cup qualifying, 31 in qualifying for the European Championships, 13 in the FA Cup and seven at the World Cup.

## Economy heading in right direction'

From Page 01

overall economic landscape of the country. Asad Umar said due to prudent economic policies of the government, Current Account Deficit and Primary Budget Deficit have turned surplus. The Planning Minister said due to the government's incentive of industrial tariff, the consumption of electricity by industry has increased by eight percent.

Speaking on the occasion, Omar Ayub Khan said, the government is compelled to increase electricity tariff by 1.95 rupees per unit against the proposed raise of 2.18 rupees per unit, due to burden the capacity charges that will reach to 1,455 billion rupees by the end of 2023, only because of corrupt policies of the previous government. Omar Ayub said despite the difficult economic situation, the government granted subsidy of 473 billion rupees to the power sector and invested 73 billion rupees in distribution system to ensure provision of uninterrupted electricity to people.

Tabish Gauhar said the government has worked out new agreements with IPPs to reduce financial burden on the energy sector.

## Shibli opposes summoning

From Page 01

Javed Latif over the decision. He said as per terms of reference of the inquiry committee responsibility would be fixed and its details would be shared with the information committee. Moreover, he said the matter did not come in the domain of the committee on Information and Broadcasting. Shibli Faraz opined that at a time when an inquiry committee was working, summoning the NAB Chairman in the committee could create confusion. He said that when the inquiry committee report comes, if the committee was not satisfied it could summon him then. He said that if the committee summons the chairman NAB, then it should also summon all persons named in it. During past five years the committee has never taken any agenda like this, he said adding that the PTI had no worry on the Broad-sheet issue, as it had nothing to do with this all saga.

## No one above accountability: Younis Khan

## SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Pakistan's batting coach Younis Khan has admitted that no one, including coaches such as himself, should be exempted from accountability, but believes that the ensuing criticism shouldn't be of personal nature.

Head coach Misbah-ul-Haq and bowling coach Waqar Younis have copped intense criticism in the last few weeks, especially in the aftermath of the team's performances in New Zealand. Younis, on the other hand, has largely went unscathed, largely on account of him having joined only recently. Nonetheless, the Man from Mardan wouldn't mind answering if critics were to question his performance. "Coaches shouldn't be exempted from accountability," he said in an online press conference. "Even I should be questioned and criticised if I am unable to deliver what I am supposed to. "Criticism is always important for development but I would like to add one thing that people shouldn't get personal in their criticism." Similarly, Younis asked critics to go easy on young players and not be quick to judge them over a few failures. "It is important to give freedom to players to do well. There is no harm in making mistakes. You always learn from from them so one should accept that it is okay to make mistake," he said.

"Most of our red-ball cricketers emerge from white-ball cricket, so those who are in Test squad should be given time. Even I took some time to establish myself as player. "I want these young players to stay with us for at least two-three series. I request everyone to back these young players. I wouldn't want any one to become a story of past after just one or two failure." Younis explained his preferred way of teaching, saying: "Whenever I try to share my experience with these youngsters, I try not to make them feel confused. "Coaches should be like a best friend to players.



## Briefs

## US to join WHO-led vaccine project

## FOREIGN DESK

WASHINGTON: The United States under President Joe Biden intends to join the COVAX vaccine project that aims to deliver vaccines to poor countries, his chief medical adviser, Anthony Fauci, told the World Health Organization (WHO) on Thursday. "President Biden will issue a directive later today which will include the intent of the United States to join COVAX and support the ACT-Accelerator to advance multilateral efforts for COVID-19 vaccine, therapeutic, and diagnostic distribution, equitable access, and research and development," Fauci told the WHO executive board.

The United States will remain a member of the WHO, Fauci said after Biden announced to end the process to withdraw from the UN health agency – a decision taken by Biden's predecessor Donald Trump. Washington, which is the largest donor to the WHO, formally joined the Geneva-based body in 1948. Trump had halted funding to the WHO and announced a process to withdraw from the agency in July 2020. The former president also refused to join the COVAX project.

