



Islamabad POST

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US-Pakistan to cooperate for Afghan peace

Detailed News On Page-01

United Nations chief "concerned" over ethnic violence

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Late Abdul Qadir conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz

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Briefs

Pakistan back on track: PM

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan says, today Pakistan is back on track to realise the ideal of Riyasat-e-Madina by bringing the powerful under rule of law and establishing a welfare state through Ehsaas, Panagahs and health cards programs. In a tweet on Tuesday, the Prime Minister said 15 centuries ago our Holy Prophet (Sallallahu Alaihe Wa Alehi Wasallam) set up the first welfare state in Madina based on rule of law, meritocracy, compassion and tolerance and where quest for knowledge was made a sacred duty.

Supremacy of constitution necessary

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said in his message on the Pakistan Day that the supremacy of the constitution is the only way to move forward. Bilawal Bhutto said Pakistan was founded for a democratic society based on justice and equality. The country is facing economic, political and social crises as the teachings of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions have been forgotten, he added. The PPP chairman stressed that every institution must work within its constitutional limits and mandate so that the purpose of the Pakistan Resolution and independence could be achieved.

Zardari said he cant battle establishment

DNA

LAHORE: PML-N Punjab president Rana Sanaullah revealed Monday that former president Asif Ali Zardari, during the last Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) meeting, had said he is weak and cannot not "battle the establishment". Rana Sanaullah said the Opposition alliance had decided that the office of the leader of the Opposition would be set aside for the PML-N. "During Zardari's speech, someone came inside [his room] and said that there is chaos outside.

China to fulfill vaccine needs of Pakistan

Qureshi told Wang Yi that the govt had formulated a comprehensive strategy to vaccinate the citizens against COVID-19



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: China will prioritise the fulfilment of Pakistan's COVID-19 needs, State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi said Tuesday. The Chinese foreign minister, in a telephonic conversation with his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi, said that China will donate more doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to Pakistan by March 31 to help the country fight coronavirus. Wang Yi said that over a 100 countries had approached China to get the vaccine but they would prioritise the fulfilment of Pakistan's COVID-19 needs. The telephonic conversation encompassed the pandemic situation as well as the bilateral and other

matters of mutual interests, a foreign ministry press release said. Qureshi told Wang Yi that the government had formulated a comprehensive strategy to vaccinate the citizens against COVID-19 for which the country would require further doses of the vaccine. In response, the Chinese FM assured to provide more vaccine doses by end of the current month. Qureshi thanked the Chinese counterpart for the goodwill gesture. He said the Chinese assistance to the world particularly Pakistan during the challenging situation the pandemic was exemplary. The foreign minister told his Chinese counterpart that Pakistan's government was taking all precautionary measures, including the smart lockdown as per the vision of Prime Minister Imran Khan. He also thanked the Chinese leadership for expressing good wishes, through a letter, for Prime Minister Imran Khan who had tested positive on Saturday. Both the leaders had a detailed discussion on bilateral ties and multiple cooperation besides agreeing to keeping up the high-level contacts between the two countries.

British High Commissioner urges to follow SOPs

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The coronavirus pandemic "has been frustrating" but "please do keep safe", the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Christian Turner, said Tuesday in his Pakistan Day message. In a video message on Twitter, Turner spoke about the worsening coronavirus situation in Pakistan, the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the travel restrictions in place. Coronavirus cases "in Pakistan are rising" and "the country is going through a third wave, with a recent spike of



people in Pakistan to follow the rules, observe the coronavirus-related standard operating procedures (SOPs), and wear a face mask. He also advised people in the UK against travelling to Pakistan since "you must stay at home and it is illegal to travel abroad for leisure" under Britain's current coronavirus restrictions. "You shouldn't travel unless you have a legally permitted reason to do so, and you will need to fill in a form declaring that your travel is essential which can be checked by UK authorities at the airport," Turner said.

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Putin, Biden greet Dr Alvi on Pakistan Day

US President, in his message, expressed his resolve to strengthen partnership with Pak in future

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin have congratulated President Arif Alvi on the country's 81st Pakistan Day. US President Joe Biden, in his message, expressed his resolve to strengthen partnership with Pakistan in future, reported media. We will continue cooperation for the establishment of peace in Afghanistan and meet common challenges including that of coronavirus

Xi Jinping greets President

DNA

BEIJING: Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a congratulatory message to President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday, congratulating him on Pakistan's 81st Day. In the message, President Xi said that China and Pakistan maintained a

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ISLAMABAD: Sabeeh-ul-Hassan s/o Mahar Muhammad Yasir Manzoor (Shaheed) receiving Sitara-e-Shujaat, on behalf of his father, from President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Pakistan Day celebrated

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The 81st Pakistan Day was celebrated across the country with great national spirit and enthusiasm despite the coronavirus pandemic on Tuesday. The day dawned with gun salutes and special prayers in mosques for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, the liberation of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) and the eradication of COVID-19. The nation renewed its pledge to work with dedication and professional commitment besides paying rich tributes to national heroes of the Pakistan Movement for their sacrifices. They also commemorated the historic 'Lahore Resolution' passed on March 23, 1940

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PPP, PML-N lobby for their candidates

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz have sped up their efforts for the Senate opposition leader's election. Both parties have been lobbying for their candidates. The PML-N has 17 seats in the Senate. The Nawaz league claims to have the support of five senators of the Jamiat Ulama Islam-Fazl, and two each from the National Party and the Pashtunkhwa Milli Awami Party. This way it would have the support of 26 members in the Senate. The PPP has 21 seats in the Senate. It says it is backed by two senators each from the BNP-Mengal and ANP.

US lauds Pakistan's role in Afghan talks

The Pentagon chief renewed the commitment in a phone call with Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa

IP REPORT

WASHINGTON: US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin on Sunday reiterated Washington's "commitment to maintaining strong bilateral defense relationship with Pakistan". The Pentagon chief renewed the commitment in a phone call with Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa. "Secretary Austin reinforced the United States' commitment to maintaining a strong bilateral defense relation-



ship with Pakistan and expressed gratitude for Islamabad's continued support for the Afghan peace process," said a press statement issued by the Department of Defense. In the phone call,

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DRAP satisfied with Sputnik V retail price: Asad

SHUJAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Asad Umar on Monday said that the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) is satisfied with its assessment of the price fixed for the Russian coronavirus vaccine Sputnik V. Talking to a private news channel, Umar said he checked with the secretary health on the matter after the importer raised concerns on the retail price announced by the pricing committee of DRAP. He said they are satisfied with the retail price, although it is a complicated matter. "The DRAP is okay with



their assessment based on the facts available with them that the price fixed for the Russian vaccine is fine," he said. The government on Sunday had said two doses of Russia's Sputnik V vaccine would be available at Rs 8,449 in

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Four killed, 13 injured in Chaman blast

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: At least four people including a child were killed while 13 others sustained injuries in an explosion outside Levies headquarters in the Pakistan-Afghanistan bordering town of Chaman in Balochistan on Tuesday, police officials said. Officials said that the explosives were planted on a motorcycle and the apparent target was a police mobile stationed outside the Levies prison. They further said that the bodies and injured have been shifted to Civil Hospital, Chaman. A large number of law enforcement agencies (LEAs) are present at the location and further investigation is under way, they added.

Indian PM felicitates PM Imran

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi sent a letter on the occasion of Pakistan Day to Prime Minister Imran Khan, expressing his desire for better relations between the two countries. "On the occasion of the National Day of Pakistan, I extend greetings to the people of Pakistan," the letter begins by stating. "As a neighbouring country, India desires cordial relations with the people of Pakistan. For this, an environment of trust, devoid of terror and hostility is imperative," Modi wrote. "Excellency, at this difficult time for humanity, I would like to convey my best wishes to you and the people of Pakistan for dealing with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic," he added.

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Gunman kills 10 at Colorado supermarket

"These were people going about their day, doing their shopping. I promise the victims and the people of the state of Colorado that we will secure justice"

MONITORING DESK

COLORADO: A gunman has killed 10 people, including a police officer, following an hours-long stand-off at a grocery store in the US state of Colorado. The attack in Boulder ended with police detaining an injured suspect at the King Soopers market. The shooting was live-streamed by witnesses and broadcast on YouTube. Among the dead was 51-year-old Eric Talley, who was the first police officer to respond to the shooting. "This is a tragedy and a nightmare for Boulder County," the area's district attorney, Michael Dougherty, said. "These were people going about their day, doing their shopping. I promise the

victims and the people of the state of Colorado that we will secure justice." No other details have been released about the nine other victims or a motive for the attack. The grocery store is located in a busy shopping plaza in Boulder, a north-central Colorado city about 30 miles (50km) away from the state capital of Denver. The supermarket attack comes less than a week after a mass shooting that left eight dead, including six Asian women, at three spas in Atlanta. The incident began at about 14:30 local time (20:30 GMT) on Monday when the suspect entered the supermarket and began firing. Shoppers and employees of the store said they had to dive for cover or run to safety as the shooting

unfolded. Some of the stand-off was captured on camera by a passer-by, showing victims near the grocery store. "I don't know what's going on... I heard gunshots, someone's down," the cameraman shouts. "There's an

active shooter, get away". Gunshots can be heard as he runs away from the shop. The video continues, with police arriving on the scene and surrounding the market. The Boulder police department later warned people

Colorado incident among 7 mass shootings in a week

WASHINGTON: The mass shooting at a supermarket in Boulder, Colorado, on Monday took place less than a week after eight people were killed in a series of attacks on spas in Atlanta. The two incidents are likely to spur discussion about gun control legislation in the United States, where firearm deaths are tragically common. They are also among at least seven mass shootings in the past week across the United States - including three incidents on Saturday alone. - DNA

to avoid the area and told them not to "broadcast on social media any tactical information you might see". "We were at the checkout, and shots just started going off," said Sarah Moonshadow, a customer caught up in the shooting with her son Nicholas. She told Reuters she had tried to help one of the victims lying on the pavement outside the store, but her son pulled her away saying "we have to go". "I couldn't help anybody," she said. Ryan Borowski, who was also inside the store, told CNN he could not believe what had happened in his town: "This feels like the safest spot in America, and I just nearly got killed for getting a soda and a bag of chips." Eyewitnesses said the suspect

was armed with a rifle. A police source told CNN it was an AR-15 style rifle, a semi-automatic gun that has been used in several mass shootings across the US. Aerial footage later showed a handcuffed, shirtless man with an apparent injury to his leg being put onto a stretcher for treatment. Authorities did not say whether he was the suspect or not. Speaking at a press conference, Boulder police chief Maris Herold confirmed that a suspect was in custody and was receiving hospital treatment. "I want to reassure the community that they are safe," she said. Ms Herold named the officer killed as Eric Talley, a father of seven who had been with the Boulder Police Department since 2010.

Briefs

GCU VC awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz

SHAHBAZ SINDHU

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Ch Muhammad Sarwar on Tuesday conferred Tamgha-i-Imtiaz on Prof. Dr. Asghar Zaidi, the Vice Chancellor of Government College University Lahore, for his meritorious contributions in the field of research and education especially attributing to his innovative research on population ageing.

Prof. Zaidi was awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz at a graceful ceremony at Governor's House Lahore.

Working along the lines of the Human Development Index of Dr Mahbub ul Haq, Prof. Zaidi developed two global indexes, namely Global AgeWatch Index and Active Ageing Index. These indexes provided insights in studying the well-being of older populations around the world. His contributions are also recognised for the first of its kind study of dementia experiences in Pakistan with Alzheimer's Pakistan and in developing a nation-wide survey of human rights of older population for British Council Islamabad.

