



Islamabad POST

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First Lady attends Serena Hotels' Int'l Women Day event

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NCOC to review its decision on reopening schools

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Meghan Markle accuses royal family of racism

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Briefs

Govt to empower women

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz said on Monday that empowerment of women was imperative to make society civilized and enlightened. In a tweet on the occasion of International Women's Day he said, "We are committed to empowering women in society by ensuring equal opportunities and rights for development". He said that Islam has given women rights unparalleled in history and their rights are guaranteed in the constitution of Pakistan.

Siraj-ul-Haq demands ban on dowry

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Emir Siraj-ul-Haq has demanded complete ban on dowry and other un-Islamic and anti-constitutional traditions in Pakistani society on occasion of International Women's Day on Monday. Addressing "Istehkam-e-Khandan-Growth Protection of Family Institution" rally at Lahore's Mall Road, he also called for ensuring protection of women at workplaces and educational institutions. The JI women chapter organized rallies in all major cities including Lahore on women day.

Women's participation necessary

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Punjab on Information Dr Firdous Ashiq Awan on Monday while paying tribute to women on the occasion of International Women's Day said that women are the country's "valuable asset" and their participation is pivotal for building a progressive society. Talking to a private news channel, she said International women day reminds us that women are vital entity of a family and first teacher to the child, adding, PTI-led government was to ensure inclusion of women in every sphere.

PTI senators receiving bribe offers, says PM

"These people first spend money to get elected and then spend the same money [on illegal activities]," said PM Imran

ANSAR MAHMOOD BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: The election for the post of Senate chairperson hasn't already begun and PTI senators are being offered money to sell their votes, claimed Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday. The prime minister was chairing a meeting of the party's members where he said that the recently-held Senate elections proved the suspicions that the PTI government had. "The Opposition used money to win the Islamabad seat," he said, referring to Dr Abdul Hafee Shaikh's surprise loss to former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani. The prime minister urged party representatives to highlight the issue of the Opposition allegedly buying votes in the Senate elections, adding that the PPP and the PML-N have been using money as a tool to influence elections in the past as well. "These people first spend money to get elected and then spend the same money [on illegal activities]," said PM Imran Khan. The premier continued his criticism of the

Govt has 'solid evidence' of corruption

ZUBAIR AHMED

ISLAMABAD: The government will present "solid evidence" regarding corrupt practices allegedly adopted by the opposition during the Senate election and will present it before the court and the Election Commission Pakistan (ECP) at an appropriate time, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shibli Faraz said on Monday. Talking to a private channel, the information minister alleged that the PPP spent billions of rupees to ensure the victory of Yousaf Raza Gilani in the Senate poll for the Islamabad general seat. The minister said the entire nation knew how Ali Haider Gilani was buying votes for his father. He said the vote of confidence obtained by Prime Minister Imran Khan from the National Assembly has embarrassed the opposition.

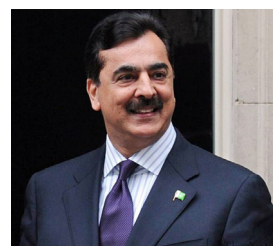
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PDM names Gilani for Senate chairman

"We want the Chairman Senate to win the election and claim another victory," Bilawal vowed

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) on Monday approved the name of newly-elected Senator Yousuf Raza Gilani as the joint candidate of the opposition alliance for the Senate chairman. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman chaired a meeting of PDM leaders at Sindh House in Islamabad which was attended by Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Paki-



stan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) vice president Maryam Nawaz and others. Speaking during the PDM meeting headed by its chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Bilawal Bhutto said that they were given the challenge to ensure an upper hand in Senate and they had suc-

cessfully achieved it. "I congratulate all of you over the victory," he said and added as to what would have happened if they had boycotted the Senate polls if PPP had not intervened. The PPP Chairperson addressing the PDM important meeting said, "We were challenged to prove our numerical superiority in the Senate, in which we won." "Think, where we would stand if we had boycotted the by-elections and Senate elections, Bilawal Bhutto asked the various parties' leadership.

Continued on Page 06



ISLAMABAD: Mr. Wouter Plomp, Ambassador of Kingdom of the Netherlands called on Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Health Dr. Faisal Sultan. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: European Union's Ambassador to Pakistan, Ms. Androulla Kaminara called on President Dr Arif Alvi, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. – DNA

COAS lauds services of women for nation

Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar shared the army chief's message on twitter

SHUJAAT HAMZA

Zalmai meets COAS

STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, in his statement on the International Women's Day, on Monday said Pakistani women contributed immensely for glory and honor of our nation. Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) Major General Babar Iftikhar shared the army chief's message on twitter. The COAS said women are also at forefront against covid-19.

RAWALPINDI: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation and General Austin Scott Miller, Commander Resolute Support Mission* in Afghanistan, called on General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) at GHQ on Monday. According to an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement, matters of mutual interest, regional security and ongoing Afghanistan Reconciliation Process were discussed during the meeting. The visiting dignitary greatly appreciated Pakistan's role in the ongoing peace process, it added.

Women in uniform have proved their mettle by contributing copiously in diverse fields serving the nation and humanity, General Bajwa said while adding that they deserve our immense respect and gratitude. This year's theme for the International Women's Day was "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". Besides celebrating women's achievements, the Day also aims to raise awareness about women's equality, lobby for accelerated gender parity.

Five 'BLA terrorists' killed in Mastung

BUREAU REPORT

QUETTA: The Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) killed five suspected terrorists said to be associated with the outlawed BLA in Balochistan's Mastung, security officials said on Monday. According to sources within the CTD, when the police reached a house in Mastung, the terrorists hiding there opened fire at the personnel. Five of the terror suspects were killed when the police returned fire. Others managed to flee. 10 kilogrammes of explosives, detonators, and three Kalashnikovs were seized from their possession. The raid was conducted following information provided by an arrested suspect, CTD officials said, adding the terrorists were planning an attack in Quetta. The police are conducting raids to arrest the accomplices of the killed terrorists.

SC never rules about hearing's live broadcast

Justice Qazi Faez Isa's filed an application seeking live TV coverage of the proceedings

APP

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has never given ruling that live broadcast of hearings was media's right however the apex court always spoke for the freedom of media. Additional Attorney General Amair Rehman argued on Monday while opposing Justice Qazi Faez Isa's plea for live broadcast of his review proceedings before a 10-member SC bench. Justice Qazi Faez Isa's filed an application seeking the apex court permission to allow live TV coverage of the proceedings of his review petition against the majority judgment that had referred the matter of his family's properties to the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for inquiry.

On June 19, 2020, seven judges of a bench quashed a presidential reference against Justice Isa but also ordered the FBR to conduct an inquiry into the judge's family members' foreign assets and submit a report to the Supreme Judicial Council (SJC). During the course of proceedings, Additional Attorney General questioned the maintainability of application of Justice Isa and argued that the court could not decide such matters while hearing the review petition. Article 184/3 could not be applied in the review case, he added. He said that no new position could be taken in the review cases.

Continued on Page 06

Matsuda grieved over train accident

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Matsuda Kuninori, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, has expressed his condolences and profound grief over the incident of Lahore-bound train derailment near Rohri station that claimed the life of a passenger and left many others injured. In his message of condolences, Ambassador MATSUDA on Monday said he feels saddened over this unfortunate train derailling incident in Pakistan and offers his condolences and deep sympathies to the grieving families. "I heard the news with deep sorrow and offer my sympathies to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery for the injured in the incident," said Ambassador MATSUDA.

COVID-19 claims 22 more lives

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The national tally on Monday of total active COVID-19 cases recorded 18,415 with 1,592 more people tested positive for the deadly virus and 1,038 people recovered from the disease during the last 24 hours. Twenty-two corona patients have died during past 24 hours, who were under treatment in hospital, according to the latest update issued by the National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC). During the last 24 hours most of the deaths had occurred in the Punjab followed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

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Briefs

NFC award weakened the infrastructure

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: PML-Q Deputy Secretary Information Khawaja Rameez Hassan has said that 18th Amendment and NFC award weakened the infrastructure of the state. The development of the country is possible with the establishment of a presidential system of government and strong local bodies. Past governments have ridiculed the constitution on the basis of party majority and prolonged their rule by distorting its true form. The biggest disadvantages of the 18th Amendment were the elimination of uniform education system and the promotion of provincialism on linguistic grounds. Which really weakened the federation.

Dist admin sealed 18 marriage halls

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: The district administration has sealed 18 marriage halls in one day for violating the Marriage Act and Corona SOPs, besides registered cases against 14 persons and imposed heavy fines on the management of one marriage hall. According to details, on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali, the Assistant Commissioners checked the marriage halls across the district and during the marriage ceremonies for violating the Marriage Act and Corona SOPs, Quresh Marriage Hall One and Two Millat Road, Cottage Marriage Hall Daewoo Road, Canal Palace, Sheraton, Zoom, Koh-i-Noor, Victoria Executive, Lyallpur Gymkhana, Royal Palm, Victoria, Crown, Qullim, Taj Mahal and other marriage halls have been sealed. Deputy Commissioner directed the ACs to check the marriage halls on daily basis and in case of violation cases should be registered against their management and the violation of Corona SOPs will not be tolerated at all.

Abacus appoints Fatima Asad as CEO

STAFF REPORT

LAHORE: Abacus a leading technology, consulting, and outsourcing firm, announced that its Board of Directors has appointed Fatima Asad Khan as Chief Executive Officer effective immediately. Whilst Asad Ali Khan continues as Chairman of the Board, he will no longer serve as the CEO. Also, Muhammad Aamer Chaudhary shall assume the role of Vice Chairman of the Board. Abbas Khan and Paul Batchelor shall continue as non-executivemembers of the Board of Directors and Aliya Haider as Corporate Secretary.

Over the last 24 years with Abacus, Fatima has been an integral member of the top leadership at Abacus and spearheaded major strategy and technology initiatives across the firm's portfolio, most notably delivering solutions in Digital Transformation, Enterprise Innovation, Corporate Governance, Strategic Change and Human Capital Management.

"During this time of rapid transformation, Fatima Asad Khan is clearly the best person to lead the firm. Fatima has the track record of leading with innovation and creating value for our stakeholders that we believe is critical to lead Abacus," said Asad Ali Khan, Abacus' Chairman of the Board. "We are on a positive growth trajectory at Abacus, and I am confident that this realignment of Abacus' corporate governance framework shall enable us to innovate at a faster pace with improved capabilities and offerings for our clients, and we would be able to ensure sustainable growth, consistent with our vision and strategy." As a pioneer in the consulting, outsourcing, and technology space, he added, "The impact Abacus has made on our people's lives and collectively on our client's business is undeniable, and I can see a glorious future ahead as we continue to reinvent ourselves and be the transformation partner of choice for our clients and partners."



ISLAMABAD: Senator Faisal Javed and Senator Zeeshan Khanzada called on Prime Minister Imran Khan. – DNA

WPC, UNFPA organize special event to pay tribute to WWDs

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Women Parliamentary Caucus (WPC) in collaboration with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on Monday organized a special event here at Parliament House for paying tribute to the achievements and successful life of 'Women with Disabilities' (WWDs) under the theme "Women Leadership in Achieving an equal future in a Covid-19 world".

Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser was the chief guest on the occasion while Deputy Speaker Qasim Khan Suri, Secretary WPC MNA Munaza Hassan, parliamentarians, diplomats, Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan and a large number of WWDs also attended the event.

Addressing the participants, Speaker NA Asad Qaiser said that National Assembly was committed to support effective implementation of rights based legislation for persons with disabilities and women with disabilities that would also be included in decision making processes.

He said that persons with disabilities are our priority and recently constituted special committee on disability in parliament will make sure that rights of persons with disabilities are not violated in the country, adding that women with disabilities in Pakistan will be included in the parliamentary systems very soon.