## Armenian PM says Shusha Azerbaijani city

## MONITORING DESK

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan has admitted that Shusha has always been an Azerbaijani city and its Azerbaijani population made up over 90 percent before the city was occupied by Armenian troops in 1992. Pashinyan made this statement in the Armenian parliament on January 20, while answering MPs' questions. "During the entire period of the negotiation process, there was not a single option (settlement) that did not provide for the return of Azerbaijani refugees to Shushi [Shusha]. The Azerbaijani population of Shushi exceeded 90 percent before the start of the conflict and its liberation (editorial note: the occupation of the city by Armenian forces in 1992). That is, you want to say that the city of Shushi, which has over 90 percent of the Azerbaijani population, is Armenian in this status?" Pashinyan said. He also stressed that it was impossible to stop the war in Nagorno-Karabakh with less "territorial losses". Pashinyan made the remarks after Armenian Foreign Minister Ara Ayyazyan alleged that "Shusha is the centre of Armenian culture". Earlier, Russian President Vladimir Putin stated that on October 19-20, he had a series of telephone conversations with both Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Pashinyan.

## Azerbaijan to open bus routes to Shusha

## DNA

BAKU: Bus routes will be opened to the cities and districts of Azerbaijan liberated from occupation, Nurida Allahyarova, Head of the Public Relations Department of the State Road Transport Service under Azerbaijan's Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, told Trend. According to Allahyarova, a draft order has already been prepared on the start of a tender to determine the transportation companies. Firstly, routes will be opened to Horadiz, Sugovushan, Talyshkand, Jabrayil and Zangilan districts. The opening of flights to the city of Shusha was planned at the second stage. However, given the large number of people wishing to visit the pearl of Karabakh, Shusha, is also included in the list of priority routes. It is planned that bus routes to Shusha will be opened from Ganja, Beylagan and Yevlakh cities.



KARACHI: Swiss ambassador to Pakistan, Bénédicte de Cerjat in a group photo after meeting with the management committee of the Swiss Business Council in Karachi. More business opportunities are expected in relation to the dynamic textile industry. – DNA

## Kazakhstan president presents new political reforms for state

Their implementation will facilitate strengthening the human rights protection system, expand civic participation, develop parliamentarism and a multi-party system, and further democratise the country. Previous packages of political reforms

## DNA

NUR SULTAN: The President of Kazakhstan, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, presented to the newly elected members of parliament (Mazhilis) a third package of political reforms. The new initiatives of the President are aimed at further institutional development of the political system of Kazakhstan and enhancing the mechanisms of the protection of human rights. Their implementation will facilitate strengthening the human rights protection system, expand civic participation, develop parliamentarism and a multi-party system, and further democratise the country. Previous packages of political reforms The first package of reforms was presented at the meeting of the National Council of Public Trust on December 20, 2019. They were implemented ahead of the parliamentary elections which took place on 10 January, 2021.

## The reforms include:

- The registration barrier for creating political parties was halved
- A 30 percent quota was introduced for women and youth on electoral party lists
- The institution of parliamentary opposition was formalised and strengthened
- The decriminalisation of Article 130 (defamation) and the humanisation of Article 174 (inciting social discord) of the Criminal Code were initiated
- A new law on assemblies was implemented, which made it



easier to organise and participate in rallies

- Kazakhstan joined the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, abolishing the death penalty

## Third package of political reforms President Tokayev proposed the following reforms:

- 1.) Reduce the threshold for political parties to gain seats in

the Mazhilis (lower house of parliament) from 7% to 5%

- 2.) After the introduction of elections of rural akims (Mayors) starting in 2021, Kazakhstan will then proceed to the election of district akims

- 3.) Introduce the option "against all" in the ballots for all future elections

- 4.) Legally formalise the institution of online petitions

- 5.) Adopt an additional law on the Commissioner for Human Rights – the ombudsman (the law will streamline the activities of this institution in various areas and sectors)