The GC University's Academic Staff Association, faculty members and Old Ravens congratulated Prof. Zaidi on the tremendous achievements he has made at the GC University since his arrival.

In a statement, GCU ASA termed this achievement a stepping stone for his future work at GCU and offered their fullest support in achieving the strategy of uplifting the glorious position of GC University Lahore.

Professor Zaidi, who holds a PhD in economics from the world's top university, University of Oxford, is a social policy analyst and renowned researcher.

PTI rebel MPA Shar calls on Sindh CM Shah

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) rebel MPA Sheryar Shar met with Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and had a detailed discussion over the prevailing political situation in Ghotki district.

The sources claimed that the two also discussed the possibility of Shar's joining the PPP. It may be recalled that Shar cast his vote in favour of the PPP candidate instead of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) candidate in the recently-held Senate elections.

On March 11, taking disciplinary action against two members of the Sindh Assembly belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), who had ditched their party and voted for the opponents' candidates in the recent Senate elections, the PTI ordered the expulsion of the from the party. PTI's disciplinary committee stripped Aslam Abro from PS-I Jacobabad-I and Sheryar Khan Shar from PS-18 Ghotki-I off their basic membership on account of deviating from the party policy.

Senior journalist Sardar Akhter passes away

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Bureau Chief The News, Senior Journalist Sardar Mohammad Akhter has passed away. The funeral prayer was offered at Khizra Masjid D Block People's Colony No. 1 in which the people from journalism, government, religious, business and others sectors were present.

Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Senior Journalist and Bureau Chief The News Lahore Sardar Muhammad Akhter. They prayed for the forgiveness of the deceased and patience for the bereaved.

They paid homage to Sardar Mohammad Akhter for his invaluable services in the field of journalism and said that he would always be missed in the field of journalism.



LAHORE: Representatives of Pakistan Air Force and Rangers posing in a group photograph on the occasion of Pakistan Day at Mazar-e-Iqbal. – DNA

Commissioner vows to implement Quaid's vision about Pakistan

He said that the journey of building Pakistan from the establishment of Pakistan is going on gradually. At this stage, every member of the nation has to go ahead and play his role

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan in his message on Pakistan Day, said that in the history of independence, Pakistan Day, March 23, can never be forgotten. It is a day when the dream of an independent homeland was laid down. Today we are free but this freedom is the result of many sacrifices, efforts and hard work. The resolution passed in 1940 became the basis for the establishment of Pakistan. March 23 is a day of building emotions and realizing dreams. He said that the journey to freedom is never easy, Pakistan had to go through rivers of fire and blood to reach its destination. Under the enthusiastic leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the struggle for a separate homeland was successful by making many sacrifices.

He said that the journey of building Pakistan from the establishment of Pakistan is going on gradually. At this stage, every member of the nation has to go ahead and play his role. He said that today we have to take the spirit, deter-



World TB Day commemorates

Faisalabad's famous clock tower has been illuminated in red color to commemorate the World tuberculosis day which depicts solidarity with the people suffering with TB.

Under the arrangements of District Administration and District Health Authority a simple symbolic ceremony was held regarding International Day to create awareness regarding the disease and draw attention to the potentially disastrous socio economic consequences on the developing countries and this year day is commemorate with the theme "Clock is Ticking". Divisional Commissioner Saqib Manan and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali were the special guests on the occasion. Provincial Coordinator TB Control Program Dr. Saeed Akhtar, CEO Health Dr. Bilal Ahmed, Assistant Commissioners Umar Maqbool, Syed Ayub Bukhari, District TB Coordinator Dr. Asif Shehzad, Senior Advisor Dr. Asif Mehmood, District Coordinator Anti-Infectious Diseases Dr. Zulqarnain and other doctors were also present.

mination and solidarity of March 23, 1940 and take our dear homeland forward. Meanwhile on the occasion of Pakistan Day, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali congratulated the entire nation and especially the people of Faisalabad and said that today paved the way for the establishment of a separate homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent and the resolution

passed at the historic meeting at Manto Park. It was a practical embodiment of Allama Iqbal's vision. In his message on Pakistan Day, the Deputy Commissioner said that the resolution was an important milestone in the struggle for a separate Pakistan and on this most important historical day, the Muslims of the subcontinent, under the enthusiastic leader-

ship of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, came together and determined their destiny. The Deputy Commissioner said that the journey of building Pakistan which started from the establishment of Pakistan is still incomplete and has to complete this incomplete journey we have to work day and night and use all our energies to achieve our destination. He said that by

adopting golden principles like unity, organization, discipline, hard work, honesty and trustworthiness, Pakistan can be brought to the path of development and prosperity. He said that our forefathers had made everlasting sacrifices for the betterment of Pakistan which demanded that we should not spare any sacrifice for the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

SHO vows action to curb crimes

MEHBOOB AHIR

SARGODHA: Police station Jhal Chakiank, SHO Shamshir Khan Joya, ASI Faisal Manzoor, Muhammad Ijaz, Ghulam Shabbir and Muhammad Saleem said according to the directives, the continuity to take full action against the criminals, the canal department stole timber worth one hundred thousand from the mills of Saddam son of Ramzan, Salman son of Ramzan, Akhtar javed son of Nawaz, resident of Kolawal. Two accused Sabir and Saqib were arrested from Sial Chak 58 North and locked up in Jhal Chakiank police station. A case was registered against them.

A young Salman son of Ghulam Qasim Mochi from Fatima Jinnah Colony had recently got married. His wife got angry and went back to her house. Salman ul Qasim threw petrol on him because of severe depression and set him on fire.

Precautionary measures taken against corona

MS DHQ Hospital Sargodha Dr. Ghulam Shabbir Tahir said that precautionary measures are being taken in the hospitals across the district to deal with the new wave of corona. He said that the number of patients infected with corona virus has increased. He added that this is the third wave of serious nature in which the people have to show their responsibility to stay safe and must use face masks when going out of the house. Take special care to clean the hands for at least 20 seconds and urge others to take precautions as well.

No passenger without mask

On the directions of DCO Sargodha, Secretary RTA Farooq Haider Uzair instructed the owners passenger transport depots to use corona in buses and wagons. He said that the third wave of corona has started which is of severe nature.

Metro, FBR collaborates on POS-EDS integration

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: METRO Pakistan in collaboration with the Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR), has completed integration of all its Point of Sales (POS) with the latest Electronic Device System (EDS) introduced by the FBR. The state-of-the-art system will allow the small retailers, medium retailers, and large tier-1 retailers to report and record their sales in real-time for taxation purposes and will ensure the sales tax paid by the customers at the POS counter and the GST at the cash counter will be deposited in the system.

The inauguration ceremony for the new system was held at METRO Store Islamabad with a live demonstration. Dr. Waqar Masood Khan, the Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Revenue, was the Chief Guest, whereas Dr. Philipp Deichmann, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Federal Republic of Germany in Pakistan, graced

the occasion as the Guest of Honor, along with number of other of distinguished guests from the business community. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Marek Minkiewicz, Managing Director METRO said "METRO Pakistan is a prime example of foreign investment and fully respects the laws of the land, maintains its global high standards for social responsibility, and cooperates with the Government to the extent

possible. METRO Pakistan supports and strengthens the documented economy and is an important exchequer collector. It is one of the largest tax collector in shape of Sales Tax and Income Tax in the Wholesale/Retail sector, from its Customers and Suppliers, and depositing the same in Government treasury. On average METRO Pakistan is collecting Rs.8.1 billion per annum". Elaborating further, Mr. Asim Israr, Director Finance

METRO added "After implementation of this integration at all tiers, there would be no hurdles left for the growth of wholesale and retail sector to flourish and also minimize any need for interaction between the taxpayer and tax-departments".

He also thanked the FBR team led by Director General Retail Mr. Sajidullah Siddique for their guidance, support and cooperation in successful implementation of the project.



Covid SoPs: School, shopping malls sealed

BUREAU REPORT

FAISALABAD: District administration sealed 4 more schools, 24 shopping malls, 9 wedding halls and 3 restaurants for violating Corona SOPs and a total of 514 places were sealed and imposed Rs 445,000 fine. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali said that Assistant Commissioners were active in ensuring implementation of Corona SOPs and as many as 50 private schools, 352 shopping malls, 80 restaurants and 32 wedding halls were sealed in last 8 days.

He said that the implementation of SOPs was being checked and zero tolerance policy was being adopted on violations. Meanwhile Deputy Commissioner appealed to the citizens to adopt the precautionary measures regarding corona and use face mask while going out.

10 schemes for construction of roads approved
The District Sugar Cane Development Cess Committee has approved the implementation on 10 schemes for construction, repair and rehabilitation of roads in different Sugar Mills areas of the district at a cost of Rs. 126 million from Sugar Cess Funds.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed in detail the road construction and repair schemes in the areas of Sugar Mills and said that immediate steps should be taken to further departmental action on the approved projects and no scheme should be stalled.

He said that representatives of Sugar Mills management should be present in the meeting of the committee and only schemes of public need should be presented for approval. He cleared that transparency should be ensured in this regard.

Kaira regrets PDM tied resignations to long march

DNA

LAHORE: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) leader Qamar Zaman Kaira said on Tuesday that the party was ready for the long march but resignations were tied to it.

Talking to the media in Lahore along with other party leaders Faisal Karim Kundi, Kaira and Hasan Murtaza, Kaira said that the PPP had sought advice from its legal experts who told that even if resignations were given, Senate elections would still be held.

Referring to media talk by some of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) leaders which created the impression of fissures within the ranks of the opposition parties' alliance, the PPP leader further said that politicians should avoid making controversial statements before media because of these created difficulties.

He said PPP never forced any of its political allies in the past to accept its viewpoint. "These were our principles that convinced our allies," he claimed.

Afridi vows support to Kashmir cause

ISLAMABAD: Kashmir Committee Chairman Sheryar Khan Afridi on Tuesday felicitated the entire nation on Pakistan Day and vowed to extend his diplomatic, moral and political support to Kashmiri brothers in their inalienable right to self-determination.

Kashmir was an unfinished agenda of 1947 partition, he said while expressing his commitment to mobilize all resources for the independence of Kashmir.

In his message on the occasion of Pakistan Day, he said the Day reminded us the sacrifices made by our elders in making this country.

He paid tribute to the Kashmiri brothers and sisters for showing continued resistance against Indian oppression and barbarism for the last several decades.

The ideology of Pakistan was the basis for the establishment of Pakistan, under which the Muslim leadership refused to be dominated by the Hindutva mentality and struggled for the establishment of a separate state, said Afridi. The sacrifices of freedom fighters of occupied Kashmir will not go in vain, he remarked. – APP

SAARC Chamber hails Pakistan goodwill gesture

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: President SAARC chamber of Commerce and Industry Iftikhar Ali Malik Tuesday hailed goodwill gesture of Pakistan for offering 100 scholarships to Sri Lankan students in top medical institutions which will further cement bilateral ties with special focus to gear up trade and strengthen economic cooperation between two countries.