"I congratulate all the mothers, daughters and sisters on this very precious day being celebrated all over the world with highlighting success stories all those women who



contributed their efforts in bringing their recognition in the society", he said.

Speaker said the main agenda of the government was to provide equal opportunities to person's with disabilities (PWD's), adding that vaccination was also being provided on immediate basis to per-

sons with disabilities. He said equal rights would be given to persons with disabilities in any sector including health and education.

Electric wheel chairs were also distributed among deserving persons on the occasion.

Secretary WPC, Munaza

Hassan said, "The rights of persons with disabilities bill will protect the rights of PWDs in the country."

She said it will become a law in our regime and persons with disabilities in the country will enjoy their life as equal citizen having access to education and employ-

ment opportunities.

Director Special Talent Exchange Program (STEP) Abia Akram, Zala Qaiser daughter of Speaker National Assembly, Lina Mousa, Country Representative UNFPA Pakistan and Atif Sheikh Executive Director STEP also spoke on the occasion.



LAHORE: Belarus ambassador to Pakistan Andrei Metelitsa, on his trip to Lahore, met with Pakistani businessman at the Consulate of Belarus in Lahore. A fruitful exchange on the possibility of establishing joint ventures in the field of automotive and agricultural equipment occurred. – DNA

Coca-Cola's 5by20 program concludes

STAFF REPORT

KARACHI: The Coca-Cola Company recently marked the monumental success of its 5by20 program, which empowered 1.2 million additional women beneficiaries from its original decade long target of economically empowering 5 million women by 2020. The 5by20 program was implemented in more than 150 countries around the world. In Pakistan, more than 10,000 women beneficiaries were economically empowered as part of this program in a strategic partnership between Coca-Cola Pakistan and Kashf Foundation. This achievement resonated more strongly when it was formally announced at the International Women's Day Monday, March 08, 2021 during a special panel discussion hosted at The Coca-Cola Export Corporation's head office in Lahore following the topic of 'women in leadership'.

Accomplished women from various fields of life participated in this panel discussion in person and through virtual attendance including Afia Salam, Chairperson at Indus Earth Trust, Lubna Bhayat, Former President at Women Chamber of Commerce, and Bushra Khanum, Senior Manager at Kashf Foundation. Top management officials from The Coca-Cola Export Corporation also participated in this event including Fa-

had Ashraf, VP and General Manager for Pakistan and Afghanistan region and Asmara Noman, Human Resource Director for Pakistan and Afghanistan region.

The idea of sustainability served at the heart of this strategic partnership between Coca-Cola and Kashf Foundation. To ensure a long-standing impact of this collaboration, the 10,000 Pakistani women who benefitted from this program were taught new skills through vocational trainings which included football stitching, rali making and transforming recyclable waste material into sellable handicraft products.

In addition, these women entrepreneurs were also trained on crucial areas of business management including preparation of budget, promoting their products through social media/e-commerce platforms, and provision of micro loans, which significantly altered their socioeconomic milieu.

While speaking about this accomplishment, Fahad Ashraf, General Manager and VP at The Coca-Cola Export Corporation for Pakistan and Afghanistan region said, "Since 2015, The Coca-Cola Foundation (TCCF) has invested over USD 1 million in Pakistan under the 5by20 program to economically empower thousands of women entrepreneurs so they can earn a decent living for themselves and their families."

Islam is the protector of women rights: Tahir Ashrafi

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Religious scholars and leadership of different religious schools of thought said that Islam is protector of women's rights and advocated stern action against all those elements responsible for underage marriages and depriving girls from their rights of education.

Addressing at 'Pakistan Stability Ulemas-Mashaykh Convention' which held here on Monday in aegis of Pakistan Ulema Council,

the clerics said that Islam and teachings of Quran-o-Sunnah commands for girls education and there is no space for underage marriages in Islamic Shariah. Islam does not allow forceful conversions, said clerics. The clerics and religious scholars also pledged to support and endorse Prime Minister Imran Khan to make Pakistan a state on the pattern of Medina Munawara.

Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Chairman Pakistan Ulema Council, Special Aide to Prime



Minister on Religious Harmony and Middle East chaired the Pakistan Stability Ulemas-Mashaykh Convention.

The religious scholars speaking with the convention said that registration process of seminaries will be complet-

ed ahead of new academic year for seminaries. They said that establishment of new examination boards for seminaries will strengthen the Madaris.

The clerics also demanded of Chief Election Commissioner to stop the use of money in elections. Addressing the Pakistan Stability Ulema-Mashaykh Convention, the clerics said that Islam and teachings of Quran-o-Sunnah have stressed on education for girls and underage marriages are not permissible in Islam.

DC Faisalabad hails govt policies to uplift women

ISHFAQ MUGHAL

FAISALABAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ali has said that due to the efforts of the government and social sector the confidence of women has increased and they are seen working in every field, women belonging to the public and private sectors were provided services on the front foot during the covid 19 whose greatness is being saluted by district administration. He said this while distributing certificates among women on the occasion of International Women's Day.

In-charge Control Room Muhammad Sadiq and other officers were also present. The

Deputy Commissioner said that the Punjab government was taking priority measures to give women their rightful place in the society and to provide protection to them and the purpose of the program is to raise social awareness to advance the development initiatives of this important section of the society. He said that Islam has also commanded to ensure protection of women's rights and only by empowering women can the goal of social development be achieved. In this regard, apart from the overall welfare measures for women, the district administration is providing a safe and peaceful environment for working women.

'Sufferings of Kashmiri women go unabated'

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Kashmir Committee Shehryar Khan Afridi on Monday said the miseries and sufferings of Kashmiri women at the hands of brutal Indian forces continued to go unabated. In his message on the occasion of International Women's Day, he urged the world to pressurize India to end plight of women in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

"Kashmiri women are not safe in their own houses. They are true face of resistance in IOJK," he tweeted.

He further added that Indian forces were using rape as tool of genocide in Kashmir to break resolve of Kashmiris for freedom from Indian illegal occupation as women teach their kids to fight oppression. – APP

Daraz launches Ibtida

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: Daraz, the leading E-Commerce platform in Pakistan, has announced the launch of "Ibtida" on this International Women's Day with the mission to empower local female entrepreneurs on its platform. Ibtida is a program that will enable women to establish online shopping stores on Daraz and take advantage of the platform's hundreds of thousands daily active users, generate higher sales and grow their businesses.

This initiative is a promising source of sustainable income for small and large business owners to get access to e-commerce technology during these challenging economic times and will empower females to run their own stores while sitting at home. Daraz as a platform has spearheaded successful seller empowerment initiatives previously as well and given financial support of up to PKR 8 crore during COVID lockdown and supported 45,000+ sellers previously. With the launch of Ibtida, Daraz aims to empower specifically women, who otherwise might not get as many opportunities to sell with ease in the offline markets due to societal pressure and cultural norms.

Through this program, Daraz offers 0% commission, free packaging and storage to female sellers for the 90-day incubation period.

The sellers will also have access to Daraz University which is a customized learning center to help sellers belonging to different cohorts improve their performance. Register for Online Selling in Pakistan with Daraz Today!

Additionally, through business performance manager sellers will also have access to insights from seller marketplace business performance tools.

Waqar presents tax proposals to government

DNA

LAHORE: Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka has mailed the necessary recommendations for Income Tax 2022-2021 to the government.

According to reports, Waqar Zaka in his recommendations has made the transaction of crypto currency and payment of tax on it a topic of discussion. In this regard, Chairman Technology Movement Pakistan Waqar Zaka said that after the explanation of SBP, since cryptocurrency is legal in Pakistan and people are also transacting this currency, the government should tax those who trade cryptocurrency.

Benefit the national treasury by receiving. Waqar Zaka has also discussed in detail the method of tax collection in his recommendations. He said that if any response is received from the government, then Technology Movement Pakistan is ready for full cooperation.



LAHORE: A large number of women participating in 'women walk' on the eve of International Women's Day organized by Jamaat e Islami women wing. –DNA

Briefs

HEC announces PhDs' interim placement

ATHAR SUFI

ISLAMABAD: The Higher education Commission (HEC) has announced Phase-II (Batch-II) of the Interim Placement of Fresh PhDs (IPFP) Program, initiated to provide all Pakistani fresh PhD graduates an opportunity to be placed as Assistant Professors on a tenure track system for a period of one year. Under the Programme, HEC has invited applications for the fiscal year 2021-22 as 'IPFP Fellows' in all areas of study/disciplines. Deputy Director National Academy of Higher Education (NAHE), Mehwish Jabbar told MEDIA that due to increase in the number of PhD holders, there was growing demand for such interim opportunities. HEC has given final deadline for the submission of application as March 31, 2021, she added. She urged that candidates should fill required information online, upload mandatory documents and apply at HEC e-portal <http://eportal.hec.gov.pk/ipfp>.

Capital's healthy serene vibes revives

IMRAN TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: The air quality in the federal capital on Monday was recorded healthy and clean as harmful ambient pollutants dropped after recent rain broke the prolonged dry spell since January in the metropolis. Director General Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (DG Pak-EPA) Farzana Altaf Shah told APP that Islamabad has got the best air quality recorded on Monday as not only Oxides of Sulphur and Nitrogen rather suspended particulate matter of 2.5 microns (PM 2.5) was also below the permissible limits. "It is one of factor that the Capital had received a mild shower but the efforts to control air pollution have already been going on to contain the risk," she added. Otherwise, she said if the pollutants ratio had been on very higher side already before shower, the pollutants level would not have lowered as reported today.

Court adjourns reference against Zardari

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Monday adjourned hearing till March 15, on Thatha Water Supply Scheme reference against former president Asif Ali Zardari and others. AC-II Judge Muhammad Azam Khan adjourned hearing of the reference connected with fake accounts scam without further proceeding due to the lawyers' strike. The court also granted one-day exemption from hearing to Asif Ali Zardari, Abdul Ghani Majeed and Nadeem Bhutto on their lawyers' request. National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Prosecutor Irfan Bhola and a prosecution witness also appeared before the court. Meanwhile, an employee of Asif Ali Zardari associated with Zardari House Islamabad Amjadikhlq approached Islamabad High Court (IHC) challenging the NAB's call up notice through his lawyer Farouk H. Naek. The petitioner had stated that he had no connection with any transaction of fake bank accounts and the NAB call up notice for March 12, was baseless. Previously, the notice was served to him for February 17, but he sought time from National Accountability Bureau (NAB) due to sickness. However, he was again served call up notice for March 12. The petition prayed the court to stop NAB action against him and grant him post arrest bail in the matter.



ISLAMABAD: Wives of the Italian and Palestine ambassadors taking interest in various items displayed on the occasion of International Women Day at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

Speakers illustrate women role in nation building

This was closely followed by Dr. Humaira Shahbaz from Persian Department whom spoke Iqbal's on message for women and she concluded with Iqbal's statement: "The fate of a nation can be read from the forehead of its mothers"

ZUBAIR AHMAD

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on Women's Day, illustrated the pivotal role of women and their continued struggle for nation building in Pakistan. The seminar was organized by the department of International Relations of National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad to commemorate the International Women's Day. Several distinguished speakers spoke on the occasion. Prof. Dr. Safer Awan, Pro Rector Academics NUML said, "Women's movement is divided across the ideological spec-

trum. But the good thing is that all women come together on international women's day." He also said biases against the women are more deep rooted in language and culture. The gate keepers of honor and culture exploit women's bodies for their narrow ideological politics. However, the positive thing is that social consciousness about women's rights is increasing in the right direction. Covering the topic



of Women's Leadership Role in 21st Century, Dr. Rizwana Abbasi HOD IR department said, that to lead successfully in this century and beyond, we need trans-personal leaders who are ethical, authentic and lead without egocentricity by setting aside personal desire for power. In today's complex world women's inherited attributes will set them up to spearhead the transformation of leadership in twenty first cen-

tury. This was closely followed by Dr. Humaira Shahbaz from Persian Department whom spoke Iqbal's on message for women and she concluded with Iqbal's statement: "The fate of a nation can be read from the forehead of its mothers." Dr. Sobia Saleem of Urdu department and Dr. Asma Naveed of Russian Department also shared thoughts on the occasion on Women in Urdu Novel and Women Emancipation and Socio-economic development in Pakistan. It may as well be noted that NUML already entertains and upholds gender equity principles where its faculty consists of 45% females and 45% of its students comprise of young women as well.