- 6.) Strengthen the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights (including the creation of its regional offices)

- 7.) Implementation of the Youth Development Index to evaluate the efficiency of youth policy

- 8.) Provide measures to stimulate the activities of charities

The second package of political reforms was put forward by President Tokayev on September 1, 2020, in his Address to the people of Kazakhstan. The reforms include:

- The transition to direct elections of rural akims (Mayors) from 2021
- It was instructed to develop a Concept for the Development of Local Self-Government and the Law "On Public Control"
- Creation of a single institution for online petitions
- The need was established to improve legislation to combat torture, human trafficking, and protect citizens (especially children) from cyberbullying
- Tasked to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communications Procedure

## Fire at India plant of world's biggest vaccine maker

PUNE: A big fire has broken out at a plant being built for the Serum Institute of India (SII), the world's biggest vaccine maker, but it will not affect the production of coronavirus vaccines, a source close to the firm said. Television channels showed a huge cloud of grey smoke above the site in Pune in the western Indian state of Maharashtra on Thursday.

The SII is manufacturing millions of doses of a vaccine developed by Oxford University and AstraZeneca for India and many other low- and middle-income countries. The company is also getting ready to produce a vaccine being developed by the United States company, Novavax Inc. Reports said the blaze was at a new plant under construction at the large facility.

Pune's fire office told Reuters news agency five fire trucks had been sent to the site. "We have no other information ... on the extent of the fire or whether anyone is trapped," an official said. There was no immediate word on any casualties, nor on the cause of the fire. "It is not going to affect production of the COVID-19 vaccine," a source at the Serum Institute told AFP news agency. Earlier this month, Indian regulators approved two coronavirus vaccines – Covishield, produced by the SII, and Covaxin, made by local firm Bharat Biotech. India began one of the world's biggest vaccine roll-outs on Saturday, aiming to vaccinate 300 million people by July with both Covishield and Covaxin. Many other countries are relying on the SII to supply them with the vaccine. – APP



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the parliamentary special committee on Kashmir, Shehryar Khan Afridi and Turkish ambassador to Pakistan Mustafa Yurdakul in a group photo during an event. – DNA

## China sanctions Pompeo, other Trump adm officials

Meanwhile, Biden's National Security Council called the move "unproductive and cynical", and "an attempt to play to partisan divides." "Americans on both parties should criticise this unproductive and cynical move

## FOREIGN DESK

BEIJING: China imposed sanctions on 28 individuals from the United States, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, over "crazy actions that have gravely interfered in China's internal affairs". A statement from China's foreign ministry came as Joe Biden was being sworn in as the new US president on Wednesday, ending Donald Trump's reign during which bilateral ties between the two world powers suffered. According to the statement, those sanctioned also include Trump's trade adviser Peter Navarro, national security adviser Robert O'Brien, assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs

David Stilwell, health secretary Alex Azar and UN envoy Kelly Craft. Beijing also sanctioned former Trump national security adviser John Bolton and former adviser Stephen Bannon. The ministry said the sanctioned US citizens, out of their selfish political interests and prejudice and hatred against China showed no regard for the interests of the people of China and the US. "These individuals and their immediate family members are prohibited from entering the mainland of China, Hong Kong and Macao," it said. "They, and companies and institutions associated with them, are also restricted from doing business with China." Shortly after the Chinese statement, Bolton tweeted: "Great news for an inauguration day! I ac-