Talking to a delegation of traders led by Pir Saddam Hussain Shah, Muhammad Hussain Dohla, Noor Shah, Ali Zaman and Akram Shah here today he said

it's good omen that both countries recently during the visit of Prime Minister Imran Khan reiterated the importance of strengthening economic relations in key areas of mutual interest and diversifying trade and investment of two countries. He said that it's historic major breakthrough that both sides underlined the vital importance of realising the goal of achieving \$1 billion bilateral trade target and also agreed to work together closely towards broadening and deepening of Pak-Sri Lanka Free Trade Agreement. He said that MoU on cooperation between Boards of Investment of two countries will ac-

celerate the economic activities and boost bilateral cooperation. Iftikhar Ali Malik who remained actively associated with SAARC Chamber for the last three decades having deep insight said that the current trade between both countries is not entirely encouraging, but both countries have markets for each other's primary products. SAARC Chamber Chief observed that Pakistan is an important market for tea products, which also happens to be a top Sri Lankan export item, and Pakistan is also a significant importer of copra and rubber, both items are important Sri Lankan exports. Similarly, Sri Lanka is an impor-

tant market for textile products, machinery, and pharmaceuticals along with other products that Pakistan records significant exports. He said therefore there exists a huge trade potential between both countries if the FTA is utilised properly he remarked. Iftikhar Ali Malik said that Pak companies have invested significantly in agriculture, information technology and construction sectors of Sri Lanka while it's construction industry is growing rapidly creating huge demand of Pak cement. Pak private sector can also capture sugar export market in Sri Lanka which imports its 90% sugar requirements.

He said what's both countries needed is to diversify their products through research, innovation and value addition adjusting according to the demands of each other markets. He said no tariff barriers have smothered the impact of tariff rationalisations. He said due to lack of awareness, exporters do not make full use of market potential and benefits under free trade agreement. Iftikhar Ali Malik reaffirmed Pakistan's strong commitment to SAARC and expressed the hope that the process of regional co-ordination would be allowed to move forward, he concluded.

Briefs

PSH launches its theme song 'Sahara Banain'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Sweet Home launched its theme song 'Sahara Banain' in an impressive and colorful ceremony held here at National Press Club on Monday.

Produced by Nauman Rauf and written by Baqir Saleem, the theme song of Pakistan Sweet Home 'Benawa Kay Muqadar Ka Tara Banain, Hum Kifalat Karin Aur Sahara Banain' was originally sung by renowned singer Ustad Rahat Fateh Ali Khan.

The event was attended by Patron-in-Chief of Pakistan Sweet Home Zamurad Khan (HI), children and cadets of Pakistan Sweet Home and large number of media persons.

Addressing the ceremony, Patron-in-Chief of Pakistan Sweet Home Zamurad Khan (HI) thanked to Allah Almighty for bestowing him with such a beautiful responsibility and said that media has always been a strong voice for successfully running this noble mission. He said that Pakistan Sweet Home was providing a safe abode for homeless and helpless children from across the country. To make these children capable to have their share in national development, the work on construction of cadet college of Sweet Home in Gujar Khan at the cost of Rs 1.5 billion was in final stage.

The ceremony was also addressed by senior journalists, anchorpersons, philanthropists and members of production team of the theme song.

On this occasion, lifetime Secretary General of All Pakistan Akhbar Farosh Union Tikka Khan announced cash donation of Rs 1,00,000 besides announcement by Nauman Rauf for donation of fifty percent income of his production company for Pakistan Sweet Home.

Five arrested for running illegal LPG

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi District Police under an ongoing operation against illegal Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and Petrol agencies conducted raids and arrested five accused.

According to a Police spokesman, Race Course police netted Adil and Muhammad Riaz for operating illegal LPG agencies. Police confiscated LPG cylinders and refilling gadgets from their possession. Another accused namely Muhammad Shoaib for running an illegal petrol agency was also sent behind the bars.

Police registered separate cases against all the accused, he added.

He said, police would continue their operation against the rules violators and the illegal petrol and LPG agencies would be sealed.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz viewing historic photographs during Photographic & Painting Exhibition on the occasion of Pakistan Day arranged by DEMP at Fatima Jinnah Park, F-9. — DNA

Pakistan Red Crescent Society celebrates Pakistan Day

Abrar ul Haq called upon the youth to come forward and donate blood to save lives of those in need amid pandemic

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) held a cake-cutting ceremony to celebrate Pakistan Day here at the National Headquarters.

Chairman PRCS Abrar ul Haq, Acting Secretary General Dr. Adeel Nawaz, IFRC Head of Delegation Peter (Pivi) Ophoff, Turkish Red Crescent Head of Delegation Ibraheem Carlos, program officers and a large number of volunteers were present on the occasion. The ceremony began with the recitation from the Holy Quran. National Anthem was also played on the occasion while special prayers were offered for the progress, prosperity, safety and integrity of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, Abrar ul Haq said the nation is celebrating Pakistan Day at a difficult time due to Covid-19 pandemic. He said the government has taken effective measures



to tackle the pandemic during the last over one year, however there is still a long way to go in this fight. He said the PRCS has rendered remarkable services in containing the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, adding that not only a nationwide awareness campaign was launched but

all-out support to the government was also extended in screening and quarantine operations across

country. Abrar ul Haq said while efforts to contain the pandemic continue, people need to implement all precautionary measures in

true letter and spirit. He also stressed the need for people to get themselves vaccinated at the earliest as per schedule announced by the government.

Abrar ul Haq called upon the youth to come forward and donate blood to save lives of those in need amid pandemic. He said as the blood donations have been severely affected due to Covid-19, a number of patients are at risk of being denied the lifesaving transfusions. He said the PRCS has organized a number of donation camps in the recent months to help those in critical need of blood.

Regarding Pakistan Day, the PRCS chairman said it is the day of renewal of pledge to implement the Pakistan Resolution as well as remembering those who sacrificed their lives for creation of Pakistan on the global map. "As we are blessed with a motherland now, all patriotic Pakistanis should spare no effort for its progress and prosperity," he maintained.

ISSI observes Pakistan Day

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad held a virtual meeting with its research faculty to commemorate Pakistan Day on March 23, 2021.

The meeting was attended by the Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Ambassador Aizaz Ahmed Chaudhary, the Chairman Board of Governors, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, the Directors of the five Centers of Excellence and the entire research faculty.

In his opening remarks, Director General Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI), said that we must celebrate our identity and freedom although we live in an interdependent world. However, he said that we do not see a country where we have achieved sufficient progress.

Furthermore, he said that citizens must innovate and have inclusive governance systems, as a lack of these are a hindrance in the way of progress. He further said that the political system of the country is dominated by the elite which make the citizens disempowered. The Director General invited all members of the research faculty to give one reason which, in their opinion, is behind the lack of progress.

Poor governance system both at the central and provincial level, systemic unfairness, lack of rule of law, lack of meritocracy, a lack of resolve and introspection were some of the reasons pointed out by the research faculty for the lack of progress.

Holiday on March 25 in twin cities

SHAHEEN HANIF

RAWALPINDI: The administrations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad on Monday announced local holiday in the twin cities on March 25 as the Joint Services (JS) Pakistan Day Parade has been rescheduled amid ongoing inclement weather and rains being forecast over the next two days.

The Pakistan Day Parade will now be held on March 25, as per programme and timings already specified. An Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) media release on Monday also released its public service message on creating awareness among the general public for participating in the Joint Services parade with strict adherence to the Covid-19 standard operating procedure.

The message highlighted that March 23rd, was not only Pakistan Day rather a moment of national commitment and resolve demanding the people to remain firm, resolute and steadfast in all times whereas it was decided to celebrate this year's Pakistan Day under strict Covid-19 standard operating procedure (SOPs).

CDA to hold auction of commercial plots in Islamabad on March 29

MEHMOOD ABDULLAH

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) will hold a three days auction of 29 commercial plots on March 29 at Jinnah Convention Center.

The commercial plots of sector D-12, G-6, G-10, G-11, G-8, Blue Area, I-8, F-8, F-11, I-12 and other developed sectors will be presented for auction.

Plots of five star hotels, apartment hospitals, and petrol pumps are also included which would be presented for auction.

CDA official said that to provide the best opportunities of investment Capital Development Authority has presented the plots in developed sectors for auction.

CDA collects Rs 300 million revenue during last month

ISLAMABAD: The Building Directorate of Capital Development Authority (CDA) has sealed residential and commercial buildings across the city on violating building rules. During last one month, CDA has collected more than Rs. 300 million revenue in terms of commercial charges.

According to an official, CDA's Directorate of Building Control has collected revenue of over Rs. 300 million in terms of maps, NOC, additional floor, building approval certificate and commercial charges.

The Building Control Directorate has sealed illegal restaurants and shops in Mall of Islamabad, Silver Oaks, 98E Blue Area for violating building rules, while the shopping centers in G-10/4, G-10/2 has been partially closed. Similarly, three houses have been sealed for commercial use of residential buildings in I-9 and I-10. Building Control Directorate has demolished illegal constructions in Blue Area, G-7, F-7, F-10/4, School Road F-8/4, F-8/3, F-10/1 and I-8. — DNA

The authority has devised a special team to facilitate and guide the investors in this regard. Brochures of plots for auction are available at one window Directorate and in the branches of selected bank.

Capital Development Authority has also given an option of online buying of these brochures. Auction committee has decided to give 10% discount to those who would pay amount within 30 days of their successful bids.

The committee has issued directions for the approval of building plan after the payment of first installment. However, the investor will be given permission of construction on plot only when he would pay whole price of plot. Investors who would successfully get the approval of map before June 30 will be eligible to get benefit from Prime Minister Relief package.

Distributive Justice is the way to deal with water scarcity

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: Bringing distributive justice in water management is need of the hour to overcome water scarcity, especially in the South Asian region. Without a comprehensive understanding of real and multi-dimensional value of water, safeguarding this critical resource for the benefit of everyone would not be a possibility. The experts from water, environment and agriculture sectors said this while sharing their views with the participants of online regional dialogue 'Valuing water for achieving sustainable development goal 6 (Water and Sanitation)', held by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

Former Minister of Water Resources in Nepal, Dr. Dipak Gyawali, while sharing his views in regional perspective of water management, said that from transboundary to a village level, the conflicts on water issues would always be there due to

its being precious and irreplaceable natural resource. He said that we often confine to surface water (blue water) while talking of water conservation. Brown water (underground water) and white water (clouds and glaciers) are equally important and should be conserved, he opined.

Dr. Gyawali said that "the policies pertaining water need to be pluralized while taking aboard all voices." The point that we need to consider while dealing with the water issues is that there cannot be a complete consensus on any solution and therefore, we need to reach at certain compromises for the collective betterment, he concluded.

While linking water issues with Covid-19 pandemic time challenges, Ms. Vanita Suneja, Regional Advocacy Manager, WaterAid South Asia, opined that the messaging, especially about hands hygiene to contain the spread of virus has reminded us the access to water and entailing inequality.

She added further that it is quite ironic that despite higher emphasize on value of water during the pandemic and messaging around it, there is no visible increase in the public funding on water, especially in South Asian countries. She said that including all stakeholders in decision-making pertaining water issues is imperative for effective water management.

Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI, highlighted the multidimensionality of water usage and said that water has become even important amidst Covid-19 for health (hand washing), food security (agriculture), and livelihoods (energy). He suggested that Dr. Gyawali should take a lead in updating quarter century old, "South Asia water manifesto"; a document that water experts in South Asia prepared in 1997 for just distribution of water across the region. "It is our collective responsibility to pass on this precious resource to our future generations", said Dr. Suleri.