Activities organized on Women's Day by UNHCR

RAJA PERVAIZ

ISLAMABAD: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency marks International Women's Day in Pakistan with several activities jointly organized with refugees, UN Women and other partners. March 8 is a day celebrating the achievements of women globally and raising awareness about the importance of gender equality. In recognition of the important role that women have played in the response to COVID-19, the theme of International Women's Day in 2021 is "Women in leadership: Achieving an equal future in a COVID-19 world". UNHCR's Representative in Pakistan, Noriko Yoshida, expressed her solidarity with all women, but particularly with refugee women in Pakistan, who are active in the service of their communities and bravely making a difference for all. "Since the outbreak of COVID-19 last year, until now, I have seen daily examples of women leading the way to deliver care in our communities. Women working as doctors and nurses, and also in other critical response services. Their bravery in the face of personal danger was and is inspiring. Women not only play important roles in our commu-



nities, they are real heroes," she said. In Islamabad, UNHCR is holding a virtual event on the importance of mental health support during the COVID-19 pandemic and in response to the multiple ways, it has impacted individuals and families. A psychologist, female refugees and local youth will participate as speakers. An Afghan community elder is also delivering remarks to advocate for girls' education and greater participation of women in community roles. In Haripur, UNHCR, in cooperation with GIZ and IMC, is presenting 'change-maker certificates and gifts to women and men who have made important contributions to their communities, including community Outreach Volunteers, teachers, health workers and entrepreneurs. In Quetta, UNHCR, UN Women and FAO are co-organizing an event, in collaboration with the Women Development Department, to highlight stories of different initiatives and efforts that made a difference in the response to COVID-19 in Balochistan. In Chaghi, UNHCR and its partner WESS, are holding an open forum together with the participation of male community members to discuss how community awareness can be successful in preventing and ending violence against women.

Dar lauds women' role in national development

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: PTI leader Usman Dar Monday lauded role of women for political, economic and social development of the country. In a message in connection with the International Women' Day, he said the women' participation was essential in national development through provision of equal opportunities to them in socio-political and other spheres of the nation building. The provision of suitable working environment and better opportunities to women was improved as compared to the past decades. However, there was a room to further empower and facilitate women by enabling them to play a leading role for the development of the country, Dar said. Usman Dar said "Women' commitment to move forward despite challenges is encouraging," adding the government was making efforts to ensure safe working environment for the women.

Govt to lift 7 million women out of abject poverty: Sania

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to Prime Minister (SAPM) Dr. Sania Nishtar on Monday said that the government was committed to lift seven million underprivileged women out of abject poverty enabling them to utilize their abilities as a productive citizen. In a message Dr. Sania Nishtar said, "A country cannot thrive when half of its population is not educated and unable to fulfill their potentials. Therefore, at its core, Ehsaas program aims to lift the 7 million poorest women in Pakistan out of poverty and help them to achieve their potential." She said, "Ehsaas program is a pioneering anti-poverty program in the country that aims to change this reality and ensure that all women, irrespective of their background, have the opportunity to succeed. There are currently over 250 policies under the umbrella of Ehsaas, many of which are designed to specifically target women." – DNA



MURREE BREWERY

Estd. 1860

MURREE BREWERY Company Limited

POLO MATCH

2021

Prestigious 117th M.P. Bhandara Memorial Murree Brewery Polo Cup Final 2021 being played at Rawalpindi Polo Ground, Peshawar Road Rawalpindi on 14th March 2021 at 16:00 hrs. All Polo enthusiasts, Dilpomats & friends of Murree Brewery Company are requested to please honour the occasion with their presence.

MBC Invitation Committee

Please contact on the following

Telephone No. to confirm in case of inclement weather:

M.Khalid 0300-9180345

Maj® Sabih-Ur-Rehman 0300-8553342

Farasat Kazmi 0334-5149009

Noman Shaw Chohan 0344-5430821

Briefs

Govt to provide a secure environment to women

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) celebrated International Women Day here on Monday with a theme, "One can be anyone", to mark the day. Speaking on the occasion as Chief Guest Senator Fozia Arshad said that the PTI-led government was committed to ensuring a secure and enabling environment for women to play their due role in the national economy and country's development.

She said our struggle was to provide equal opportunity and a platform for women to get excel in their fields and in policy making. Fauzia lauded the role of RCCI for organizing such tremendous events and said that the Chamber's approach towards women empowerment can be beneficial for those who wanted to start their businesses. Speaking on the occasion President RCCI Mohammad Nasir Mirza said that no nation can make progress without the progress of women.

"Rawalpindi Chamber always welcomed women to participate in Chamber's activities to bring change in businesses, adding RCCI also established an incubation center for businesswomen to provide an equipped place for women to display their products and hold meetings to promote their businesses," he said.

Earlier Convener of the event Ms. Noreen Ghaffar gave a detailed presentation on RCCI key initiatives for providing opportunity and platform for women entrepreneurs.

Chairperson CCP Ms. Rahat Kaunain, Business Women, Ms. Musrat Misbah, and USAID PREIA Ms. Hassan Bano also spoke on the occasion and shared their success stories. – APP

CDA to start operation against encroachment

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is conducting operations against illegal constructions and encroachments.

According to details, the administration of CDA is conducting large scale operation against illegal occupation and illegal constructions. Land grabbers illegally occupied plots worth billions of rupees in I-8 Markaz and IJP Road. The valuable plots have been handed over. The operation against the land grabbers is being supervised by the Enforcement Department of CDA.

PAL celebrates International Women Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A seminar entitled "Ahl-e-Qalam Women's" and "Poetry of Pakistani Languages" was organized by the Pakistan Academy of Letters (PAL) on the occasion of International Women Day here on Monday.

The Programme presided over by Parveen Tahir.

Wajihah Qamar, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education & Professional Training, was the Chief Guest. Mahjabeen Ghazal Ansari from U.K was the guest of honor. Dr. Yousuf Khushk, Chairman, PAL presented the welcome address. Fakhra Batool, Dr. Sofia Yousaf, Dr. Farhat Jabeen Virk, Dr. Fakhra Noureen, Yasmeen Hameed Shahid and Manila Nadeem also addressed the seminar.

Later, a mushaira of Pakistani languages was held in which poetess representing Pakistani languages presented their poetry. Mushaira was moderated by Dur-e-Shehwar Tauseef. Wajihah Qamar, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education & Professional Training, addressing the gathering, said that women writers have played an important role in promoting peace and tolerance in the country. "We need to give women creators equal opportunities with men so that they can play a full role in all walks of life," she said.

Experts call for early restoration of Azerbaijan's liberated areas

"Azerbaijan's reconstruction to reconnect: a way forward" was jointly organized by Regional Integration Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore, ADA University, Azerbaijan, and Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad

DNA

ISLAMABAD: An Online International Conference was organized on "Azerbaijan's Reconstruction to Reconnect: A Way Forward". This conference was jointly organized by Regional Integration Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore, ADA University, Azerbaijan, and Center for Global & Strategic Studies (CGSS), Islamabad.

The conference aimed to discuss the possible ways and means to facilitate the process of reconstruction and mega infrastructural development in the liberated areas of Azerbaijan.

The conference was commenced with the opening remarks of Dr. Fozia Hadi, Director, Regional Integration Center, University of the Punjab, Lahore. She highlighted that Pakistan has always supported Azerbaijan's stance against Armenia, we are also the only country that does not recognize the state of Armenia.

She also extended Pakistan's full support in the process of reconstruction of liberated areas and suggested joint research activities to connect the academia of Pakistan and Azerbaijan. She was of the view that academic linkages will play a great role in strengthening the bilateral ties of both countries.

Mr. Fariz Ismailzade, Executive Vice-Rector, ADA University, Baku, Azerbaijan highlighted that during his visit to Pakistan, he first-hand witnessed the strategic importance of Pakistan and

its potential in the region. Pakistan and Azerbaijan have cooperation's in multiple fields like education, diplomacy, and think tank cooperation as well. Azerbaijan now wishes to establish enhanced economic ties with Pakistan. Furthermore, Azerbaijan and Pakistan can also collaborate in the fields of infrastructure development and defense as well. He mentioned that during his various meetings in Pakistan, they tried to foster economic cooperation in business and the economy. Azerbaijan is ready to welcome companies from Pakistan for investment and to develop transport corridors and mutual investments in Azerbaijan.

Discussing the liberated areas of Nagorno-Karabakh he highlighted that these areas were under Armenian occupation and Armenia has destroyed the history and culture of these areas. He appreciates Pakistan's constant support during the war with Armenia. Dr. Fariz also mentioned that the year 2020 was special for Azerbaijan and we hope that the years to come will open up new chapters of cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. He also shared few pictures from liberated areas of Nagorno-Karabakh and explained the destruction caused by Armenian forces.

Dr. Mahboob Hussain, Chairman of Department of History and Pakistan Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore briefly shared the history behind the Armenia and Azerbaijan conflict. Armenia breached the ceasefire con-



tract and attacked civilians and Azerbaijan Armed forces breaking several humanitarian accords.

During a one-and-a-half-month conflict, Azerbaijan has liberated several cities and nearly 300 illegal settlements and villages that were occupied by Armenia for the past three decades. He further highlighted that Armenia has disturbed the geography of this region for the past many decades by its illegal occupation of Azerbaijan lands.

The liberation of these

lands was not an easy task but the performance, courage, strength, and bravery of the Azerbaijan Armed forces were exemplary in this regard. This war will be remembered in modern warfare history. He also highlighted that Azerbaijan was supported by the international community for its legitimate stance over the issue. He also mentioned that there is a dire need of reconstructing these areas and ensure their reintegration into the political and economic infrastructure of Azerbaijan.

He suggested that it is very important that civil society, local support programs, and human rights organizations are involved in this process. Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the two fundamental sectors, one is the restoration of the infrastructure, and the second is economic rehabilitation. He extended his best wishes to the government and people of Azerbaijan for the successful reconstruction of the liberated areas.

Dr. Mehmoood-Ul-Hassan Khan, Regional Geo-Political

Analyst & Member Board of Experts, CGSS highlighted the atrocities committed by Armenia. He mentioned, that during the time of occupation Armenia deliberately destroyed cities and villages, all cultural and religious sites of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories were demolished. International media has documented the facts of deliberate destruction and desecration of the cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijani people which requires reconstruction through regional recon-

nect. Discussing the role of Pakistan and Azerbaijan cooperation, he highlighted that the government of Pakistan dispatched humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan. The assistance was intended for service members and other people working in the liberated territories. Furthermore, the government and people of Pakistan have always stood by Azerbaijan and we are ready to provide full support in reconstructing the liberated territories and returning IDPs to their homes. He also highlighted the importance of the Frontier Works Organization in reconstructing the newly liberated areas of Azerbaijan.

Prof. Dr. Iram Khalid, Chairperson of Political Science Department, University of Punjab, Lahore highlighted that regional connectivity is gaining more and more importance. Culture serves as a transmission belt to engage and understand cultures, norms, and practices. She emphasized that Pakistan and Azerbaijan share common cultural, historical, and religious values. The relationship between both countries is strong in the fields of diplomacy, economy, and political cooperation as well.