## China calls for 'better angels'

BEIJING: China has congratulated President Joe Biden on his inauguration and called for a reset in relations between Beijing and Washington as the new administration brought an end to Donald Trump's fractious term. Beijing on Thursday also said it welcomed the news that the US would re-join the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Paris climate accord, as Biden tried to immediately pivot his office back to a key role in global leadership. The new US president is expected to remain tough on China but commit to international cooperation after Trump's divisive "America First" approach. "With cooperation from both sides, the better angels in China-US relations will beat the evil forces," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying told a press briefing. She said Biden had used the word "unity" several times in his inauguration speech, and that it was "precisely what is needed currently in US-China relations". – DNA

cept this prestigious recognition of my unrelenting efforts to defend American freedom." Meanwhile, Biden's National Security Council called the move "un-

productive and cynical", and "an attempt to play to partisan divides." "Americans on both parties should criticise this unproductive and cynical move. President Biden looks forward to working with leaders in both parties to position America to out-compete China," council spokeswoman, Emily Horne, said. Relations between the US and China, the world's two largest economies, have plunged to their lowest level in decades, with disagreements on issues including Taiwan, Hong Kong, human rights, the coronavirus pandemic, the South China Sea, trade and espionage. Last year, China put sanctions on 11 US citizens, including legislators from the Republican Party, in response to Washington's sanctions on Hong Kong and Chinese officials accused of curtailing political freedom in the former British colony. China's foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying joined on the new US administration to jointly put bilateral relations back on track.

## Iranian FM to visit Azerbaijan

## FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: The Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif will pay a visit to Azerbaijan on January 24, the diplomatic sources told Trend. Within the visit, the Iranian minister will meet with Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov and Deputy Prime Minister Shahin Mustafayev. The Karabakh issue will be the main topic of discussion during the visit. They will exchange views on new cooperation in the region after the liberation of Karabakh. During the visit of Mohammad Javad Zarif to Baku, the discussions will be held on the participation of Iranian companies in the reconstruction of Karabakh. In addition, the Iranian Foreign Minister will also conduct talks with Azerbaijani officials on trilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan, Iran, and Russia.

## Tunisians rally to demand release of protesters

## WEB DESK

TUNIS: Tunisians are protesting the detention of hundreds of young demonstrators arrested over several nights of disturbances, demanding their release and venting their anger against the government's handling of a deepening social crisis. Approximately 100 people rallied in the capital, Tunis, and the city of Sousse on Wednesday in defiance of gatherings banned following a recent surge in coronavirus cases. "We want the detainees to be freed," the protesters cried in Sousse. In Tunis, protesters – many of them students – shouted slogans from the country's 2011 revolution, including "freedom, work, national dignity", as they moved along the capital's arterial Habib Bourguiba avenue. Daytime protests in recent days demanding jobs, dignity and the release of detainees have been followed by nighttime violence, with COVID-19 restrictions compounding a wider economic malaise. The protests come as the economy is in free-fall, youth unemployment soaring and anger rising against a political class that has shown itself incapable of pulling together for the nation – gripes in sharp focus as the country last week marked 10 years since the fall of former leader Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Hichem Mechichi acknowledged Tunisians' "legitimate" anger in a televised address but said the violence was "unacceptable" and promised to "confront it with the force of law".

## Dubai cancels non-essential surgery

## FOREIGN DESK

DUBAI: The Emirate of Dubai has suspended non-essential surgery for a month as well as live entertainment in hotels and restaurants until further notice as coronavirus infections surge in the Middle East trade hub. The decision to postpone certain surgeries, which takes effect at midnight on Thursday and could be extended, was aimed at ensuring the preparedness of health facilities to manage COVID-19 cases, Dubai's health regulator said in a circular published on Wednesday. Dubai's tourism department issued a circular, seen by Reuters, suspending entertainment in hotels and restaurants after recording an increase in violations of coronavirus precautions. Daily cases in the United Arab Emirates hit a record 3,506 on Wednesday, the highest in the Gulf Arab region where daily tallies in each of the other five states have fallen below 500. The UAE does not give a breakdown of infections in each emirate. Visitors have flocked to Dubai, an international travel hub that is gearing up to host an expected 25 million visitors for an Expo 2020 world fair from October, even as other countries imposed new lockdowns. The UAE has lifted most coronavirus restrictions, but mask-wearing in public and physical distancing are still required. Britain this month removed the UAE from its travel corridors list due to the spike in infections.