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Price hike

TO recover billions in revenue shortfalls, the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) and Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGCL) proposed an astounding 220 percent increase in gas prices. If their demands are met by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), the per unit price of gas might become unaffordable for industrial sectors as well the masses. Accessibility must be maintained and an alternative solution should be explored by the government to protect its citizens from crippling exploitation. SNGPL and SSGCL's argument is that without a substantial increase in prices, the estimated revenue requirement for the current fiscal year may not be met. Furthermore, they mention that previous years' shortfalls must also be recovered alongside considering that their exclusive contracts have expired in Punjab and KP as well.

While it is still unclear exactly where the burden of over a 100 billion rupees might fall, one can clearly conclude that industries and the general public alike will be impacted heavily. Already, the government approved electricity price increases to meet conditions stated by the IMF; another increase will be the final straw that threatens to bring upon immense economic strife. Inflation coupled with such price hikes may put many below the poverty line and run industries out of business. The government must fulfil its duty to provide a solution that is not disadvantageous yet still allows for the companies to bridge their revenue gap.

While Pakistan works towards eliminating the reliance on depleting energy sources like gas entirely, as a long-term solution, experts propose that maximising efficiency in the meantime might help the problem. Upgrading equipment, employing a detailed control system, reducing UFG and improving distribution systems can help save up gas that would have been lost otherwise. Responsible usage should also be encouraged across the nation so that a conscious effort is made towards preserving an exhaustive resource that is vital for our economy. Lastly, carrying out checks and balances to ensure that proper functions are followed in the companies are vital since the end consumer cannot always bear the costs of every shortfall.

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Crime spike

SINCE the start of this year, Islamabad police has been telling us that making the capital crime-free is the utmost priority. But in reality, it looks like the federal police's efforts in curbing the crime rate in the city are proving to be insufficient. It is not to say that the police department is sitting idle. Indeed the force is carrying out its duty, as is evident from its earlier operations this month against criminal elements. But last Saturday, the crimes reported from eleven different areas in Islamabad must be a point of concern for the department.

Dozens of Islamabad's residents were deprived of their hard-earned money and valuables worth millions of rupees in a single day. This shows the police department's failure in performing its primary duty—protecting the lives and properties of the ordinary people. Almost a dozen incidents in a day are a worrying indicator of a newfound security problem in the capital, as crime becomes endemic. The rise in crime rate has only increased the feeling of insecurity in the residents of the capital. Islamabad police must control the deteriorating law and order situation to restore the city's peace. Such a trend cannot be condoned anywhere, especially in the capital.

This rise can be attributed to socio-economic determinants of crime in Pakistan. Crime and unemployment rates are directly related, as a plethora of research shows us. However, that does not exonerate police officials from failing in carrying out their job. The fact that crimes increase in the last few days of every month necessitates increased surveillance and patrolling of the city. The higher-ups must reassess the department's performance. They must prioritise accountability and ensure strict implementation of law and order.

A spike in petty and street crimes in a city are indicative of poor policing. Erecting scores of pickets by capital police in the past has made no difference. Perhaps, the capital police need to focus more on effective response management and good patrolling to cover all bases.



Process of judicial reforms in Uzbekistan

Khadiji-Murod ISAKOV

The development of a system of continuous judicial education in the Republic of Uzbekistan is one of necessary conditions for establishment and security of the rule of law. Taking into account the importance of training highly qualified judicial personnel and their relevance in judicial activity in the country

THE independence of judiciary is one of the fundamental principles of a democratic rule of law as well as a fundamental element of the right of fair trial. This factor is the starting, definition of the court in a democratic state, since in a dynamically developing society, the role of an independent judiciary, as an integral element of the rule of law and the system of comprehensive protection of human rights and freedoms, is certainly growing. The guarantees of independence and impartiality of the courts are enshrined in national legislation at the highest level. Thus, Articles 106 and 112 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan have become a solid legislative basis for the implementation of systemic and consistent measures in this direction. A deep in content and significant in scope work was carried out, which was aimed primarily at ensuring the full implementation of the principle of independence and impartiality of the judiciary, enshrined in the Supreme Law of our country, which contributes to the growth of the quality of justice, its transparency, accessibility, openness, efficiency, and most importantly, it serves as a complete and comprehensive protection of human rights and freedoms.

In recent years, large-scale transformations in the judicial and legal spheres have been taking place in our country, which laid the foundation for a modern new concept of the judicial system under the leadership of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan - Sh.Mirziyoyev. It should be noted that the process of democratic renewal of the judicial system was followed by powerful continuation and development in 2016-2017. It was at this stage of development that cardinal decisions were made which laid the beginning of a new, historical stage in the democratization of the judicial system. As a result of the measures taken to reform the judicial system, the guarantees of reliable protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens have been strengthened, the structure of the judicial system has been radically improved, and the efficiency of the activities of the judicial authorities has been increased. In particular, it is considered to be necessary to dwell on the

following aspects: First, within the framework of the implementation of the measures provided in the "Strategy of actions for five priority areas of development of the Republic of Uzbekistan in 2017-2021", the Head of State issued Decree No. UP-4966 of February 21, 2017 "On measures to radically improve the structure and increase the efficiency of activities of the judicial system of the Republic of Uzbekistan". In accordance with this Decree, the Supreme judicial council of the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred as the Council) was formed, by abolishing the Supreme qualification commission for selection and recommendation of candidates for judicial positions under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Council is the body of the judicial community, which is designed to assist in ensuring compliance with the constitutional principle of the independence of the judiciary. It should be noted that this reform is fully consistent with the Basic Principles of the United Nations concerning the independence of the judiciary (approved on August 30, 1997 by a resolution of Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan). The specific attention shall be paid to the fact that the Council has a constitutional status, its activities are regulated by the Constitution and the Law "On the Supreme judicial council of the Republic of Uzbekistan", which in turn also strengthens its independence and impartiality.

According to the provisions of the Decree, our country has introduced a new system for the selection of candidates and the appointment of judges, in which representatives of the judiciary, as well as civil society institutions take part. It is the Council that is empowered to select and form a highly qualified judiciary. Noteworthy, the introduction of this institution made it possible to conduct an open and transparent formation of the judiciary on the basis of a competitive selection of candidates for the positions of judges from among the most qualified specialists, to ensure the genuine immunity of judges and prevent interference in their activities in the administration of justice, and to establish a dialogue between the judicial community and people.

In addition, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan of September 10, 2019 No. 566 "On amendments and additions to certain legislative acts of the Republic of Uzbekistan in connection with improving the activities of certain state bodies", amended the Laws "On courts" and "On the Supreme judicial council of the Republic of Uzbekistan", according to which, a judge before being appointed to the position, is required to reach 35 years of age (previously - 30 years), and persons in the reserve of candidates who are appointed to the positions of judges for the first time shall undergo compulsory training at the Supreme school of judges.

Second, one of the large-scale transformations of the judicial and legal sphere and the organizational and legal guarantee of the independence of the judiciary in the Republic of Uzbekistan is the establishment of an indefinite period of office for judges. Thus, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated April 12, 2017 established that a judge is appointed or elected in accordance with the established procedure for an initial five-year term, another ten-year term and a subsequent indefinite period of office.

This innovation fully meets the requirements of modern international and foreign experience. Pursuant to Article 12 of the UN Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary of November 29, 1985, judges, whether appointed or elected, have a guaranteed term of office until mandatory retirement or the expiration of their term of office, where applicable. In practice, this means that the judge retains his position until he reaches the age limit.

This measure has become the main guarantee of the irremovability of judges - one of the most important elements of their independence. It is significant that at present this rule is fully implemented in the law enforcement practice of our country.

Third, in Uzbekistan, organizational and legal mechanisms are consistently developing, aimed at ensuring a comprehensive protection of judges, as well as their immunity.

Fourth, appropriate measures have been taken to ensure the transparency of the activities of the judiciary, expand open dialogue with the society and strengthen the role of the public in the administration of justice. So, in accordance with the provisions of the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. UP-5482 dated July 13, 2018 "On measures to further improve the judicial system and increase confidence in the judiciary," the following is provided: - gradual introduction of the procedure for the systematic publication of court decisions on the website of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan; - introduction of the practice into daily operation of courts of giving clarifications to the participants in the trial of the essence of the adopted court decision after its announcement; - conducting quarterly briefings by the chairperson of regional courts and their deputies in order to inform the public and the media about the activities of the courts; - publication of quarterly reviews of the practice of considering court cases in the order of supervision by the judicial collegiums of the Supreme court of the Republic of Uzbekistan, in the appeal and cassation procedure - by regional and equivalent courts. We are talking about the decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PP-4096 of January 6, 2019 "On measures to radically improve the system of training candidates for the positions of judges, retraining, advanced training of judges and employees of the court apparatus", in accordance with which the Supreme school of judges under the Supreme judicial council of the Republic of Uzbekistan (hereinafter referred to as the Supreme school) was created to carry out training of candidates for the positions of judges, retraining, advanced training of judges and court staff through the way of: - Organization of a unified system of training of candidates for the positions of judges, retraining, advanced training of judges and court staff; - Introduction into the educational process of interactive teaching methods that develop skills of record keeping and critical analysis, making informed decisions using innovative pedagogical and information and communication technologies; - Development of students' theoretical knowledge and practical skills in the field of jurisprudence, professional ethics, psychology, business communication, time management, negotiation tactics, technology for working with information, interpretation and application of law; - Organization of events on a regular basis for discussing topical issues of judicial and law enforcement activities, as well as law enforcement practice; - Familiarization of listeners with current amendments and additions to legislation, the state and trends of domestic and foreign law enforcement practice, as well as experience in the field of rule-making; - Implementation of deep fundamental, applied and innovative research work on topical issues of improving the judicial and legal system, the development of legislation and the formation of a uniform law enforcement practice; - Training of scientific and production (practical) highly qualified personnel in the judicial sphere, as well as scientific and methodological support of judicial and legal activities; - Analyzing legislation and law enforcement practice in the judicial sphere, study and generalization of judicial practice and statistics with the development of appropriate proposals and recommendations; - Establishment of effective interdepartmental interaction with educational and scientific-research institutions that train candidates for the position of judges, improving the qualifications of judges and court staff in order to exchange experience, consolidating efforts to improve the quality of the educational pro-

cess; - Development of international cooperation in order to establish regular scientific research, exchange of information of a regulatory, methodological and analytical nature, attract foreign specialists to the educational and scientific process, organize internships for teachers, researchers and students.

The development of a system of continuous judicial education in the Republic of Uzbekistan is one of necessary conditions for establishment and security of the rule of law. Taking into account the importance of training highly qualified judicial personnel and their relevance in judicial activity in the country, the primary training of judges and judicial officers is carried out in order to meet the needs of professional judicial corpus. Judges are trained by implementation of specialized programs, with a specific focus on the field of their professional activity, but at the same time in light of norms of protection of the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens and organizations.

The judicial reforms in Uzbekistan are ongoing and the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan PF-6034 of July 24, 2020 "On additional measures to improve further the judicial activities and increase their efficiency" can be considered as a vivid example. This Decree introduced following changes:

- The practice of reviewing court decisions by way of supervision was cancelled and respective rights of chairman of the Supreme Court, the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Uzbekistan and their deputies to protest the judicial decisions were abolished.
- regional and equivalent courts of general jurisdiction were created on the basis of the principle of "one court - one instance" and corresponding judicial collegia were formed while maintaining the strict specialization of judges. A feature of this innovation is the revision of decisions of interdistrict, district (city) courts by regional and equivalent courts, and court decisions considered on appeal can be reviewed in cassation by judicial collegiums of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan.
- a new procedure for the participation of the prosecutor in court has been introduced, according to which the participation of the prosecutor on his own initiative in the consideration of civil and economic cases in courts initiated by other persons, with the exception of cases provided for by law, as well as the reclamation from the court and examination of the case by the prosecutor, on to which the verdict, decision or ruling of the court entered into legal force only if there is an appeal by the parties in this case.