She was of the view that now it is the time to further strengthen these bilateral ties by building people-to-people contact by arranging conferences, seminars, and other activities to bring closer the people and specifically the academia of both countries.

IESCO issues power schedule

DNA

ISLAMABAD: According to Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO)'s spokesman, System Maintenance is in process. Therefore power supply of below mentioned feeders/areas will be temporary suspended as per given schedule: On 9th March, from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Abu Bakar, Noor Mohammad, Shamsabad, Shakrial, Faizabad, Katarian, Holy Family, Bani, Azharabad, Jhang, T&P Wani, CWO, Mandi Bhalwal, Sugharpur, Riaz Shaheed, Abdullahpur, Rawal, Islamabad, Sandal, Tarlai, H-8, Highway, Iqbal Town, Fazia, NPCC-2, Lohi Bhair, Coral, Gharial, I-14/3, Nog-

zi, F-17 / 1 & 2, RCCI I, II, IV, V, Chowk Pandori, Sihala, Chakri, Arsalan Poultry Farm, SPD, Padial, Anjara, Islampura, Kohistan, Kashif Gul, Max Industrial, Model Town, Industrial Estate, Ghazi Kohli, Jalala, Rural Fateh Jang, Laniwala, State Bank, Humayun Road, Jail Park, Mecca Chowk, Rehmatnagar I, II, 502 Workshop, Bostan Road, Chaklala, Scheme 3, National Park, MSF, Murree Brewery, Gulistan Colony, Topi Pumping, Chaklala Garrison, JSHQ, Dandot, Jund City, Jund City II, Pari Feeders, 08:00 AM to 12:00 PM, PGHS Feeder, 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Capt. Nisar Shaheed, Baral Army, CMH Army, Mangla Cantt, Gadari, Bhaini Feeders, 09:00 AM to 04:00 PM.

'No nation can progress without educated youth'

SHUJAT HAMZA

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Husain Jahanian Gardezi Monday said that no nation could progress without educated, skilled and trained youth and Pakistan is blessed with talented youth.

He urged the academia to educate and equip the youth with new emerging skills adding, the government was actively working to provide modern skills to youth. The minister said this while addressing the inauguration ceremony of Green Campus set up under the Prime Minister's 10 Billion Trees Tsunami Programme and the launch of various certi-

icates and diploma programs related to modern agricultural machinery, held at Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) Sub-campus Khushab.

On the occasion, Vice Chancellor PMAS-AAUR Prof. Dr. Qamar uz Zaman, Administrator Sub-Campus Khushab Dr. Ali Abdullah Shah, Deans and Directors of various departments of the University and dignitaries of Khushab District were present.

The minister appreciated the efforts of PMAS-AAUR for starting Livestock Assistant Diploma besides Diploma Program in Modern Agricultural Engineering for the development of modern

agriculture. He said that such initiatives were not only need of the hour to boost agriculture production but also to play a key role in stabilizing the national economy by providing opportunities for economic self-sufficiency to the youth through skilled education.

He urged the citizens to come forward and play a role for the success of the plantation campaign launched in accordance with the vision of the prime minister to curb the rising environmental issues.

He also planted a sapling at Sub-Campus Khushab. He informed the participants that the ministry of Agriculture was also taking practical steps in this regard and

highlighted efforts being made to increase agriculture productivity particularly in the arid areas.

On the occasion, Dr. Qamar uz Zaman said the agricultural development was inevitable without the development of modern agricultural mechanization methods and their skill building.

He highlighted the importance of strong ties and collaboration between educational institutions and industry based on his experience abroad and said that PMAS-AAUR was working on various projects to develop modern technology in collaboration with other organizations to promote agricultural development at the national level.

NEPRA celebrates Int'l Women's Day

DNA

ISLAMABAD: International women's day is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. This day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity. International women's day means acknowledging the women throughout the history that have paved the way so that the women can achieve their dreams.

NEPRA celebrated Women's Day for the very first time at NEPRA Tower, Islamabad with the aim to empower women and celebrate their efforts and contributions. This



event was attended by all NEPRA female employees and Head of Departments. Mrs. Erum Tauseef, wife of Chairman NEPRA was the Chief Guest of the event. She highly appreciated the contributions and dynamic role of the NEPRA's women in development of the power sector and also hoped that they will play a vital role in empowerment.



ISLAMABAD: Large number of women participating in Awrat Azadi March on eve of International Women's Day organized by Women Democratic Front near National Press Club. – DNA

PARC and ICIMOD celebrates Int'l Women's Day

"PARC is also taking part in varied women-focused initiatives including kitchen-gardening and agricultural inputs to provide economic substance to the women"

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In connection with International Women's Day celebrations, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in collaboration with Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) Ministry of Climate Change, Embassy of Nepal in Pakistan, National Commission on Status of Women, Rural Support Programmes Network, Hashoo Foundation, Technology Times, International Islamic University, Roots Millennium Oxbridge Campus, local communities from Gilgit Baltistan and other local partners organized a seminar, which was attended by number of women social activists, educationists, entrepreneurs, researchers and workers from all walks of life. Women's local



handicraft exhibition was also the part of this seminar.

The objectives of the seminar was to highlight the issues women facing in leadership and their contributions towards nation building through ed-

ucation, health, commerce, science & technology, conservation, and development.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Muhammad Azeem Khan views "we all are gathered here to appreciate, acknowl-

edge and highlight the performance and commitment of women as health care workers, caregivers, innovators, community organizers and national leaders while combating the COVID-19 pandemic. NARC is also

taking part in varied women-focused initiatives including kitchen-gardening and agricultural inputs to provide economic substance to women. He further added, households technology has resulted in women inclusion and new concepts of business development in country. Women inclusion can upscale country's economic opportunities in post COVID era". Mr. Tapas Adhikari, Ambassador, Embassy of Nepal was the guest of honor at the occasion, "he admired the women work displayed at the stalls and said, Pakistan's efforts in engaging women in economic activities particularly the government's flagship programme of Ehsaas Aamdan Programme is a breakthrough to this part. The interest-free-loans to women has not only built the confidence of women but enhanced the output of the programme".

Nandipur reference adjourned till Mar 22

ISLAMABAD: An Accountability Court (AC) on Monday adjourned hearing on Nandipur Power Project reference till March 22, against former prime minister Raja Pervaiz Ashraf and others.

AC-III Judge Syed Asghar Ali heard the graft reference filed by National Accountability Bureau (NAB) against Pervaiz Ashraf and Shumaila Mehmood.

NAB prosecutor Waseem Javed and witness Faheem Ahmed appeared before the court.

The court adjourned hearing of the case without further proceeding due to lawyers' strike. – APP

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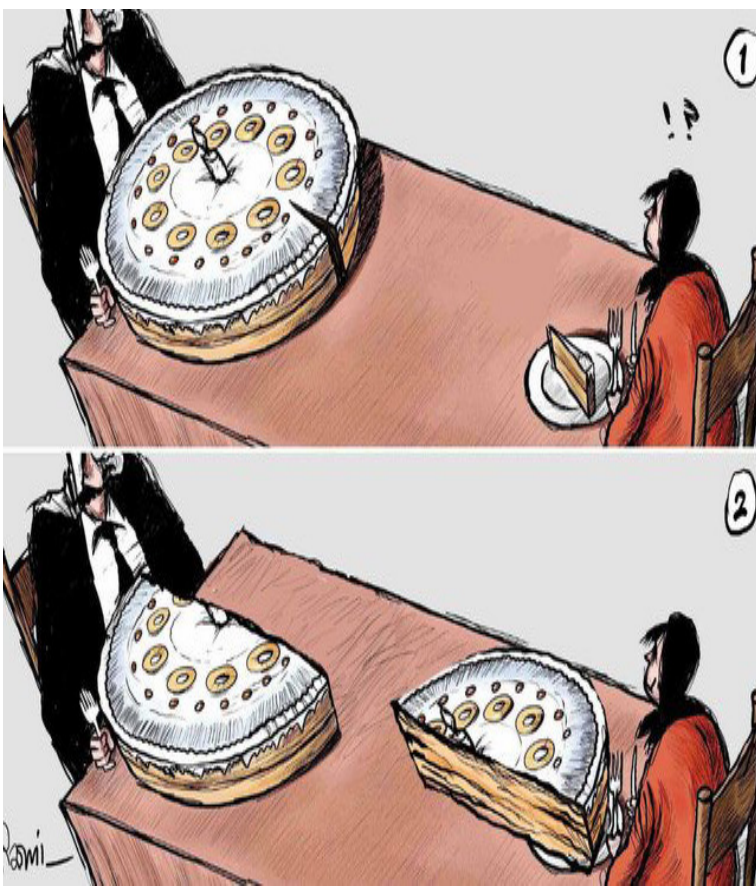
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An extreme measure

ON the petition of a citizen, Nadeem Umar, the Pakistan Information Commission (PIC) has asked the establishment division to make public the details of assets owned by civil servants, particularly officers of powerful service cadres such as Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) and Police Service of Pakistan (PSP). The commission's rationale is that public interest in this case is larger than any harm to personal privacy of the civil servants who fail to fulfil their obligation of submitting details of their assets. The establishment division appears to not be responding to the order, so the PIC has the option to initiate contempt proceedings against any official for non-compliance of its orders. However, the establishment has just cause to not be happy with this order. Accountability is needed in the civil service and it is true that the lack of transparency when it came to the assets of civil servants was eroding public trust in the bureaucracy. But any order to initiate accountability needs to be through a proper process and keeping in line with the constitution and basic human dignity. This is an extreme measure—disclosing all assets of civil servants, and the list of officers, with their designations and current posting data, who had never submitted their assets' declaration can be potentially dangerous. There are other ways which still maintain some degree of privacy to hold civil servants up to account. From a practical aspect, such drastic steps are not efficient nor easy to carry out, so it is not surprising that the establishment division is taking its time evaluating the order. For such an initiative, a proper software might be needed to detect and list the names of the civil servants. It would take a lot of time and effort to wade through the lists, check all the assets and determine which are beyond their means. Surely, there can be a more effective, less stringent or invasive way.

Combatting terrorism

PAKISTAN'S fight against terrorism continues as operations in North Waziristan resulted in the successful killing of eight members of the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and confiscation of a large cache of arms from their hideout. Considering that the complete eradication of terrorism depends on the willingness of external powers—like India—to cooperate, we may not be able to escape from the grips of such extremism. However, this report is evidence of the fact that we have effectively reduced the intensity of the problem to become an inconvenience that must be resolved immediately. It is clear to our authorities that the fight continues domestically and internally, and all efforts must still be focused towards eliminating terrorism as a whole. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) press release, many of those who were killed were commanders in the TTP. Furthermore, they were found to be integral members behind IED attacks, killings, kidnappings, firing and extortion who were aided and motivated by the degree of regional instability present in the status quo. Such circumstances are inevitable when problematic actors like India refuse to come to the negotiation table to initiate a dialogue in pursuance of peace and harmony. Instead funding for terror groups such as TTP remains a key strategy in the Modi government's playbook. Even the possibility of settling for cordial relations, in contrast to the idea of friendly ones, has been rejected by the lack of reciprocation from our neighbour despite the tireless and generous efforts of the Pakistani government. This creates the perfect breeding ground for violent retaliatory terrorism that our authorities must battle on a regular basis. It must be understood that tough circumstances will prevail if national stability lies in the hands of external powers and their temperaments. Despite this, we have prevailed in our mission to reduce terrorism, if not completely destroy it. The momentum must be kept as the government expands its approach to all levels to push the threat even further back.