**Briefs**

**44th meeting of CCI on January 27**

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has summoned the 44th meeting of the CCI on Wednesday, 27th January, 2021. Prime Minister will approve following agenda items for the meeting, including 'Permanent Secretariat of the CCI', 'Amendment in the OGRA Ordinance 2002', 'Notification of Census Result', 'NEPRA Annual Report 2019-2020', 'Higher Education in Post-Eighteenth Amendment Scenario' and others. Federal Cabinet, Chief Ministers, Secretaries, and Chairman of different Authorities will be attending the meeting.

**PM won't bow down to blackmailing, says Firdous**

DNA

ISLAMABAD: CM Punjab's Special Assistant on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Thursday said the corrupt opposition parties were only trying to 'blackmail' government to get relief on ongoing accountability cases. Talking to a private news channel, she said the incumbent government was standing firm to exposed their blatant lies in front of public at any cost.

Terming the allegations against PTI in foreign funding case as propaganda, she said that this 11 party temporary alliance would fail as PM Imran Khan will not bow down before the opposition's blackmailing tactics. The prime minister will go to the masses to counter the opposition's propaganda, she said, adding, Prime Minister Imran Khan will not budge an inch from principled stance on his agenda. If the opposition thinks that the Imran Khan will come under pressure from the rallies, it will never happen, she made it clear.

Criticizing Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), she assured that the government under the honest leadership of PM Imran Khan is not going anywhere, however, all corrupt group of politicians would go to jail. Firdous Awan said the PML-N and PPP leadership is the worst example of political hypocrisy as when they are in power, they desire that the government should fulfill its constitutional tenure and when Imran Khan comes to power, they become uncomfortable.

However, now people of Pakistan have buried the politics of two families, ruling for many decades, and reposed confidence in the dynamic leadership of Prime Minister Imran Khan.

**PDM urged to avoid aiding anti state lobbies**

IBRAR KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Communications and Postal Services Murad Saad on Thursday said that opposition parties were playing in the hands of anti state lobbies, urging them to avoid becoming stooge of such elements for the interest of the country.

"The opposition parties are playing as puppets in hands of such elements which does not want Pakistan to flourish and progress under the able leadership Prime Minister Imran Khan" he said. Addressing a press conference here at Press Information Department (PID), he said that deposed Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has been meeting with anti-Pakistan lobbyists, which was working under the greater game plan of India and Israel to defame Pakistan.

He observed that PDM President Maulana Fazal ur Rehman also held meetings with the foreign lobbies. He questioned that why Maulana was against the merger of erstwhile FATA?, adding that Ajmal Qadri was from which party?

# Ulema's role vital in promoting harmony: PM

Talking to a delegation of Ulema (religious scholars), the Prime Minister said their united efforts could help counter the nefarious conspiracies aimed at creating rift among Muslims all over the world

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday termed the unity and solidarity among Muslim Ummah need of the hour said the role of Ulema was vital in promoting harmony by discouraging extremism and sectarianism. Talking to a delegation of Ulema (religious scholars), the Prime Minister said their united efforts could help counter the nefarious conspiracies aimed at creating rift among Muslims all over the world. The delegation included Pir Muhammad Amin Al Hasnat Shah, Pir Charaguddin Shah, Dr Qibla Ayaz,

Pir Naqib-ur-Rehman, Maulana Abdul Khubair Azad, Pir Habib Irfani, Sahibzada Muhammad Hamid Raza, Syed Ziaullah Bukhari, Pir Sultan Ahmad Ali Haq Bahu, Allama Muhammad Hussain Akbar, Mufti Abu Bakar Mohyuddin, Maulana Muhammad Adil Attari, Maulana Muhammad Tayyab Qureshi, Mufti Fazal Jameel Rizvi, Maulana Hamid ul Haq, Pir Shamsul Amin, Pir Habibullah Shah, Muhammad Qasim Qasmi, Sahibzada Muhammad Akram Shah and Pir Makhdoom Abbas Bengali. Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Pir Noor ul Haq Qadri was also present. The Prime Minister said Ulema