Regarding institutional changes in the judicial system, Article 107 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uzbekistan has introduced new structure of the state's judicial system. According to it, new court instances were formed, such as the courts of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, regional and Tashkent city courts, the Administrative Court of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, administrative courts of regions and the Tashkent city, inter-district, district, city courts on civil cases, district and city courts on criminal cases, district and city courts on economic cases, and finally, district and city courts on administrative matters.

In general, the abovementioned, measures, having become an important factor in the development of democratic transformations in the country, serve the main goal - "Man, his life, rights and freedom are the highest value." This concept deriving its origins from Article 13 of the Constitution of Uzbekistan has become the most important foundation for strengthening the role of judiciary in the system of state power, ensuring the true independence of the judicial system, increasing the level of access to justice, as well as strengthening judicial power in ensuring reliable protection of the rights and freedoms of citizens.

— **Khadiji-Murod ISAKOV, is the Deputy Chairman of the Supreme judicial council, Director of the Supreme school of judges Republic of Uzbekistan, PhD in Law**

Renewed commitment from Pakistan!

Attiya Munawer



The 27th meeting of the Muslim League, presided over by Quaid-e-Azam, started with great pomp on March 22, 1940. It was very successful in terms of assembly

SOME moments in national life are very precious, and living nations do not waste these moments or let them be forgotten. March 23, 1940 is one such day in the national history of Pakistan when a historic resolution was passed at the end of the three-day annual meeting of the All India Muslim League in Minto Park, Lahore, on the basis of which the Muslim League leaders started a movement for a separate homeland for Muslims in the subcontinent and succeeded in getting his demand approved in a short period of seven years.

It is clear that the Pakistan Resolution was passed on March 23, 1940 after going through many difficult stages, but we can all estimate it hypothetically. From the beginning of 1940, Quaid-i-Azam gradually shifted the views and opinions of the Muslims of the subcontinent towards the ten-year-old goal for which Allama Iqbal was striving. The Quaid-e-Azam, while expressing his views in the London newspaper Time and Tide, had clearly declared that Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations. Quaid-i-Azam wrote in reply to Gandhiji's letter that he had no misunderstanding that India was not one and the same. The subcontinent is inhabited by many nations, Hindus and Muslims being the two major nations. In February 1940, a meeting of the Working Committee and Council of the Muslim League was held in Delhi, where it was decided that the demand for a separate state for Muslims would be presented at the Lahore meeting.

The 27th meeting of the Muslim League, presided over by Quaid-e-Azam, started with great pomp on March 22, 1940. It was very successful in terms of assembly. More than 50,000 people attended the meeting. In his presidential address at the open session of the Muslim League on March 22, the Quaid highlighted the two-nation ideology and said in no uncertain terms that India's problem was not sectarian but international, and that it was impossible to combine fire and water. Alhamdulillah, Pakistan is based on this ideology and at that time those who opposed this ideology were regretting their own decision. Just look at the recent amendments to the Indian law, how the controversial Citizenship Bill was introduced in defiance of Islam, newspaper headlines there are now slamming opponents of the ideology of Pakistan and they are convinced of the political insight of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

There is no denying the fact that the Pakistan Resolution of March 23 is a blessing or a gift for all of us (Muslims). If all Pakistanis pledge to protect this gift, then every enemy of the country will think a hundred times before looking at our beloved land with a dirty eye. We celebrate Pakistan Day every year with great enthusiasm, events are also organized in the educational institutions of the country, special programs and influential writings on print, social and electronic media are selected, but all these matters do not fall into the category of loyalty to the beloved land, our homeland demands

sacrifices from us, and it is our duty to pledge solidarity and unity with it, we pledge to lead Pakistan in the light of the guiding principles of faith, unity and discipline. We will make Pakistan a truly welfare and Islamic state, we will implement the Qur'an and Sunnah system in Pakistan in practice, we will liberate Pakistan from the slavery of others, we will wage jihad against those who promote Hindu culture and its traditions.

For the people of Pakistan, Pakistan Day is a day of renewed commitment, the responsibility to improve this country lies not only with the government and the braves of the Pakistani forces guarding the border, we all have a responsibility to develop and protect this country. Forgetting all kinds of differences and setting an example of unity so that the enemy countries cannot even think of conspiracies against us. We have spent our time, but the future of our children has to be decided in the same way as our elders have made a dream come true for us and made it a free country. In the same way, it is our duty to train the youth for the integrity and survival of this country, to give them a conducive environment so that they can be able to run this country. This year, let us all renew our commitment to Pakistan on Pakistan Day that in the light of the Pakistan resolution, we will individually and collectively become the Shaheen of Allama Iqbal and make Pakistan's future bright.

— **The writer is a freelance columnist, essayist, and blogger. She studies EnvSci at (LCWU).**

Briefs

No major issue with my fitness: Sharjeel

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Left-handed opening batter Sharjeel Khan said that he is working hard on his fitness and is trying to reach the required level, set by Pakistan team management. Speaking to reporters in a virtual conference on Tuesday, the 31-year old said that he never missed a match in 2020/21 domestic cricket due to fitness. "There is no major issue regarding my fitness as I have been playing the entire domestic season," said Sharjeel.

Niger: At least 137 killed in attack

FOREIGN DESK

NIAMEY: At least 137 Nigerien civilians were killed on Sunday in an attack on several localities near the Malian border, the Nigerien government said in a statement late Monday. "In the afternoon of Sunday March 21, 2021 at around 1 p.m. (1200GMT), the localities of Intazayane, Bakorat, Wirsnat and several other hamlets and camps located in the department of Tillia, Tahoua region, witnessed an attack perpetrated by armed bandits," said the statement read on national TV by government spokesperson Abdourahmane Zakaria.

Xi Jinping greets President

From Page 01

high level of four-season strategic cooperation partnership, and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has entered a new phase of high-quality development. In the context of Covid-19 pandemic, China and Pakistan have been cooperating closely which has further enhanced the traditional friendship between the two countries. "I attach great importance to Sino-Pak relations and look forward to joint efforts with President Alvi to comprehensively promote friendly exchanges and cooperation in all fields between the two countries." The two countries on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Pak diplomatic relations will strengthen and build a close China-Pakistan co-operative society in the new era. Meanwhile, in a separate congratulatory message to his counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi on March 23, China's State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi congratulated him on his 81st Pakistan Day. Wang Yi said that China and Pakistan have always supported each other in matters of mutual interest and the two countries are jointly promoting global justice. Together, China and Pakistan will promote friendly exchanges at various levels, strengthen real cooperation in various fields, promote high-quality development of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and promote global and regional affairs. "Close liaison and cooperation will be promoted and the standard of strategic cooperation between the two countries will be comprehensively raised," he added.

Putin, Biden greet Dr Alvi...

From Page 01

and climate change," said Biden in a letter to President Arif Alvi sent on Pakistan Day. Joe Biden said that Pakistan-US partnership is based on the common goal of regional peace and prosperity. "Vladimir Putin, President of Russia, sent the congratulatory message on the occasion of a national holiday - the Pakistan Day to H.E. Dr. A. Alvi, President of Pakistan, and H.E. Mr. Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan," Russian Embassy in Pakistan said Monday on Twitter. Earlier, Spokesperson of Russian Foreign Ministry Maria Zakharova said, "Russia and Pakistan maintain friendly relations, a regular political dialogue and interaction at international organisations. We send greetings to our Pakistani friends."



BEIJING: Pakistani ambassador to China Moin ul Haque at the national flag hoisting ceremony on the occasion of Pakistan Day at the Pakistan embassy in Beijing. - DNA

Pak-China financial co-op highlighted at National Day

"As a diplomat, I stayed twice in #Pakistan for over 8 years. Pakistan has won my heart. May I wish you a happy #PakistanDay! Chin-Pakistan dosti zindabad!" Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian posted in his Twitter handle

DNA

BEIJING: The 81st Pakistan Day was observed on Tuesday with traditional fervor and zeal at the Pakistani Embassy in Beijing, where guests were hosted and enjoyed entertainment from children singing songs in tribute. Through the national flag hoisting ceremony, Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque marked Pakistan's National Day. Similar flag hoisting ceremonies were also held at Pakistani consulates in Chengdu, Guangzhou, Hong Kong and Shanghai. Haque stressed that 2021 marks Pakistan and China's commemoration of the establishment of bilateral ties' 70th anniversary. It was a very important milestone for the two countries, not only the celebration of the fortified brotherhood that exists between the two countries but also leads the



way forward for ever-increasing cooperation in diverse fields. He thanked the Chinese leadership and the government for supporting Pakistan during the COVID-19 pandemic and sending relief goods and vaccines to help fight the pandemic. "As a diplomat, I stayed twice

in #Pakistan for over 8 years. Pakistan has won my heart. May I wish you a happy #PakistanDay! Chin-Pakistan dosti zindabad!" Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian posted in his Twitter handle. On Monday, Habib Bank, also known as HBL, the largest bank

in Pakistan, opened its branch in Beijing. Cheng Wei, country manager of HBL Beijing Branch, told the Global Times on Tuesday that HBL has facilitated around \$6 billion for different projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). During his speech, Haque con-

gratulated Cheng for the opening of the Beijing branch. "Our two countries now have a bilateral currency exchange agreement with Pakistan worth 20 billion yuan (\$3.07 billion)," Cheng said. HBL was the first Pakistani bank to open a branch in China in 2017 and was allowed to handle end-to-end Chinese yuan transactions. The ceremony started with a recitation from the Holy Quran. Messages from the Pakistani President and Prime Minister were also read. In his address, Haque paid rich tribute to the leadership of Pakistan's Movement, highlighting the importance of March 23, 1940. "It was the day when Muslims of South Asia, under the dynamic leadership of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah resolved to create a separate homeland for themselves where they could live in accordance with their beliefs, traditions and culture," he said.

Late Abdul Qadir conferred Sitara-e-Imtiaz



SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Legendary leg-spinner Late Abdul Qadir has been awarded 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz', Pakistan's third-highest civilian award. Cricketer Umar Akmal, Qadir's son in law shared a photo of the award while Qadir's wife received the award, handed by Governor Punjab, Chaudhary Mohammad Sarwar. Remember, President of Pakistan Arif Alvi announced 'Sitara-e-Imtiaz' for the legendary leg-spinner on 14 August 2020. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) termed 'proud moment' for the country's cricket family. It must be noted that Qadir passed away due to a sudden heart attack in his hometown Lahore in September 2019.

Protesters rally in front of Kosovo embassy in Ankara

DNA

ANKARA: Dozens of protesters rallied in front of Kosovo's embassy in the Turkish capital Ankara on Tuesday. They were showing resentment against Kosovo's move to open its embassy in Jerusalem.

The protest, organized by the Humanitarian Relief Organization (IHH) and the Memur-Sen Trade Union, was attended by Turkish activists and Arab students. "We believe that Kosovo's move to open an embassy in Jerusalem will go down as a black mark in history", Zahid Sengul, a leading figure of Memur-Sen, said in a press statement.