Azerbaijan reconstruction: A way forward

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also appreciated Azerbaijan which liberated its lands from Armenian occupation with a glorious victory and opened the doors of a new era in the region. During 2nd Trilateral Meeting of Pakistan-Turkey and Azerbaijan Pakistan assured Azerbaijan of its support for rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the newly liberated territories of the country

IN Holy Quran Allah Almighty says help others in virtue and stay away from vice. Islam promotes real brotherhood which cares about others pains, sorrows and motivates to assist. The topic of my speech is based on gust of unlimited ancient prophecies and lessons of modern community development and human survival. Let us talk about cultural reinvention, re-connection and Pakistan and Azerbaijan connectivity which started many centuries ago in shape of Multani Caravanserai to Hajji Zeynalabdin from Bibi-Heyba to Bibi Pak Daman. From late Heydar Aliyev to Ilham Aliyev and from Benazir Bhutto to incumbent Prime Minister Imran Khan Caravans of true friendship, brotherhood, mutual respect, love and harmony have been achieving new heights since its beginning. During the 14th Summit of Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) the President of Azerbaijan H.E. Ilham Aliyev appreciated positive, permanent, productive and participatory role of Pakistan from the first day of war which vividly reflected its true spirits of brotherhood, solidarity, love and compassion. The President welcomed Pakistani government, private companies, businessmen and investors to invest in the newly liberated areas Nagorno-Karabakh. During the time of occupation Armenia deliberately destroyed cities and villages, all cultural and religious sites of Azerbaijan in the occupied territories. Mosques were used as stables for pigs and cows. International media has documented the facts of deliberate destruction and desecration of cultural and religious heritage of Azerbaijani people which requires reconstruction through regional reconstruction. In this context, the new connectivity corridor which will pass through historic Azerbaijani land of Zangazur and link Azerbaijan with its inseparable part Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic and Turkey will create new opportunities in the transportation sector in the region. On his part, Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan, who chaired the summit, first greeted the summit participants especially Azerbaijan for its victory and assured his government support in the reconstruction and resettlement activities in the newly liberated areas. Moreover, assurance was also given by Prime Minister Imran Khan to the visiting Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Jeyhun Bayramov during a meeting in Islamabad. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also appreciated Azerbaijan which liberated its lands from Armenian occupation with a glorious victory and opened the doors of a new era in the region. During 2nd Trilateral Meeting of Pakistan-Turkey and Azerbaijan Pakistan assured Azerbaijan of its support for rehabilitation and reconstruction activities in the newly

liberated territories of the country.

On its part, Pakistan's armed force Chief General Javed Qamar Bajwa that his forces fully support Azerbaijan's position in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh.

Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Mujahid Anwar Khan paid personal visit to Azerbaijan and lauded the professionalism of Azerbaijan Air Force and assured his full support especially in the domain of training which another way of reconstruction and re-connectivity.

To show spirits of solidarity, support, true sentiments of brotherhood and harmony and love Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee General Nadeem Raza paid personal visit to brotherly country Azerbaijan and extended his support to de-mining the newly liberated areas because fascist Armenia polluted all the liberated areas with deadly mines. It is again Pakistan's government and armed forces commitment towards the resettlement and reconstruction of Nagorno-Karabakh and all the adjacent areas.

While visiting to Baku Director General Frontier Works Organization (FWO) of Pakistan, Major General Kamal Azfar assured full support of his organization in resettlement and reconstruction activities in the newly liberated areas. FWO specializes in civil and military infrastructure, communications projects and mining in Pakistan. Since its establishment in 1966, it has been credited with the construction of bridges, roads, tunnels, airfields and dams in Pakistan. Its objectives include projects related to civil, construction, combat, structural, and military engineering. The FWO led the design and construction of the Karakoram Highway.

The Pakistani government also dispatched humanitarian aid to Azerbaijan. The assistance was intended for service members and other people working in the liberated territories. Pakistan's ambassador to Azerbaijan, Bilal Haye, said the aid was another example of the country's brotherly attitude towards the Azerbaijani people. The government and people of Pakistan always stood by Azerbaijan and ready to provide full support in reconstructing the liberated territories and returning IDPs to their homes.

On its part, the Azerbaijan government is pushing forward with an ambitious plan to reconstruct the territories. A master plan will be drawn up. Relevant instructions have been given. A master plan will be developed for each city. All office buildings, public buildings, schools and medical centers will be established here. All infrastructures will be put in place. Streets, parks and alleys will be built.

It is estimated that fully reconstructing the newly liberated areas would likely take 10 years and cost 25 billion manats (about \$15 billion). There is basically no infra-

structure left in Jabrayil, Fuzuli, Zangilan, and Gubadly," four of the seven regions that Azerbaijan regained control of. "It's going to cost about as much as Azerbaijan spends in a year" on its entire budget.

Azerbaijan will also likely try to attract private financing for the reconstruction. Many entrepreneurs, natives of these regions, will probably want to invest in the reconstruction of industrial and commercial enterprises in their villages and towns and may even offer some donations. Azerbaijan official said that it will simplify procedures for planned investment in its recently liberated territories, adding that Turkish companies will be prioritized in tenders in a bid to improve the quality of construction projects.

The government plans to help facilitate the reconstruction process for foreign investors. With the legislative amendments, the bureaucratic barriers in tenders will be removed and the base price list of construction material ordered by companies will be updated.

"Turkish and Azeri companies are jointly working on the construction of a new road from Fuzuli to Shusha. This is just the first step. Turkish companies have undertaken projects worth \$16 billion in Azerbaijan so far. Not just in Karabakh, but throughout all Azerbaijan, Turkish companies will be able to give advantaged offers. It will increase competition and quality in projects, thus creating a win-win situation.

Being prominent regional expert of Azerbaijan & CIS I would like to suggest that comprehensive city planning should be formulated to promote start living, smart city, smart village in all the liberated areas as soon as possible. There is an ample opportunity to utilize vast potential of green energy resources in all the newly liberated areas which should be tapped by Pakistani public & private companies.

Serious and sincere efforts should be initiated to form an "Infrastructural Development Bank" by polling financial resources. A "Joint Construction Company" may be a right step in right direction in which FWO and Turkish private companies may jointly excel. A Joint Hot-Line" to be shared with housing ministries and private companies is the need of the hour. A Joint Working Group of Reconstruction" may be a functional idea to proceed further.

The trade turnover between Azerbaijan and Pakistan amounted to \$13.2 million in 2020, with export amounting to \$1.6 million and import to \$11.6 million. In January 2021, trade turnover between the two countries amounted to \$1.1 million. Now time has come to jointly work for the further strengthening of bilateral trade, FDIs, joint ventures and reconstruction activities in the days to come.

AMAN-21-The message resonates

Muhammad Azam Khan

AMAN-21 aimed to strengthen and develop cooperation among world navies in order to promote regional stability and to counter common maritime threats. It was a rare opportunity for participating countries to rub shoulders with global counterparts putting aside their differences to work towards a common cause, develop synergy and doctrinal interoperability to fight unconventional threats. The high point on closing day was the international fleet review in which formation of ships conducted manoeuvres while marine and Special Forces and air elements displayed their skills

FROM now onward Pakistan would only partner another country in peace; we will not become part of any other conflict, we will not join any other country in its conflict" Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, speaking at World Economic Forum, 2020. With its tag line, "together for peace" resonating powerfully in the far reaches of the Indian Ocean region and beyond, the 42-country multinational mega biennial exercise AMAN-21 of Pakistan Navy concluded this February 16. A grand international fleet review was held in the North Arabian Sea on the culminating day. With dozens of warships representing wide ranging countries and stationed in a massive formation natively called, "AMAN formation, the imposing finale was witnessed by President of Pakistan, Dr. Arif Alvi. He was joined by the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Minister for Defence Production, Chief Minister Sindh, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Chief of the Army staff and the Chief of the Air staff. This was besides Emissaries of various countries in Pakistan. The traditional AMAN formation denotes, "unity and collective resolve". The proceedings on the final day were reviewed by dignitaries while on-board, PNS MOAWIN. The name of the ship, PNS MOAWIN, itself signifies collaboration, or coming together. Jointly constructed by Pakistan navy with a Turkish firm at local, Karachi Shipyard and Engineering Works (KS&EW), the ship stands as pride of the nation. It was commissioned as recently as October 2018 and aptly symbolised the spirit that underpinned AMAN-21. "I often queried that why my success should come as someone's failure or why would my success mean that someone must lose. There has to be a way where we all can win and because this goes against the established thinking and psychology, therefore it needs paradigm shift. Let's come together; understand each other, and fight the common enemy", was the clarion call given by Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi on the occasion of curtain-raiser for AMAN-21 on 12 February. On this occasion, a record number of naval and marine officers, ships and air unit crews as well as observers from various countries witnessed the stirring flag hoisting ceremony at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, Karachi. These included representatives from, China, Russia, Indonesia, the United States, United Kingdom, and Iran, Sri-Lanka, Turkey, Malaysia and other ASEAN states as well as African Union, EU, GCC and NATO. The most striking feature of AMAN-21 was the presence of Russian Navy. It was icebreaking moment with arch-rival, the United States Navy showing presence alongside. The last time Russian Navy conducted joint military drills with NATO members was in the "Bold Monarch" exercise in 2011. This move in AMAN-21 did not go unnoticed. Tributes were aglow, even from across the border. "I must commend Pa-

kistan Navy for holding such a large-scale exercise in post Covid period. One of your (Pakistan Navy) greatest achievement, as one must learn from all and everyone, is to bring Russia and United States together on a single platform; for that alone Pakistan and Pakistan Navy deserves rich tributes. It becomes singular since the two countries (Russia and the United States) have been hostile and at odds since 2014—and for this you (Pakistan Navy) can comfortably add another jewel in its crown", so remarked Lt Gen KJ Singh during a live video conversation on a private television network.

AMAN-21 was split in two phases of harbour and sea. In the former seminars, symposiums, discussion sessions, international get-together, and cultural festivities to showcase Pakistan as an opulent society with great traditions were profitably held. In the next phase, tactical manoeuvres and exercises like anti-piracy, counterterrorism and search and rescue missions etc. were conducted at sea.

AMAN-21 aimed to strengthen and develop cooperation among world navies in order to promote regional stability and to counter common maritime threats. It was a rare opportunity for participating countries to rub shoulders with global counterparts putting aside their differences to work towards a common cause, develop synergy and doctrinal interoperability to fight unconventional threats. The high point on closing day was the international fleet review in which formation of ships conducted manoeuvres while marine and Special Forces and air elements displayed their skills. There were Para jumps, and a fly past by Pakistan Navy aviation as well as Pakistan Air Force. Aircraft from participating countries too flew past over the AMAN-21 formation. Earlier, the message of Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Niazi was read out during the Opening Ceremony. In his message, the Admiral warmly welcomed the participants of the exercise, the seventh edition in the AMAN series commandeered by Pakistan Navy since 2007. AMAN-21 will provide a medium to develop doctrinal synergy to tackle maritime security challenges and to enhance interoperability amongst navies at different pedestals of technological prowess to come together and secure a sustainable maritime environment', read the message.

On 13 February, the Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Niazi paid a visit on-board the Indonesian, Russian and Sri-Lankan naval ships. The senior officers and each commanding officer of the visiting ships received Naval Chief in befitting manner. They deeply appreciated the enduring efforts of Pakistan Navy in mustering global navies and working towards shared commitment of maritime peace, stability and legitimate order at sea. The highlight of the first phase of exercise, 13 to 15 February was devoted to International Maritime Conference (IMC-21). The conference brought together a wide array of distinguished international and national scholars as well as subject matter experts. The scholars addressed large multinational gatherings. Under the overarching theme, "De-

velopment of Blue Economy under a Secure and Sustainable Environment: A shared future for Western Indian Ocean", the erudite speakers proffered creative solutions to oceanic problems afflicting the region. Notable luminaries included, Secretary General IMO, President J&K, Dr. Gunter Pauli and Senator Sherry Rehman. Commander US Naval Forces Central Admiral Samuel Paparo delivered his keynote address. His talk, "Enhancing Regional Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean Region through Effective Mechanism", was instructive. Dr. David Brewster of Australian National University talked about the challenges and opportunities in changing maritime dynamics of Indian Ocean region and its implications for regional states.