could play a significant role in making the country a true Islamic welfare state. Imran Khan said he would hold series of meetings with Ulema and seek guidance from them on issues facing the country. About his efforts in highlighting the problems faced by the Muslim world, he mentioned that voice against Islamophobia was raised at several international fora. The Ulema paid tribute to Prime Minister Imran Khan for his firm stance against the blasphemy of the Holy Prophet (Peace be upon Him) and Islamophobia in the West at the platform of the United Nations.

They said the Prime Minister effectively conveyed the sentiments of the people of Pakistan and the entire Muslim Ummah. On issue of recognition of Israel, the Ulema lauded the Prime Minister for taking a clear and unequivocal stand. The delegation appreciated the Prime Minister's vision and efforts to make Pakistan in line with the Islamic welfare State of Madinah. They assured the Prime Minister full support in making Pakistan a true Islamic welfare state. The Ulema mentioned that minorities enjoyed full protection in the country following the Prime Minister's efforts for their safety and

restoration of their religious sites. They lauded the Prime Minister's prudent strategy in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic and the government's efforts to manage worshippers at mosques in the most efficient manner. The delegation said the Prime Minister highlighted the Kashmir issue in an effective manner at the United Nations, adding that Imran Khan was a true leader of the Islamic world. The Ulema also praised the efforts of the government in improving madrassas system in the country particularly in implementation of educational curriculum as per modern requirements.

**Foreign funding case to become panama part II**

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Thursday said that foreign funding case will soon gain more importance and predicted that it will become panama case part II. Addressing a ceremony in a NADRA center, Sheikh Rashid claimed that more properties of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Maryam Nawaz and JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman will soon be unearthed. He also asked Maryam Nawaz to read the documents carefully or let someone go through them for her.

The minister said that opposition cooperated during protest outside Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP). Talking about rally of JUI-F in Karachi, Sheikh Rashid said that he would have joined the anti-Israel rally if Fazl-ur-Rehman had invited him. Sheikh Rashid said that JUI-F chief will lose most as opposition parties had deceived him before. Interior Minister said that Karachi will be converted into a complete safe city and he has directed Rangers to install cameras in the city. I will not allow anyone to interfere in my domain, he vowed.

He also announced to establish NADRA center in every Tehsil and from now on three more centers will remain open for 24 hours. 300 new vehicles for NADRA are being prepared while 16 vehicles of the authority are currently operational in Karachi, he added.

**3 soldiers killed in NY helicopter crash**

DNA

NEW YORK: Three US soldiers were killed Wednesday in a military helicopter crash in upstate New York, according to a statement by the state's Division of Military and Naval Affairs. The soldiers, assigned to the New York Army National Guards 2nd Squadron 101st Cavalry, were in a medical evacuation helicopter when it crashed near the town of Mendon, south of Rochester.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Dunn from Buffalo, Pvt. Haylee Seefeldt from Medina, and Cpl. Joseph Clement from Auburn, were assisting the New York State Police in securing the State Capitol for President-elect Joe Biden's Inauguration Day in case there were demonstrations in the New York state capital Albany. The incident is under investigation, it added. Monroe County Sheriff Todd Baxter said on Twitter the helicopter crashed on a farmer's field and there were no houses nearby. New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo said in a separate statement he was "devastated by the news."

**PDM mulls joint candidates in Senate polls**

RANA FARRUKH

LAHORE: The PDM leaders have started consultations for the upcoming Senate elections which is likely to be held in February this year. Sources said that PDM leaders are mulling over fielding joint candidates for the Senate polls. The opposition leaders have started consultations to field joint candidates in KP and Balochistan assemblies.