The statement also urged the leaders of Kosovo to reverse their decision. "Just as we had defended Kosovo at the cost of our lives during its war of independence, we will stand up for the state of Palestine languishing under Israeli occupation", the statement read. Speaking to media, Sengul said they will not end the



struggle till Palestinians are granted their rights.

"We will continue our struggle until the Zionist invaders leave Palestinian lands, including Jerusalem", he said. Huthaifa Yassin, an Ankara-based Palestinian student, said he is taking part in the protest to voice his "outrage" over the Kosovo move. "Jerusalem was and is still the capital of Palestine and Israelis have no

right there," he added.

Jordanian student Jilan Abu al-Rub, who was also part of the protest, said she was there to express strong condemnation against the Kosovo country's move. "Our position represents every free person in this globe which is rejecting the Israeli attacks and discrimination practiced by the Apartheid state of Israel against the Palestinian people,"

she said. In a controversial move, Kosovo on March 14 announced the opening of its embassy to Israel in Jerusalem. Turkey had condemned the Kosovo decision. The city of Jerusalem remains at the heart of the decades-long Mideast conflict, with Palestinians insisting that East Jerusalem - illegally occupied by Israel since 1967 - should serve as the capital of the Palestinian state.

Hurriyat leaders, organizations greet Pakistanis

The Hurriyat forum led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, in a statement, said, positive shift in the relations between Pakistan and India is being observed with anticipation by the people of IIOJK

NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR: In Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Hurriyat leaders and organizations have extended warm greetings to the people as well as Government of Pakistan on the Pakistan Day. The All Parties Hurriyat Conference in a statement issued in Srinagar said that bonds of the people of Jammu and Kashmir with Pakistan are strong and multidimensional. The Kashmiris' love for the country, the statement added, is vindicated by the fact that they hoist Pakistani flags and celebrate the day in the valley of brutal firing by the Indian troops. Besides, they shroud the dead bodies of their martyrs in Pakistani flag. Other Hurriyat leaders, organizations and dig-

nities including Mufti Nasirul Islam, Shabir Ahmad Dar, Muhammad Ahsan Untoo, Mohammad Yousof Naqash, Bilal Siddiqui, Javid Ahmad Mir, Khawaja Firdous, Devinder Singh Behl, Abdul Ahad Parra, Yasmeen Raja, People's Freedom League, Youth Social and Justice League and Tehreek-e-Wahdat-e-Islami in their statements hoped that the people of Kashmir would soon get freedom from Indian yoke and celebrate the Pakistan Day along with the people of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, different functions were held while Pakistani flags were hoisted in Srinagar, Kulgam, Shopian and other parts of the

territory, today. Posters carrying pictures of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Prime Minister Imran Khan, and Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa were seen in the streets of the occupied territory. Kashmiri women and children sang Pakistan's National Anthem and raised pro-Pakistan songs during a function in Srinagar. A report released by Kashmir Media Service in connection with the Pakistan Day, today, said that a Kashmiri delegation had attended the big public event in Lahore on 23 March in 1940 and had announced on the occasion that Kashmiri people would be a part of future Muslim state in the re-

gion. The report maintained that top Hurriyat leaders including Syed Ali Gilani and Masarrat Aalam Butt have, all along, been openly raising pro-Pakistan slogans like 'Hum Pakistan Hain - Pakistan Hamara Hai' and 'Jeeway Jeeway Pakistan'. The Hurriyat forum led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, in a statement, said, positive shift in the relations between Pakistan and India is being observed with anticipation by the people of IIOJK. The statement said that the forum sees it as the first step in the direction of a meaningful dialogue for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir conflict. On the other hand, a gang of around 50 goons associated with Hindu extremist Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh attacked a Muslim Bakarwal family in Samba district, tortured men and molested female members.

261 killed in Myanmar military crackdown

WEB DESK

YANGON: At least 261 people have been killed in Myanmar since the military coup last month, said a civil society organization that works to secure the release of political prisoners in Myanmar. The Thailand-based Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said: "The actual number of casualties is likely much higher. We will continue adding as and when." As of Monday, a total of 2,682 people were arrested, charged or sentenced for protesting against the coup, said the group. In the crackdown, the military junta uses live ammunition with impunity, and assaults, arrests and kidnaps, it added. "They do this to spread fear, but people continue to protest," the group said. Myanmar's army seized power on Feb. 1, ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi and ending the country's brief experiment with democratic rule. In response to the coup, civilian groups across the country launched a civil disobedience campaign with mass demonstrations and sit-ins.

US lauds Pakistan's...

From Page 01

The phone call came just weeks before Washington is due to withdraw the last of its troops under a deal struck with the Afghan Taliban and Austin's unannounced trip to Afghanistan on Sunday. Kabul was the last stop on a whirlwind tour of Asia for the new Pentagon chief, a former career soldier who served in Afghanistan as a division commander from September 2003 until August 2005. Austin and his entourage flew into Afghanistan on a US-liveried aircraft instead of a military plane that usually carries US officials to the war-torn country.

British HC urges...

From Page 01

Noting that the UK border controls were "under constant review", he said it was possible for changes to take place at short notice. If they did, "direct flights could stop and hotel quarantining on arrival in England could be made mandatory". The coronavirus pandemic "means we can't celebrate occasions like Pakistan Day with the normal festivities that we used to, as part of our dosti [friendship]". "So wherever you are, I say Yaum-e-Pakistan Mubarak. You can follow updates on our social media and Travel Advisory pages as ever and please do keep safe and well and follow the SOPs," he said.

DRAP satisfied with Sputnik V...

From Page 01

the country but the importer objected to it and asked for a review. Umar, who is also the chief of Pakistan's COVID-19 body, said if the price fixed by the government is correct then any other company will import the medicine and if the objections raised by the firm are correct then the DRAP will reconsider its decision. He also said that the COVID-19 vaccine is available in the country and hundreds of thousands of doses are currently stored. "Pakistan would get around 60,000 doses of CanSino vaccine by March 26 and at the end of the current month, 10 million doses of Sinopharm would also arrive from China. So, we are not dependent on the Russian vaccine and the government is making arrangements for the vaccine."

Pakistan Day celebrated

From Page 01

that eventually led to the creation of Pakistan within seven years of its adaptation on August 14, 1947. The nation paid tributes to leaders of the Pakistan Movement including Father of the Nation, Muhammad Ali Jinnah and national poet, Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal for their matchless services for Pakistan.

Briefs

Germany declares lockdown until April 18

DNA

BERLIN: Germany has announced plans to extend lockdown restrictions until April 18 amid a sharp rise in the number of infections. "We have not yet been able to defeat the virus, it does not give up," Chancellor Angela Merkel said Tuesday morning in Berlin after 12-hour marathon consultations with the state premiers.

Germany is in a "very, very serious situation" with rising infections, heightened pressure on intensive care units, and the spread of more contagious variants, she added.

"We are in a race with vaccination and valued ally," said Merkel. Merkel pointed out that the country is "basically facing a new pandemic" with a new virus that is way more deadly and more infectious.

If an area has an incidence rate of over 100 for three consecutive days, harsher lockdown measures will once again apply.

The stricter lockdown over the Easter holidays comes amid calls by some health experts for a full lockdown with a night curfew. Merkel's coalition government is under intense public pressure for its handling of the pandemic crisis, especially when it comes to its slow vaccination program.

US says Turkey is 'long standing ally'

WEB DESK

ANKARA: Turkey is a "strong and valued ally," the US top diplomat said on Tuesday, asserting that it is in the interest of NATO to have Turkey in the bloc. "Turkey is a long standing and valued ally, and one that I believe we have a strong interest in keeping anchored to NATO. And I believe that's also in Turkey's interest as well," US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in Brussels.

His remarks came in an address with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg ahead of the NATO foreign ministers meeting. Blinken also said NATO has showed its effectiveness in dealing with some disagreement, especially in the Eastern Mediterranean, "serving as a vehicle for deconfliction, for de-escalation, for finding a way forward."

"I strongly believe that NATO has to be a platform where allies also sit down together, and then we address them, then we discuss them, and that's exactly what we try to do," he stated.

Spain to extend use of AstraZeneca vaccine

DNA

MADRID: Spain's public health commission on Tuesday agreed to extend the use of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine for people up to 65 years old. Previously it had only been used for people younger than 55.

The Spanish state TV network RTVE said the decision was taken in a meeting held to identify the groups of the population that should be administered the AstraZeneca vaccine after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said last Thursday that the vaccine was "safe and efficient" and that no links had been discovered between its use and an increased risk of blood clots.

Monday also saw the publication of the results of a trial involving 32,000 people in the U.S., Chile and Peru, which showed that the vaccine was 79 percent effective at preventing symptomatic illness and 100 percent effective against severe infection, and that there was no evidence it caused thrombosis. Spain had earlier joined other European countries, such as France, Italy and Germany, in suspending the use of this vaccine, but while most countries began administering the AstraZeneca jab almost immediately after the EMA's announcement, the Spanish Health Ministry gave the public health commission until this Wednesday to decide whether to make any changes to its policy.



MINSK: Pakistan ambassador to Belarus Sajjad Haider posing for the group photo with other guests on National Day of Pakistan flag-hoisting ceremony held at embassy of Pakistan. - DNA

Pakistan embassy in Belarus celebrates Pakistan Day

DNA

MINSK: To commemorate the national day of Pakistan, a flag-hoisting ceremony was held at the Residence of the Embassy of Pakistan, Minsk today on 23 March 2021. The ceremony was attended by Pakistani diaspora, students and few Belarusians from different walks of life.

Ambassador Sajjad Haider Khan raised the national flag to the tune of national anthem of Pakistan. Addressing the participants, he delivered the message from the Prime Minister of



Pakistan whereby a glowing tribute was paid to the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and that of the other leaders of the Independence Movement, whose unwavering struggle culminated in freedom for the Muslims of subcontinent.

Expressing the resolve to nurture Pakistan into a progressive Islamic society on the ideals of Riasat-e-Madina, the need for unity among nation during these testing times was underlined.

On the occasion, Pakistani children also sang Pakistani national songs.

Hit with sanctions, China, Russia push for UN summit

FOREIGN DESK

MOSCOW: Russia and China have called for a United Nations Security Council summit over what they term heightened "global political turbulence", which has seen Western powers impose fresh sanctions on the pair over alleged human rights violations.

The two allies, whose relations with the West are under increasing strain, made the call in a joint statement on Tuesday following talks in Beijing between Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi.

"At a time of increasing global political turbulence, a summit of the permanent members of the UN Security Council is particularly necessary to establish direct dialogue about ways to resolve humankind's common problems in the interests of maintaining global stability," said the statement, published on the Russian foreign ministry's website.

Moscow has long been unilaterally pushing for such a summit.

The joint statement came after the United States, European Union, United Kingdom and Canada imposed sanctions on a handful of Chinese officials on Monday for alleged human rights abuses against the country's Uighur population in

its northwestern Xinjiang province.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement that the united response "sends a strong signal to those who violate or abuse international human rights," as he warned, "further actions in coordination with like-minded partners".

China responded by imposing sanctions on 10 European individuals and four institutions that it said had damaged China's interests and "maliciously spread lies and disinformation".

Russia too is braced for a new round of US sanctions over what Washington says was its meddling in the 2020 US presidential election, which Moscow denies. Russia and China's joint statement also urged other countries to refrain from interfering in the pair's domestic affairs.

"Interference in a sovereign nation's internal affairs under the excuse of 'advancing democracy' is unacceptable," it said.