The second day of the conference saw presence of Special Assistant to Prime Minister, Dr. Moeed Yusuf as chief guest during pre-lunch session. Eminent speakers shed light on the, "Need of Maritime Security and Sustainable Growth-A Shared Vision for Western Indian Ocean region". In his key note address on, "BRI and its implications on maritime security in the Indian Ocean region", Dr. Nong Hong, Executive Director of China America Studies, USA, underlined the need for stability in the region in the wake of non-traditional security threats where interests of multiple stakeholders converged. In the second session, federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Syed Ali Haider Zaidi was the chief guest. Scholars presented their thoughts on, "Development of Pakistan's Maritime Sector and Blue Economy". In the last session on 14 February, the discussants alluded to the, "contemporary strategic environment related to Indian Ocean region and opportunities for regional cooperation". Renowned Senator Mushahid Hussain shared his views on, "Building strategic partnerships".

With progressing geopolitical shifts in the Indian Ocean region and its peripheries, maritime security has assumed a distinctive significance for Pakistan. A stable order in the region has now become an indispensable need for the country. With the upcoming port of Gwadar projected as a regional hub and transshipment port in the wider Indian Ocean and given the external machinations against CPEC, maritime security was never so critically important to Pakistan as now. Gwadar is tipped to become the hub of trade connecting South Asia, Middle East, Africa and Central Asia. Perhaps the finest tribute to AMAN-21 came not from within Pakistan but outside, from eastern neighbourhood. "India's Pakistan policy seems to have landed in a cul-de-sac. It lacks credibility and has no future. A course correction is overdue. AMAN-21 makes mockery of India's aspiration to be a 'net security provider' for littoral states in the Indian Ocean. The participation of Bangladesh and Sri-Lanka in AMAN-21 speaks for itself", asserted Ambassador M.K. Bhadrakumar in his column on February 17, 2021.

Briefs

Lebanon:
Protests
continue
over political,
economic
crises

FOREIGN DESK

BEIRUT: Protesters have blocked roads with burning tyres all over Lebanon for the seventh consecutive day, demanding an end to the economic crisis that has prevailed for more than a year and a half of political paralysis.

Three main roads leading south into the capital Beirut from Zouk, Jal al-Dib and al-Dawra were blocked on Monday while, in Beirut itself, protesters briefly blocked the road in front of the central bank.

"We have said several times that there will be an escalation because the state isn't doing anything," said Pascale Nohra, a protester in Jal al-Dib.

In Tyre, a man tried to burn himself by pouring petrol on his body but civil defence stopped him in time, the state news agency said. Lebanon's financial crisis, which erupted in 2019, has driven nearly half of the population of six million into poverty, wiped out jobs and savings and slashed consumer purchasing power.

Protesters have been blocking roads daily since the collapse of the Lebanese pound, which fell to 10,000 to the dollar on Tuesday, slashed about 85 percent of its value in a country relying heavily on imports.

It was the last straw for many who have seen prices of consumer goods nearly triple since the crisis erupted.

The country has been rudderless since August last year when caretaker Prime Minister Hassan Diab's cabinet resigned on the back of the Beirut port explosion that devastated swathes of the capital.

Prime Minister-designate Saad al-Hariri was nominated in October but has failed to form a new cabinet due to the political deadlock with President Michel Aoun.

A new cabinet is necessary to implement reforms needed to trigger billions of dollars of international aid to fix the economy.

On Saturday, Diab threatened to quit to raise the pressure on those blocking the formation of a new government. State news agency reported that Diab is scheduled to meet Aoun, several caretaker ministers, the central bank chief and financial and security officials on Monday.

PDM
names...

From Page 01

He congratulated PDM for Yousaf Raza Gillani victory achievement in Senate polls. "We want the Chairman Senate to win the election and claim another victory," Bilawal vowed. Former President Asif Ali Zardari congratulated Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on his victory. Yousuf Raza Gilani, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Raja Pervaz Ashraf, Nayyar Bukhari, Farhatullah Babar, Sherry Rehman and Qamar Zaman Kaira, Raza Rabbani, Faisal Karim Kundi, Mahmood Khan Achakzai, Dr Abdul Malik, Haider Hoti, Aftab Sherpao, Prof. Sajid Mir, Senator Jamaluddin, Owais Noorani and Shahid Khaqan Abbasi were present in the meeting. Besides this, the sources privy to the details said the PPP has also suggested to give authority of the no-confidence motion in Punjab Assembly to the PML-N.

"The PPP will give the suggestion for the non-confidence motion at the PDM platform while the PML-N being the majority party will have a final say in this regard," they said while divulging the decisions of the opposition alliance's meeting headed by Fazlur Rehman.

"PPP will completely back the PML-N in the no-confidence motion," they said.

The Punjab Assembly currently has 369 members of which the treasury benches have the support of 191 of them while PML-N has 166 lawmakers, followed by PPP with seven MPs. – DNA



RAWALPINDI: German ambassador to Pakistan Bernhard Schlagheck meet female lawyers at Rawalpindi Bar Association and discussed about the situation of Pakistani women in the legal sector & the challenges they face in this male-dominated profession. – DNA

ICCI to promote sports activities for businesses

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry said that the sports was an important source of generating economic activity as the global industry was valued at over USD 500 billion, therefore, he urged that the Sports Committee of ICCI should focus on promoting various sports activities for achieving beneficial results for the economy. He said that the progress of many industries was linked with sports, therefore, promotion of sports would boost their growth. He said this while presiding over a meeting of ICCI Sports Committee.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan said

that ICCI Sports Committee should accelerate efforts for promoting all sports including cricket, hockey, tennis, badminton, kabaddi judo and others.

He said that the Sports Committee should develop strong liaison with Pakistan Sports Board and other Sports Associations to explore opportunities for boosting sports activities in the region. He said that ICCI has recently organized a very successful international cycling gala as part of promoting healthy sports activity and the Sports Committee should plan multiple sports events in coming days. He assured that ICCI would extend its full cooperation to the Committee in such pursuits.

Zareef Khan, Convener of



ICCI Sports Committee briefed the ICCI President about the plan of his Com-

mittee for sports activities that would be organized in the coming days. He said

that the Sports Committee would organize a cricket match in near future while

many other sports events would also be organized in coming months.

Allen leads Windies to three-wicket win

SPORTS DESK

ANTIGUA: All-rounder Fabian Allen clobbered three sixes off the penultimate over to lead West Indies to a nervy three-wicket win against Sri Lanka in the final Twenty20 International on Sunday. Chasing a modest target of just 132, the two-time world champions struggled in the run chase as their star trio of Chris Gayle, skipper Kieron Pollard and Dwayne Bravo all flopped. Allen's three sixes came off-spinner Akila Dananjaya as the 25-year-old Jamaican smashed a desperately needed 21 off just six balls faced at Coolidge Cricket Ground.

West Indies finished on 134-7, clinching the three-game series 2-1 after a four-wicket win in the first match followed by Sri Lanka's 43-run victory in the second. Dananjaya was again the victim of some explosive West Indies batting after Pollard hit six sixes off one of his overs in the first game on Wednesday. "I prepare for everything, including bowling in the powerplay," said Allen, who earlier took 1-13 opening the bowling. "When I look in the dressing room we have a lot of batting power." "I told Jason Holder that I'm not comfortable batting against Hasaranga, so I told him to bat him out and I'll be finishing. I just backed myself in end. It was a good performance overall."

ICC announces expansion of women's game

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday announced the expansion of women's cricket events post the 2023 cycle. ICC in a media release stated that more teams will compete in both the Women's World Cup and the Women's T20 World Cup from 2026 onwards as part of the ICC's long-term commitment to growing the game globally and in a sustainable fashion, ICC stated in a media release.

"The revised formats will give more teams the chance to

compete on the global stage and importantly provides members with a window to grow the game domestically to challenge internationally as the changes take place," ICC added.

On the other hand, ICC has also announced the introduction of a new tournament, called the Women's T20 Champions Cup and it will be played in 2027 and 2031. Six teams will take part with 16 matches to be played in the competition.

Two 50-over World Cups will be played in 2025 and 2029 while four T20 World Cups have been scheduled for 2024, 2026, 2028, and 2030.

Manu Sawhney, ICC Chief Executive said: "We have a clear focus and commitment to an ambitious long-term growth plan for the women's game. We have been building momentum around the women's game for the last four years investing in global broadcast coverage and marketing to drive fan engagement."

"The results speak for themselves with the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2020 attracting record numbers, 1.1 billion video views, making it the most-watched women's cricket event of all time and having 86,174 fans attending the final at the MCG, a record attendance for a women's cricket event."

"This decision to expand our women's events builds on these foundations and allows us to give more member countries greater opportunities to compete on a global stage."

This means that more teams will also get the opportunity to compete in the qualification pathways for the respective ICC events over the coming years. I am sure these initiatives will go a long way in helping us achieve our strategic goal of continuing to build strength and depth in the women's game," he added.



Rome: Roma's Borja Mayoral vies with Genoa's Ivan Radovanovic during a Serie A football match between Roma and Genoa in Rome, Italy.

Investigation reveals who returned COVID positive in PSL 6

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE: Just after the announcement of a two-member independent panel to find loopholes in the bio-secure bubble of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six, it has been revealed that Islamabad United's Fawad Ahmed was not the first to test COVID-19 positive.

According to reports, Multan Sultans' integrity officer was the first individual to test COVID-19 positive. The official didn't undergo a mandatory isolation period and was allowed to travel home.

The integrity officer was also part of Sultans' dugout and Fawad Ahmed fell vic-

tim to COVID-19 days after the Integrity Officer's test came out positive.

Note, Fawad was tested positive on March 1 which led to the postponement of Quetta Gladiators-Islamabad United's clash.

Three more participants part of the event were tested positive the following day after all the teams underwent PCR test.

On March 4, three more members from two different franchises came out COVID-19 positive, resulting in the postponement of the PSL 6.

Meanwhile, PCB has also announced a two-member fact-finding panel to investigate the flaws that occurred during the PSL 6.

Dahani
receives star
welcome
upon return

DNA

KARACHI: The 22-year-old pacer Shahnawaz Dahani, who represented Multan Sultans in the Pakistan Super League (PSL) season six received a star welcome upon his return to Larkana. The right-arm pacer, who has the capability of bowling up to 145+ clicks, has emerged as one of the potential stars to represent Pakistan in the future.

Former Pakistan captain Sarfaraz Ahmed shared a clip where the people are showering flowers to Dahani as he returned to his hometown after making debut in the PSL 6.

Dahani is the third-highest wicket-taker of postponed PSL 6. He bagged nine wickets in four matches at an economy rate of 10.33.

It must be noted here that PSL 6 was postponed on Thursday after seven people including six cricketers and a staff member tested COVID-19 positive.

SBP vows to increase women's role

DNA

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) is taking initiatives under its comprehensive National Financial Inclusion Strategy (NFIS) to prioritize women's financial inclusion and will soon be launching its path-breaking gender mainstreaming policy called Banking on Equality, said Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Dr. Reza Baqir.

He was speaking at an in-house event held at SBP Karachi Monday to commemorate the International Women's Day for appreciating the role of women in general and in SBP and its subsidiaries, in particular.

Governor SBP, Dr. Reza Baqir, was the Chief Guest and the event was attended by the Deputy Governors, senior officials and female officers of SBP and subsidiaries in Karachi. For the first time in its history, the SBP staff throughout the country witnessed the program available through in-house livestreaming. Governor SBP, in his opening remarks lauded all the good work done by women who are part of SBP and its subsidiaries. He recognized Pakistani women for their vital role in shaping and strengthening our economy and society.