Sources closer to Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz said that the PDM parties will be convinced to field joint candidates besides appealing Pakistan People's Party (PPP) to support PML-N in Punjab. A consultation session will be summoned soon to discuss the strategy to field joint candidates of the opposition parties, PML-N sources said. It is pertinent to mention here that the opposition alliance is currently possessing 22 seats in Balochistan Assembly and 41 lawmakers in KP Assembly. Earlier in December last year, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari had said that PDM will prepare a joint strategy for upcoming Senate elections.

## Infrastructural improvement paves the way starting SEZs

DNA

ISLAMABAD: With the significant infrastructural improvement due to investments made under China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has shifted its focus to the development of Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and Industrial Zones.

It will pay the way of creating clusters of industrial excellence and to start the growth of industries, Gwadar Pro reported on Thursday. Recently the KP's cabinet passed the revised "Industrial Policy 2020", which supports human resource development, innovation and creates a supply

chain to capitalize on many potential opportunities available in the province (including newly merged tribal districts). The policy also aims to make the environment competitive for investment and rejuvenate the industrial sector. Under the policy, the KP Government plans to establish at least 10 EZ/SEZs across the province in ten years. They include Hattar SEZ Extension (1000 acres), Daraband (D.I Khan) SEZ (1500 acres), Mohmand EZ (350 acres), Nowshera Extension EZ (77 acres), Swat EZ, Buner EZ, Shahkas (Khyber Pass Economic Corridor route), Chitral EZ, Ghazi and Jalozi. According to the policy, at least two SEZs under

Public-Private Partnership (PPP) like Rashakai SEZ are going to be established in the next five years while Hattar, Mohmand and Rashakai SEZs are being promoted under CPEC. It also states that efforts are on the way towards the development of Mohmand Industrial Estate as a sector-specific SEZ (Marble City). The policy is based on three pillars of "revival & rehabilitation, growth and competitiveness". The priority areas include the revival of sick units, rehabilitation of infrastructure and allied facilities in existing industrial estates, the establishment of sector-specific EZs, SEZs and encouragement of small and medium-sized enterprises/cottage industry.

## Army Chief visits ISI headquarters

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa on Thursday visited Inter Services Intelligence Headquarters. According to a statement released by ISPR, Lieutenant General Faiz Hamid, DG ISI received the Army Chief upon his arrival. Comprehensive briefing was given on regional and national security situation. The statement further added that the COAS appreciated the tireless efforts of ISI for national security and expressed his satisfaction over professional preparedness.

## President for facilitating differently-abled people

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi has emphasized the need for establishing one-window operations in the country to expeditiously process disability certificates. He said that the existing procedure of certification and registration was quite slow and cumbersome which needed to be simplified for the facilitation of the differently-abled people (DAPs). He stated this while chairing a follow-up meeting on the registration of DAPs, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The meeting was attended by SAPM on Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Dr Sania Nishtar,

SAPM on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C), Dr Faisal Sultan, Chairman NADRA, Mr Usman Yousaf Mobin and senior officials of Ministry of Health. Addressing the meeting, the President said that persons with disability (PWDs) constituted almost 12-14% of the country's population and they faced great difficulties in getting their disability certificates. In order to facilitate them, he asked the concerned stakeholders to establish an institutional setup to be comprised of medical specialists and representatives of NADRA in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) to swiftly process disability certificates.

## NA Speaker Qaiser for deepening Afghan ties

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ambassador to Afghanistan Mansoor Ahmad Khan called on Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser at Parliament House here Thursday and discussed matters of mutual interest. Enhancing parliamentary and bilateral relations between Islamabad and Kabul came under discussion. The Speaker while talking to the ambassador said that Pakistan and Afghanistan both were intertwined in religious, cultural and historic bonds and shared common destiny. He said that Parliament had taken the lead and proposed various changes in the trade and visa policy for Afghanistan. He was sure that these steps would bring both the countries closer. He asked the Ambassador to play his role in that regard. - DNA