Commenting specifically on Monday's sanctions, Lavrov said Russia and China both regarded the measures as unacceptable.

Wang sharply criticised the moves, warning they would "not be embraced by the international community". "Countries should stand together to oppose all forms of unilateral sanctions," he said.

Pakistan National Day marked across the world

NEWS DESK

DUBAI: Pakistan day was observed in the Consulate General of Pakistan, Dubai and the Consul General of Pakistan Ahmed Amjad Ali hoisted the national flag whilst the audience recited the National Anthem. The Ambassador read the messages of President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. The messages were read out on the occasion.

The Consul General felicitated the Pakistani Community in UAE and recalled the struggle and sacrifices of the Muslims of the sub-continent under the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

Pakistan Day celebrates at Tokyo

The National Day of Pakistan was celebrated at the Embassy of Pakistan, To-

kyo with zeal, fervor and enthusiasm. The ceremony commenced with recitation from the Holy Quran followed by the National Anthem of Pakistan.

Ambassador Intiaz Ahmad hoisted the national flag whilst the audience recited the National Anthem. The Ambassador read the messages of President and Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Ambassador in his remarks paid homage to the father of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and all the other great leaders of the freedom movement who paved the way for the creation of Pakistan.

Pakistan Day marked in Paris

Pakistan embassy in Paris, France held the ceremony on Tuesday to celebrate Pakistan Day and pay hom-

age to Quaid-e-Azam for his struggle for a separate homeland.

Speaking on the occasion, Charge d'Affaires M. Amjad Aziz Qazi said the day changed the course of history as Muslims of the Indian subcontinent adopted a resolution at the annual session of All-India Muslim League on 23 March 1940. He said, "On this day, we pay homage to the Quaid and other leaders of Pakistan movement who made Pakistan a reality in just seven years after passing of the resolution."

Pakistan National Day observed in Turkey

Pakistan Embassy in Ankara observed National Day on Tuesday by hosting the country's flag and reaffirming its commitment to the "vision of its forefathers."

Ambassador Syrus Sajjad Qazi hoisted the flag to the tune of Pakistan's national anthem.

A limited number of Pakistani communities in the Turkish capital witnessed the flag hoisting ceremony due to local regulations of public gatherings in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. The messages of the president and prime minister of Pakistan were read out on occasion.

To mark the occasion, one of Ankara's landmarks, "Atakule," lit up in solidarity messages of Pakistan-Turkey relations on the nights of March 22 and 23. Besides, all the three bridges in Istanbul on the Bosphorus linking Asia with Europe would be illuminated in Pakistan flag colors on Tuesday evening.



TOKYO: Pakistan ambassador to Japan Intiaz Ahmad addressing after hoisting national flag on the occasion of National Day of Pakistan at the embassy of Pakistan. - DNA

Pak-UAE council announces steps to boost trade

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: FPCCI's Pak UAE Business Council (PUBC) held their first inaugural meeting today under the Chairmanship of Mr Diwan Fakhruddin and announced a new round of initiatives to take the trade relations between Pakistan and UAE to the next level. The meeting was attended by all the members of PUBC. Vice President of FPCCI Mr Nasir Khan graced the meeting with his presence signaling how important it is for FPCCI to spearhead the growth of trade between the two brotherly countries.

"Our relations with UAE are strong and Trade plays a major role in it and we need to now create a new road map to meet the changing needs of the UAE market sectors so as to grow both our exports to and imports from UAE" says Mr Diwan. He also emphasized on the fact that companies doing business in UAE has to ensure quality and position

itself "in building Brand Pakistan so as to effectively compete and enhance our market share in the UAE".

"FPCCI plays a major role in Pakistan's economy as export trade is the backbone hence PUBC will play an effective role through creating awareness and motivating FPCCI members to tap the emerging opportunities in UAE particu-

larly in food and technology" said Mr Diwan.

He also announced the following in the meeting:

Area of focus # 1: Creating a HELP DESK of PUBC which shall provide all the information and assistance to the Pakistani companies wanting to do business in UAE or importing from UAE. Area of focus # 2: A team shall

be created by the Chairman to analyse the trading data between UAE and Pakistan so as to derive necessary business intelligence to create the new roadmap for enhancing the trade between the two countries.

Area of focus # 3: How to build Brand Pakistan in UAE workshops and online seminars for the FPCCI members.

Area of focus # 4: Ensure we maximise the opportunities arising from Expo 2021 for the FPCCI members through the Pakistan pavilion, Asia-Pacific has two main hubs for traders; Singapore and UAE. The former is far and trade is relatively expensive there while the latter is closer and trade is quicker making it ideal for Pakistan. We can use this to our advantage and double our export.

The meeting was concluded with emphasis on Expo 2021. Mr. Diwan stated that this can be a gamechanger for Pakistan if we grab all opportunities that it has to offer. Companies and investors from all around the globe will be present and this will be our opportunity to showcase what Pakistan has to offer in terms of IT sector, agriculture, textile, tourism and much more. We urge all manufacturers in Pakistan especially in Gujarat, Sialkot and Gujranwala to participate in this exhibition, introduce themselves and help our economy grow.



Israel votes in fourth election in two years

FOREIGN DESK

TEL AVIV: Israel has gone to the polls for the fourth election in less than two years, with the nation still divided over whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu deserves to remain in office.

Polling stations were opening across Israel and in the occupied West Bank, with some 6.5 million registered voters set to deliver a result that could prolong the worst period of political gridlock in the country's history.

Israelis vote for parties, not individual candidates. During Israel's 72-year history, no single party list of candidates has been able to form a governing majority in the 120-seat Knesset.

Netanyahu has portrayed himself as a global statesman uniquely qualified to lead the country through its many security and diplomatic challenges.

He has made Israel's coronavirus-vaccination campaign the centrepiece of his re-election bid and pointed to last year's diplomatic agreements with four Arab states.

Opponents accuse Netanyahu of bungling the management of the coronavirus pandemic for most of the past year.

UN verifies 15 deaths in Rohingya fire

DNA

DHAKA: The UN has confirmed that 15 people were killed and over 550 were injured in Monday's deadly fire in Rohingya refugee camps in southern Bangladesh.

"It has been confirmed that 15 people have tragically lost their lives, and around 560 are injured," UNHCR communications officer in Bangladesh Louise Donovan told Anadolu Agency on Tuesday. She added that 400 are still missing.

"These numbers may increase," Donovan said in a message to media in the most devastating fire in the history of Rohingyas in Bangladesh, "around 45,000 people have been displaced, and approximately 10,000 shelters damaged or destroyed," the UN official added.

The fire erupted on Monday at around 3:30 p.m. local time (0930 GMT) and gutted thousands of makeshift tents of Rohingya until midnight.

After nine hours of efforts by the Fire Service and Civil Aviation and other agencies, the blaze was brought under control.

More than 1.2 million persecuted Rohingyas have been living in Bangladesh's camps, most of them fled the August 2017 brutal military crackdown in west Myanmar's Rakhine State.

AstraZeneca might rely on 'outdated' data

FOREIGN DESK

ANKARA: US federal health officials on Tuesday cast doubt on the efficiency of AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine, saying it may have relied on "outdated information."

The Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) informed the National Institute for Allergy and Infectious Diseases that the data released about the testing results "may have provided an incomplete view of the efficacy data."

"We urge the company to work with the DSMB to review the efficacy data and ensure the most accurate, up-to-date efficacy data be made public as quickly as possible," said the agency.

The statement came a day after AstraZeneca announced that its coronavirus vaccine is 79% effective against the symptomatic virus.

According to the findings from the phase 3 trials in the US, the jab also has 100% efficacy against severe or critical disease and hospitalization and is 80% effective in participants aged 65 and over.

AstraZeneca added that it would apply to the US Food and Drug Administration for emergency use authorization "in the coming weeks."

Briefs

70,000 doses of Convidecia to arrive

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The first consignment of a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine, Convidecia, developed by Chinese CanSino Biologics will arrive in Pakistan on March 25. After importing COVID-19 vaccines from Russia, the private sector is ready to bring the single-dose vaccine from China after getting its approval from the drug authorities in Pakistan. The technical adviser of a private pharmaceutical company, Dr Hassan Abbas has said that the Chinese COVID-19 vaccine developed by CanSino Biologics will reach Pakistan on March 25. As many as 70,000 doses of China's CanSino Biologics Inc's vaccine Convidecia will land in Pakistan on Thursday. Out of 70,000, 60,000 doses are said to be purchased by the Government of Pakistan. Dr Abbas detailed that the first consignment containing 10,000 doses of the single-dose Convidecia vaccine will arrive in the country on Thursday, whereas, the second consignment will arrive in Pakistan next month. CanSinoBio's Convidecia vaccine will be available in three hospitals in Lahore, Karachi and Islamabad. The representative of the pharmaceutical company added that the price of the Convidecia vaccine is Rs4,225.

Two-day meeting of PIC begins

DNA

NEW DELHI: A two-day meeting of Permanent Indus Commission began in New Delhi on Tuesday to discuss a host of issues between Pakistan and India related to water under the Indus Waters Treaty. Commissioner for Indus Waters, Syed Muhammad Meher Ali Shah will lead the Pakistan delegation at the negotiations. Pakistan will take up with India its objections on the designs of Pakal Dul and Lower Kalnai Hydroelectric Plants. Under the provisions of Indus Waters Treaty 1960, Permanent Indus Commission is required to meet at least once a year.

US vows to revitalize NATO ties

FOREIGN DESK

BRUSSELS: The US is committed to rebuild transatlantic ties and revitalize the alliance within NATO, the secretary of state said on Tuesday. "I've come here to express the United States' steadfast commitment to the alliance which has been the cornerstone of peace, prosperity and stability for the transatlantic community for more than 70 years," Anthony Blinken told a joint news conference with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg before the meeting of bloc's foreign ministers in Brussels. The US top diplomat also pointed out that they "want to revitalize the alliance to make sure it's as strong and effective against the threats of today as it has been in the past." Calling the new US secretary of state's first visit to the NATO headquarters a "unique opportunity to start a new chapter in the transatlantic relationship," Stoltenberg welcomed the Biden administration's determination to strengthen the alliance. The NATO chief reassured Blinken that he was "here not among allies but among friends," and stressed that "only Europe and America together in NATO" were able to face the security challenges of the 21st century.