PTI senators
receiving...

From Page 01

Election Commission of Pakistan, saying that its role had remained controversial even in the past. "The ECP said the same thing even in the Daska by-election," he said. PM Imran Khan lashed out at PDM's joint candidate for the post of Senate chairman, former premier Yousaf Raza Gilani, adding that the PPP leader had "destroyed [the concept of] morality [in politics] and the entire nation is watching his actions". Urging his party members to push back against the Opposition's narrative, the PTI chairperson said that his party's senators were already receiving offers to sell their votes for the upcoming Senate elections. "I know very well which senator was offered what," said the prime minister, adding that money was used to influence the Senate elections not only in Islamabad but also in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

SC never
rules...

From Page 01

He said that live coverage was the right of the media and not any individual. No media house had requested for permission for live broadcast of the court proceedings, he added.

The AAG asked did freedom of expression mean live broadcast?

Citing the example of hearings via video link, Justice Mansoor Ali Shah said that technology had aided the court in many matters and helped to create ease. Justice Umar Ata Bandial said that Justice Faez Isa mentioned the decisions of foreign courts.

The AAG said that it was the stance of the government that live telecast was not a judicial concern but an administrative matter of the SC.

Thousands of Indian women join farmers' protests

FOREIGN DESK

NEW DELHI: Thousands of women have joined protests by farmers on the outskirts of New Delhi to mark International Women's Day, demanding the scrapping of new agricultural laws that open up the country's vast farm sector to private buyers.

The demonstrations on Monday were held at multiple sites on the capital's fringes where tens of thousands of farmers have camped for more than three months to protest against the laws, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government says are necessary to modernise agriculture.

Wearing bright yellow scarves rep-

resenting the colour of mustard fields, the women took centre stage at one key site, chanting slogans, holding small marches, and making speeches against the laws. "This is an important day as it represents women's strength," said Veena, a 37-year-old from a farming family, who gave only one name in order to protect her identity.

"I believe if us women are united, then we can achieve our target much quicker," added Veena, who travelled from the northern state of Punjab to the sprawling Tikri protest spot.

More than 20,000 women gathered at the site near Delhi's border with the state of Haryana, police and event organisers said.

"This is a day that will be man-

aged and controlled by women, the speakers will be women, there will be a lot of feminist perspectives brought in, and discussions on what these laws mean for women farmers," said farm activist Kavitha Kuruganti. "It is one more occasion to showcase and highlight the contribution of women farmers both in agriculture in India as well as to this movement." About 100 women sat cross-legged in front of the protest sites on Delhi's border with Uttar Pradesh state.

Holding the flags of farm unions, they listened to female farm leaders speak and chanted slogans against the laws. At least 17 took part in a day-long hunger strike.

"Women are sitting here, out in the

open, in protest, but Modi doesn't care. He doesn't care about mothers, sisters, and daughters. He doesn't care about women. That's clear," said Mandeep Kaur, a female farmer who travelled 1,100km (680 miles) from Chhattisgarh state to participate in the protests. Women have been prominent at the forefront of the protests, which have posed one of the biggest challenges to Modi since he took office in 2014.

Many travelled with the thousands of male farmers who arrived at the protest sites in late November and have since organised and led protest marches, run medical camps and massive soup kitchens that feed thousands, and raised demands for gender equality.

"Today Modi is sending wishes to women across the country on International Women's Day. Who are these women he is sending wishes to? We are also like his daughters, but he clearly doesn't care about us," said Babi Singh, a farm leader. Demonstrations were also held at Jantar Mantar, an area of New Delhi near Parliament where about 100 women held placards denouncing the new laws and calling for their withdrawal.

"Today we are finding ourselves under attack at all fronts. As women, as peasants, as workers, as youth and students," said women rights activist Sucharita, who uses one name. "We are opposed to the laws that have been passed in favour of corporations."

Briefs

Libyan PM-designate in Sirte for unity gov't vote

FOREIGN DESK

TRIPOLI: Libya's Prime Minister-designate Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh arrived in the coastal city of Sirte on Monday to present his unity government lineup to the House of Representatives (parliament), a government spokesman told Anadolu Agency.

"Dbeibeh arrived in Sirte to present his cabinet formation to the members of the House of Representatives during a parliamentary session that will be held later today," Mohamed Hammouda said.

On Saturday, Dbeibeh proposed a unity government of 27 members, promising that the government will prioritize "improving services, unifying state institutions and ending the transitional period by holding elections". The parliament will debate giving confidence to Dbeibeh's government during today's session.

Muhammad al-Raidh, a member of the House of Representatives, told Anadolu Agency that some 90 deputies from both Tobruk and Tripoli assemblies already arrived in Sirte for Monday's parliamentary session.

Vietnam kicks off COVID-19 vaccination campaign

HANOI: Vietnam's Ministry of Health on Monday started a COVID-19 vaccine inoculation campaign, the country's largest vaccination campaign in history, with over 100 million injections expected to be conducted nationwide, Vietnam News Agency reported Monday.

The first doses of AstraZeneca's vaccine began to be given at 8:00 a.m. local time Monday to health workers directly treating COVID-19 patients in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi, the southern Ho Chi Minh City and the northern COVID-19 epicenter Hai Duong province.

The Ministry of Health said that vaccination is an important, effective, proactive and indispensable measure in the process of COVID-19 pandemic prevention, and a top priority for the government to help bring lives back to normal.

In the coming days, vaccination will start in other cities and provinces that have been hit by the latest wave of COVID-19 infections, targeting people working on the front-line against the epidemic such as health workers, personnel at quarantine facilities as well as contact-tracing teams, police and national defense forces in the localities. — APP

India's COVID-19 tally reaches 11,229,398

NEW DELHI: India's COVID-19 tally rose to 11,229,398 on Monday as 18,711 new cases were registered during the past 24 hours, said the latest data from the health ministry. According to the official data, the death toll mounted to 157,853 as 97 COVID-19 patients died since Sunday morning.

There are still 188,747 active cases in the country, while 10,882,798 people have been discharged so far from hospitals after medical treatment. There was an increase of 4,224 active cases during the previous 24 hours, out of which 5,090 were reported from the southwestern state of Maharashtra alone. The number of daily active cases had been on the rise over the past few days, as another wave of COVID-19 looms large in India. Till a few weeks ago, the number of daily cases had come down to below 10,000.

As many 9,102 new cases were reported between Jan. 25-26, which was the lowest in the previous 237 days. Prior to that the lowest number of daily new cases were 9,304 registered on June 4, 2020. Jan. 16 was a crucial day in India's fight against the pandemic as the nationwide vaccination drive was kicked off on the day. So far nearly 21 million people, mainly health workers, have been vaccinated across the country.



SINGAPORE: High commissioner of Pakistan to Singapore, Rukhsana Afzaal, held a luncheon meeting with Ong Keng Yong, non-resident ambassador of Singapore to Pakistan. Gilbert Oh Hin Kwan, DG (South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa), MFA also attended the meeting. — DNA

Pope ends historic Iraq visit with messages of coexistence

The first-ever papal visit to Iraq, he toured four cities, including Mosul, the former ISIL (ISIS) stronghold where vast areas still lie in ruins

FOREIGN DESK

BAGHDAD: Pope Francis has ended his historic tour of Iraq, departing the capital Baghdad after visiting conflict-torn cities, meeting Muslim and Christian leaders and preaching peace and coexistence over war. On Monday, Francis waved one last time before boarding the plane to the Vatican after Iraqi President Barham Salih accompanied the 84-year-old pontiff down a red carpet to his flight.

In the pope's Mosul mass on Sunday, Muslim and Christian residents in the

ing Mosul, the former ISIL (ISIS) stronghold where vast areas still lie in ruins.

In his addresses, he delivered messages of peaceful coexistence, urging coexistence and safety for all. Intense security surrounded his trip to Iraq. Military pick-up trucks, mounted with machine guns, escorted his motorcade and plainclothes security men mingled in Mosul, the butts of their guns peeking out of black backpacks slung around the front of their bodies.

In the pope's Mosul mass on Sunday, Muslim and Christian residents in the

ruined Iraqi city spoke of their lives under the brutal rule of ISIL.

Francis saw the ruins of homes and churches in a square that was the old town's thriving centre before Mosul was occupied by ISIL from 2014 to 2017, its fighters ravaging northern Iraq, killing Christians as well as Muslims who opposed them.

He sat surrounded by skeletons of buildings, dangling concrete staircases, and cratered ancient churches, most too dangerous to enter.

Much of the old city was destroyed in 2017 during

the bloody battle by Iraqi forces and an international military coalition to drive ISIL out.

"How cruel it is that this country, the cradle of civilization, should have been afflicted by so barbarous a blow, with ancient places of worship destroyed and many thousands of people — Muslims, Christians, Yazidis and others — forcibly displaced or killed," he said. "Today, however, we reaffirm our conviction that fraternity is more durable than fratricide, that hope is more powerful than hatred, that peace more powerful than war."

In an apparent direct reference to ISIL, Francis said hope could never be "silenced by the blood spilled by those who pervert the name of God to pursue paths of destruction".

Iraq's Christian community, one of the oldest in the world, has been devastated by the years of conflict, falling to about 300,000 from about 1.5 million before the US invasion of 2003 and the brutal ISIL violence that followed.

On Sunday, Francis also flew by helicopter to Qaraqosh, a Christian town that was overrun by ISIL fighters, and visited a church

whose courtyard was used by fighters as a shooting range.

He then celebrated Mass in Erbil, capital of the autonomous Kurdish region, where most people were not wearing masks or practicing social distancing despite a rising number of COVID-19 cases in the country.

At the end of the Mass, the last official event of his visit, Francis told the crowd: "Iraq will always remain with me, in my heart".

China opposes Houthis missiles attack at Saudi oil facilities: Spokesperson

BEIJING: China on Monday supported Saudi Arabia's efforts to safeguard security and stability and said it always opposed attacks targeting civilians and civil facilities.

"We support Saudi Arabia's efforts to safeguard security and stability," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing in response to a question about Yemen's Houthi missiles and drones attacks on Saudi oil facilities. On evening of March 7, Houthi forces in Yemen said in a statement that they fired eight ballistic missiles and attacked oil and military facilities in Saudi Arabia.

The spokesperson said the Chinese side always opposed



attacks targeting civilians and civil facilities. "We call our relevant sides to refrain from taking actions that may escalate regional tensions," he added. The Saudi power ministry mentioned an oil storage yard at Ras Tanura, the positioning of an oil refinery and

the world's largest offshore oil loading facility, was attacked with a drone however there had been no casualties or property loss. It added that shrapnel from a ballistic missile fell close to Aramco's residential compound in Dhahran. — APP

Amb. Sajid Bilal presents credentials to President Sisi

DNA

CAIRO: Ambassador of Pakistan to Egypt Sajid Bilal on Monday presented his credentials to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in an impressive ceremony held at the Presidential Ittihadia Palace in Cairo.

The ceremony included a guard of honour and playing of the National Anthem of Pakistan by the Egyptian military band. The ambassador, in his brief interaction, conveyed the greetings and best wishes of President Dr Arif Alvi and Prime Minister Imran Khan to President Sisi and the brotherly people of Egypt.

Swiss vote to outlaw facial coverings in 'burqa ban' poll

FOREIGN DESK

GENEVA: Swiss voters have narrowly approved a proposal to ban face coverings in a decision that critics branded Islamophobic and sexist. Official results showed that 51.2 percent of voters, and a majority of federal Switzerland's cantons, supported the proposal.

Some 1,426,992 voters were in favour of the ban, while 1,359,621 were against, on a 50.8 percent turnout.