## Civil engineering work of Gwadar Vocational Institute completed

ISLAMABAD: The civil engineering construction of Gwadar Technical and Vocational Institute's main structure has been completed, which lays a solid foundation for the project's delivery as scheduled in August 2021. According to the News network Gwadar Pro, this institute's total floor area is 7,350 square meters, which includes the teaching building, training workshop, multi-function hall and dormitories for students and faculty. The construction of the institute project kicked off at the end of 2019. Despite of the impact of the COVID-19, the project construction went smoothly. It is estimated to be completed and accepted by the end of August 2021. This China-aid Institute is a key project under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Upon completion, it will become the first vocational institute in Pakistan that takes port and shipping as the mainstay and other technologies fields as the supplementary. According to Naseer Khan Kashani, some 800 students will be trained annually in multiple disciplines in the institute. And then, they will take part in different projects at the port and the free zones. - DNA

## EU DisinfoLab exposes another fake Indian forum

After the shocking report of the disinformation watchdog, board of members of the fake forum South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) have resigned after increasing pressure and calls for stepping down

DNA

ISLAMABAD: EU DisinfoLab, a Brussels-based disinformation watchdog, exposed a forum that promote India's diplomatic interests to influence the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) with content critical of Pakistan. After the shocking report of the disinformation watchdog, board of members of the fake forum South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF) have resigned after increasing pressure and calls for stepping down. According to EU DisinfoLab, South Asia Democratic Forum was ambiguously created in 2011 by the Srivastava Group. The news outlets were managed by Indian stakeholders, with ties to a large network of think tanks, NGOs, and companies from the Srivastava Group. It is pertinent

to mention here that in November, the non-governmental group, after carrying out investigation, in its initial findings had uncovered a nexus of 265 fake media outlets across 65 countries to influence the EU and the UN with content critical of Pakistan. These platforms allegedly promote India's geopolitical interests through republication of propaganda pieces and op-eds. EU DisinfoLab uncovered links between zombie companies, dormant media outlets, and legally non-existent organisations, lobbying the EU and also the UN by constantly targeting Pakistan. Questionable news portals mentioned in the investigation include Times of Los Angeles, Times of Portugal, EP Today, Times of Geneva, New Delhi Times, New York Journal American, and Times of North Korea. Most websites had

Twitter presence as well. EU DisinfoLab's investigation demonstrates how this network of think tanks, NGOs, and media outlets has already translated into a set of EU parliamentarians visiting the Kashmir valley on Oct. 30. The visit was perceived by some as a sign of validation for the government's move. It came amidst international attention on curbs on free speech and human rights violations in the Kashmir valley. EU DisinfoLab's probe goes back to October, when it found that "eptoday.com - the website of a self-proclaimed magazine for the European Parliament in Brussels - had been re-publishing a large amount of news directly from Russia Today and Voice of America. "Among this syndicated content, we unexpectedly found that a large number of articles and op-

eds related to minorities in Pakistan as well as other India-related matters," EU DisinfoLab said on its website. "This probe led EU DisinfoLab to conclude that EP Today was managed by Indian stakeholders, and had links with a vast interweb of think tanks, NGOs, and companies from one Srivastava Group. "We also found that the IP address of the Srivastava Group is also home to the obscure online media "New Delhi Times" and the International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS), which are all based at the same address in New Delhi, India," EU DisinfoLab stated. A few weeks after this, on Oct. 30, a group of 27 EU parliamentarians, mostly from right-wing political parties, visited the restive Kashmir Valley. This was perceived as a show of support for

Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's big agenda for the newly created union territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh. Through shared phone numbers and an office address in Brussels, as well as shared web servers, EU Disinfo Lab found Srivastava Group to be at the heart of the network. Srivastava Group is an Indian holding company which declares on its website that it has "interests in Natural resources, Clean energy, Airspace, Consulting services, Healthcare, Print Media and Publishing". The IINS is based at the same address in Delhi as Srivastava Group and an obscure media outlet called New Delhi Times. BBC News Hindi reporter Kirti Dubey visited the address and was told by a security guard there was no office in the building.