Puppet show marking Sino-Pak friendship hailed

Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque welcomed the audience and congratulated Rafi Peer Art Theatre and CPAT on the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration

DNA

BEIJING : A puppet show was held here at the China Puppet Theatre to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Pakistan. According to China Economic Net (CEN), it was arranged on the occasion of World Puppetry Day. "There were a lot of characters, [and] many of them I didn't know before, but it was a very interesting thing and I'd go home and read the whole story," said the 11-year-old Pakistani boy Ali

Aaryan after enjoying the puppet show held in conjunction with the celebration of the Pakistan-China civilization and cultural heritage by puppets and related art here at China Puppet Art Theater (CPAT). Pakistani Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque welcomed the audience and congratulated Rafi Peer Art Theatre and CPAT on the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance collaboration in puppet art and cultural exchanges. The ambassador also stressed the need of cultural exchanges and people to

people contacts between the two countries. "It is the first time ever that traditional art of puppetry from our two countries has come together," noted Haque, adding that most importantly, this pattern of tradition and fraternity has been passed on to the next generation with the presence of so many children from China and Pakistan. The puppeteers of the Lahore-based Rafi Peer Theatre enthralled the audience with online performance while China Puppet Art Theater presented excerpts from Mermaid, Crane and Tortoise, The True Monkey

King and Happy New Year, of which The True Monkey King was rated highly by the audience. "Puppetry will create some synergies for our children because most of them like the show very, very much," commented Muhammad Junaid, a diplomat from Pakistani Embassy in China. "The show was amazing, especially The True Monkey King. It's now becoming famous in Pakistan as and it's just like our folklore," he added. "Pakistan and China share a very rich history of culture and heritage. Both civilizations date back to thou-

sands of years. The puppet shows are just the latest examples of the rich heritage both countries have," said Agha Hunain Abbas Khan, the third secretary form Pakistani Embassy in China, adding that he really like The True Monkey King and he put A Journey to the West into his todo list. Other diplomatic delegations were present at the show, including Malaysian Ambassador to China, Raja Nushirwan Zainal Abidin, Cambodian Ambassador to China, Khok Cai Mealy Sysoda, and Himalchuli Gurung, cultural program

officer of UNESCO Representative Office in China. On March 2, Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi launched 70 years of celebrations via a simultaneous virtual ceremony Islamabad and Beijing. The two countries also issued a logo to celebrate the occasion. This event officially started a series of commemorative activities throughout the year. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established on 21 May 1951.



KARACHI: Governor Sindh Imran Ismail and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah offering Fateha after laying floral wreath at Mazar-e-Quaid on the occasion of Pakistan Day. - DNA

President confers civil awards on personalities

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi on Tuesday conferred Pakistan civil awards on prominent personalities including foreign nationals in recognition of their services in different fields of life including medicines, education, social services, fine arts and for showing gallantry in the war against terrorism and during the coronavirus pandemic. During the investiture ceremony held here at the President House in connection with Pakistan Day, the President bestowed Nishan-Imtiaz on Sadeqain Naqvi (Arts, Painting, Sculpture), Prof. Shakir Ali (Arts, Painting), Zahoor ul Haq (Arts, Painting/Sculpture), Abida Parveen (Singing), Dr. Jameel Jalibi (Literature) and Ahmad

Faraz (Literature). He also conferred awards on following personalities: Hilal-Imtiaz was given to Prof. Dr. Anwar ul Hassan Gillani (Science/Pharmaceutical) while Dr. Asif Mahmood Jah and Syed Javed Anwar received the same award for their services to Pakistan. Sitara-i-Shujaat was given to the following citizens for their gallantry: Jawad Qamar, Safia Shaheed, Malik Hayatullah, Malik Sardar Khan Shaheed, Mumtaz Khan Shaheed, Hayatullah Khan Dawar Shaheed, Malik Muhammad Niaz Khan Shaheed, Sepoy Akhtar Khan Shaheed, Muhammad Naveed Sadiq, Mahar Muhammad Yasir Manzoor Shaheed, Shafiq Ullah Malik, Dr. Mustafa Kamal Pasha Shaheed and Prof. Hafiz Maqsood Ahmad Shaheed.

Pakistan records 3,270 new corona cases

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported 72 deaths in the last 24 hours by novel coronavirus as the number of positive cases has surged to 633,741. The nationwide tally of fatalities has jumped to 13,935 on Tuesday. According to the latest figures by the National Command and Operation Center (NCO), 3,270 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 24 hours. Sindh remains the worst-hit province by the pandemic in terms of cases followed by Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. Most numbers of casualties have been reported in Punjab. Till now 263,464 coronavirus cases have been confirmed in Sindh, 200,969 in Punjab, 80,519 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 19,347 in Balochistan, 52,676 in Islamabad, 11,792 in Azad Kashmir and 4,974 in Gilgit-Baltistan. Furthermore, 6,039 individuals have lost their lives to the epidemic in Punjab, 4,479 in Sindh, 2,225 in KP, 203 in Balochistan, 548 in Islamabad, 338 in Azad Kashmir and 103 in GB. Pakistan has so far conducted 9,857,233 coronavirus tests and 39,742 in the last 24 hours. 585,271 coronavirus patients have recovered in the country whereas 2,485 patients are in critical condition.

Country was harmed by imposing rulers: Zardari

DNA

KARACHI: Former president and Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) co-chairman Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that today is the day to reiterate our resolve to follow the ideology and philosophy of the founder of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. In a message on the Pakistan Day, Asif Ali Zardari felicitated the nation and said that on this day we should pay homage to the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country. The PPP chairman said that Quaid-e-Azam, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto taught us to love our country and the country cannot forget the leaders who gave the nation the nuclear and missile technology. He went on to say that the thinking of hatred and vendetta has harmed the country, adding that the country was also harmed by imposing rulers without the will of the people. Asif Zardari said, "We have to treat all units of Pakistan equally and this is the recipe of a strong, stable and developed Pakistan." "The state will be strengthened by following the constitution," he said and added the 18th amendment in the constitution is the assurance for stable and strong Pakistan with an inclusive federation.

Houthi fire drone at Saudi airport

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Yemen's Houthi forces launched a drone attack on an airport in southern Saudi Arabia, the Iran-aligned group's military spokesman said on Tuesday, a day after Riyadh presented a new peace initiative that includes a nationwide ceasefire. There was no immediate confirmation by Saudi authorities or the Saudi-led military coalition that has been battling the Houthis for six years, of an attack on Abha airport which has been repeatedly targeted by cross-border attacks. "Our operations will continue as long as the aggression and siege continue," Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said in a Twitter post. Saudi Arabia and the United States have urged the group to accept the ceasefire initiative which Riyadh said would also include reopening Sanaa airport and allow fuel and food imports through Hodeidah port, both of which are under Houthi control. The Houthis' chief negotiator had said that the Saudi offer fell short of their demand for a complete lifting of the air and sea blockade, but that the group would continue to talk to Saudi Arabia, the United States and mediator Oman in pursuit of a peace deal.

UN chief "concerned" over ethnical violence

DNA

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has voiced his "profound concern" over the rise of violence against Asians and people of Asian descent around the world during the coronavirus pandemic, a U.N. spokesman said. While the U.N. chief did not name any country, he spoke out following a shooting in Atlanta, capital of the U.S. state of Georgia, last week that left eight people dead, six of them Asian-American women. The shooting stoked fears among those in the Asian-American Pacific Islander community, which has reported a spike in hate crimes since March 2020 when then-President Donald Trump began referring to COVID-19 as the "China virus." The coalition "Stop AAPI Hate", which documents and addresses anti-Asian hate and discrimination amid the pandemic across the US, released data last month reporting that there were more than 2,800 first-hand accounts of hate crimes having taken place between late

March and the end of last year, across 47 states and Washington DC. Just over seven per cent of these incidents involved Asian Americans over 60 years old. The hashtag #StopAsianHate has spread widely across social media, drawing support from many public figures both inside and outside the community. US President Joe Biden condemned anti-Asian racism, during a solidarity visit to Atlanta in the wake of Tuesday's attack, noting that hate crimes had risen, and urged Congress to pass a hate-crimes bill introduced earlier this month, by two Asian-American legislators. "The world has witnessed horrific deadly attacks, verbal and physical harassment, bullying in schools, workplace discrimination, incitement to hatred in the media and on social media platforms, and incendiary language by those in positions of power", said the UN chief, in a statement issued through his deputy Spokesman Farhan Haq. In some countries, Asian women have been specifically targeted for attack, adding misogyny to the toxic mix of hatred", he continued.

Azerrbaijan President congratulates Pakistan

DNA

BAKU: President Ilham Aliyev has sent a congratulatory letter to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Arif Alvi on the occasion of March 23 - Pakistan Day. The letter stated, "Dear Mr. President, It is on the occasion of the 23 March - Pakistan Day that on my own behalf and on behalf of the people of Azerbaijan, I offer my most cordial congratulations and best wishes to you and through you, your brotherly people. The ties between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan stem from the will of our brotherly peoples bound with common historical, religious and cultural



roots. The present high level of our strategic partnership relations, resting on

such a solid foundation, is very gratifying. Our people greatly value Pakistan's resolute and unequivocal position on the restoration of Azerbaijan's territorial integrity and its unflinching support and solidarity for our just cause. I attach particular significance to the development of friendly and cooperative relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. I am confident that through our joint efforts, our inter-state relationship, based on mutual trust, support and solidarity, and our productive cooperation in bilateral and multilateral format will continue to progress and expand successfully. On this memorable day, I wish strong health, happiness and success to you and everlasting peace and prosperity to the brotherly people of Pakistan."

NAB Lahore declared as red zone

DNA

LAHORE: The Ministry of Interior on Tuesday approved a request by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) to declare their Lahore office a "red zone" and for security to be provided to the bureau on the day of PML-N Vice President Maryam Nawaz's hearing. Maryam has been summoned by National Accountability Bureau on March 26 in connection with the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case, as well as the purchase of land in Rawind. According to sources, the Punjab government's sub-cabinet committee on law and order approved the declaration of the NAB office as a red zone during Maryam's

appearance. NAB had cited fears of a possible attack on its building the day the PML-N leader is expected to appear. Sources said approval has been granted for Punjab Rangers and police personnel to be deployed within the National Accountability Bureau office and surrounding areas on March 25 and 26. Punjab Minister for Law Raja Basharat has said that no one will be allowed to take the law into their own hands and strict action will be taken against those who disturb law and order and violate coronavirus safety protocols. Pakistan Democratic Movement chief Fazlur Rehman, in a gesture of support on Sunday, said that during Maryam's hearing with NAB, the opposition alliance will show up in an act of solidarity with the PML-N leader.

Afghan president to offer election in six months

Ghani will unveil his proposal at an international gathering in Turkey next month, signalling his refusal to accept Washington's plan for his elected government to be replaced by an interim administration

DNA

KABUL: Afghan President Ashraf Ghani will propose a new presidential election within six months, under a peace plan he will put forward as a counter-offer to a United States proposal that he rejects, two senior government officials told Reuters. Ghani will unveil his proposal at an international gathering in Turkey next month, signalling his refusal to accept Washington's plan for his elected government to be replaced by an interim administration, the officials said. Washington, which agreed last

year to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan by May 1 after nearly two decades, is pressing for a peace deal to end the war between the government and the Taliban. Talks between the Afghan sides in Qatar have stalled. US Special Envoy Zalmay Khalilzad has been circulating a proposal that would replace the Kabul government with an interim administration. But Ghani has voiced vehement opposition to any solution that requires his government to step aside for unelected successors. "The counterproposal which we are going to present at the Istanbul meeting would be to call for



early presidential elections if the Taliban agree on a ceasefire," one senior government official said on condition of anonymity. Another Afghan government of-

ficial said: "The president would never agree to step aside and any future government should be formed through democratic process, not a political deal." A third senior official also said Ghani's proposal would include possible early elections, although he did not specify the exact time frame for the vote. The third official said Ghani had already shared his road map with Khalilzad. With just weeks left before a deadline it agreed with the Taliban last year to end the longest war in U.S. history, Washington is seeking regional backing for its approach to push the Kabul government and

insurgents to share power. But diplomats and foreign officials have said it will be difficult to move forward with the US plans without Ghani's support. During a visit to the region, which included stops in Doha and Islamabad, Khalilzad pushed for a conference to be hosted by Turkey with involvement from the United Nations next month. The Afghan officials said that as part of Ghani's counter-proposal, his government would ask the UN to closely observe the new election to ensure it is accepted by all sides. A presidential palace spokesman declined to comment.