The vote comes after years of debate in Switzerland following similar bans in other European countries, despite Muslim women wearing full-face veils being an

exceptionally rare sight in Swiss streets.

Even though the far-right proposal "Yes to a ban on full facial coverings" did not mention the burqa or the niqab, local politicians, media and campaigners dubbed it the "burqa ban". Campaign posters reading "Stop radical Islam!" and "Stop extremism!", featuring a woman in a black niqab — a veil worn by some Muslim women which, in addition to a headscarf, covers the lower half of the face — have been plastered around Swiss cities.

Rival posters read: "No to an absurd, useless and Islamophobic 'anti-burqa' law".

Deadly fire rips through migrant facility in Yemen: UN

WEB DESK

NEW YORK: At least eight people, including guards, died and more than 170 were injured after a fire ripped through an immigration holding facility in the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, the United Nations migration agency said.

The total death toll from the fire on Sunday, whose cause remains unclear, could be higher, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa Car-

mela Godeau said in a Twitter post. IOM was providing emergency healthcare for injured, more than 90 of whom were in serious condition, and distributing food to those affected, Godeau added.

Associated Press news agency reported that the immigration detention centre, which is believed to be holding about 700 people, is run by the Houthi rebels — who control vast swaths of Yemen, including Sanaa, since they overthrew the internationally recognised government in late 2014.

BEIJING: Pakistan Ambassador to China Moin ul Haque Monday said the second phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) flagship project would help create linkages with the neighboring countries and bring more prosperity to the region.

"When this project is realized, it will not only help Pakistan improve its infrastructure, address poverty, critical needs of the people and create jobs but also help create linkages with the neighboring countries and bring more prosperity to our

region," he said in an interview with Xinhuanet.

He informed that in second phase of the CPEC, the country was moving towards industrialization, social economic progress, agriculture, science and technology and poverty alleviation and "so, we are developing our remote, underdeveloped area and altogether." Terming the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as a visionary project of President Xi Jinping, he said the basic philosophy of BRI was development, economic prosperity, social progress, creating



jobs and the connectivity. He said the CPEC, a demonstration and flagship project of the BRI had helped Pakistan build critical infrastructure, road infrastructure and address energy shortages,

adding, "So as we move forward, it can contribute to the basic philosophy of BRI of helping people."

He said all this project of BRI was aligned with the vision of the government of Pakistan, which had people centric.

Appreciating the Chinese leadership and government for taking people out of extreme poverty, he said China's poverty alleviation programme had been a miracle, adding, bringing out almost 800 million people out of absolute poverty was remarkable and extraordinary. — APP

EU urged to probe France on Islamophobia

FOREIGN DESK

PARIS: A global coalition of 25 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has asked the European Commission to investigate France for its state-sponsored support to Islamophobia.

In a petition to Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, these NGOs representing 11 countries have asked her to try the French government at the European Court of Justice for imposing discriminatory practices.

"France has implemented numerous laws designed to limit freedom of belief and punish the manifestation of religion," said the petition.

Speaking to Anadolu Agency, Samira Sabir from Sabir's Legal Services who submitted the petition to the European Commission on behalf of the alliance said Islamophobia has become ingrained and mainstreamed in the European societies. "Islamophobia is not only a widespread and serious phenomenon in right-wing circles, but it is also ingrained in the mainstream of European societies," she said. The legal activist said that France provided an example of how state actors have institutionalized and legitimized Islamophobia through hate speech targeting Muslims.

Among the organizations who have signed the petition included Representative Council of France's Black Associations, Muslim Rights Watch Netherlands, the Islamic Central Council Switzerland, and Muslim Association for Human Rights from Spain.

Key oil price surges above \$70

FOREIGN DESK

RIYADH: Brent crude futures surged above \$70 a barrel on Monday for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic began, while US crude touched its highest in more than two years, following reports of attacks on Saudi Arabian facilities.

Brent crude futures for May hit \$71.38 a barrel in early Asian trade, the highest since January 8, 2020, and were at \$71.11 a barrel by 02:55 GMT, up \$1.75, or 2.5 percent.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude for April rose \$1.60, or 2.4 percent, to \$67.69. The April WTI price touched \$67.98 a barrel earlier, the highest since October 2018. Yemen's Houthi forces fired drones and missiles at the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry on Sunday, including a Saudi Aramco facility at Ras Tanura vital to petroleum exports, in what Riyadh called a failed assault on global energy security.

'Syria crisis could see 6M more displacements'

WEB DESK

DAMASCUS: At least 6 million more displacements can occur in Syria if the crisis continues for another decade, an independent humanitarian group said Monday.

"The Syria crisis could see at least 6 million more displacements over yet another decade if the conflict, insecurity, and economic deterioration continue unabated," Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) said in a statement announcing a new report on the issue.

"Ten years since the start of the biggest displacement crisis since World War 2, analysis by NRC shows that on average, an estimated 2.4 million displacements occurred in and outside Syria every year since the start of the conflict," said the statement.

Some 467,000 people have returned home in Syria in the past year while 1.8 million people were newly displaced, meaning for every person who returned home nearly four more people were displaced, according to NRC.

Displaced Syrians around the region have lost hope for returning home and "were more concerned about how they will put food on the table for their families, pay the rent, or take care of medical expenses than envisioning a future back home."

"The longer this crisis is left unsolved, the more we expect economic destitution to become the prominent push factor for further displacement," NRC Secretary-General Jan Egeland said.

Two killed as Myanmar workers go on strike

YANGON: Two anti-coup protesters were shot dead in Myanmar on Monday as demonstrators across the country sought to paralyse the economy with strike action following a weekend of night raids and arrests.

The country has been in turmoil since a February 1 coup ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and triggered mass protests against the new military junta. The police and military have responded with an increasingly brutal crackdown on demonstrators, with more than 50 people killed and nearly 1,800 arrested. Despite the risk, protesters rallied in parts of the commercial capital Yangon, the second-largest city

Mandalay and other towns around the country. In some areas, the authorities once again responded with force.

In the northern city of Myitkyina, security forces used tear gas and opened fire during street clashes with stone-throwing protesters. A live Facebook stream of the incident showed protesters dragging multiple wounded comrades by the arms and legs, scrambling to get them to medical care.

There was also grisly footage of bleeding bodies lying on beds as health workers frantically tried to resuscitate them.

One man was seen in the footage lying face down, with part of his skull blown out.

"Two men were shot dead on the spot, meanwhile three others including a woman were shot in her arm," a medic told AFP.

"We are about to send the dead bodies to the families." Banks, stores, shopping malls and some clothing factories were closed following an appeal by trade unions for a general strike to bring the economy to a standstill. "To continue economic and business activities as usual... will only benefit the military as they repress the energy of the Myanmar people," 18 unions said in a statement. "The time to take action in defence of our democracy is now." Unions are seeking to extend the impact of an ongoing "Civ-

il Disobedience Movement" — a campaign urging civil servants to boycott working under military rule — which has already hit state machinery hard.

The impact has been felt at every level of the national infrastructure, with hospital disruptions, empty ministry offices, and banks unable to operate.

The junta has warned that civil servants "will be fired" with immediate effect Monday if they continue to strike.

After a restless night with security forces sent to multiple neighbourhoods and shots heard in some areas, parts of Yangon woke to police pre-emptively breaking up protest barricades.

"Police and soldiers started clearing off Kyuntaw Road in Sanchaung township. They used sound bombs to stop protesters gathering," a resident told AFP.

"They are now using a bulldozer to remove the barriers protesters have made."

Security forces patrolled Yangon streets inspecting the inside of motorists' cars and demanding to see the phones of passers-by, according to an AFP reporter. Reports emerged overnight that security forces had taken over several public hospitals in Yangon. Physicians for Human Rights said it was appalled by these moves, calling them a violation of international law. — AFP

Briefs

Sh. Rashid
vows to root
out terrorism

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Sheikh Rashid Ahmed on Monday expressed the resolve of his government to root out extremism and terrorism from every nook and corner of the country.

He was talking to journalists at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) after inquiring about the health of two policemen who sustained bullet injuries on Sunday night when unidentified motorcyclists opened fire on them.

He appreciated the role of law enforcement agencies for sacrificing their lives to ensure the safety of masses. Rashid said Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) was being reorganized from Afghanistan to launch terrorist activities in Pakistan.

He noted that there were security threats in Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Karachi, but Pakistani security agencies were on high alert and ready to thwart any possible terrorist attempt. The Minister said five terrorists were killed on March 7 by the Armed forces and they were striving hard to eliminate terrorism from the country. The families of martyred cops were being given compensation money, besides welfare package, said the Minister. He also condemned the opposition's unpleasant incident that took place outside the Parliament House on March 6, the day of vote of confidence for Prime Minister Imran Khan.

PTI seeks
early hearing
Daska petition

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) candidate in the NA-75 Daska by-election moved a plea before the Supreme Court seeking early hearing of his petition challenging the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision to annul the by-polls and announce re-election. Ali Asjad Malhi filed the miscellaneous application, stating that the matter is of immense significance. The Election Commission has called for re-polling on March 18, therefore, his petition be heard on March 10, he said. Naming the ECP and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Nosheen Iftikhar as respondents in the case, the petitioner said the decision was not in line with the facts. The ECP didn't examine the available record, he said and demanded that the court annul the ECP decision.

On Feb 25, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) had ordered a re-election in the NA-75 Sialkot-Daska constituency over alleged rigging and irregularities. Moreover, the ECP had also ordered suspension of the relevant deputy commissioner, district police officer (DPO), assistant commissioner and SPDO Daska over "rigging" during the by-poll in the NA-75 constituency.

PIA resumes
flights between
Islamabad,
Chitral

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has resumed flight operation between Islamabad and Chitral that had been suspended for 1.5 years due to the spread of coronavirus pandemic. The national carrier has resumed flight service between Islamabad and Chitral after 1.5 years and announced that Rs5,920 will be charged for one-side trip. For Chitral, two flights will be operated from Islamabad twice in one week, said the PIA spokesperson, adding that the resumption of the flight op on the Chitral Sector will promote tourism. Moreover, it was also announced that two more flights have been increased from Karachi to Sialkot by the PIA in order to facilitate passengers and businesspersons.

Serena Hotels mark Int'l Women Day

Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, said, "At Serena we believe that investing in women is the most effective way to improve the standards of living of communities and many of our CSR initiatives work with women to empower them socially and economically

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels hosted a breakfast to celebrate International Women's Day and honour the women associated with and present in Serena. All the women guests, associates, Serena Business Complex partners and representatives of the civil society along with a large number of diplomats and their wives attended the event. Mrs. Samina Alvi, the First Lady was the chief guest. Aziz Boolani, CEO of Serena Hotels, said, "At Serena we believe that investing in women is the most effective way to improve the standards of living of communities and many of our CSR initiatives work with women to empower them socially and economically". The objectives of the International Women's Day are to celebrate the struggle for women's rights in the economic, social, political, and cultural domain, to reaffirm women's solidarity in the struggle for peace and to show what women have achieved. Boolani said, "Despite advances in gender equity, there is still much more to be done and Serena continues to provide safe spaces, networking opportunities and linkages to benefit women". The women entrepreneurs also set up various stalls featuring Pakistani handicrafts and traditional items. The first lady also took a round of various stalls and evinced interest in items displayed there. She also praised the work of artisans. The guests also enjoyed live music.

– Detailed coverage of the event shall be published in April issue of CENTRELINE magazine



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi, Mrs. Aziz Boolani and wife of Turkish ambassador cutting cake on the occasion of International Women Day celebrations, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi, CEO Serena Hotels Aziz Boolani and others posing for a picture on the occasion of International Women Day celebrations, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi taking interest in a stall on the occasion of International Women Day celebrations, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Mrs. Samina Alvi posing for a picture with wives of diplomats and other ladies on the occasion of International Women Day celebrations, at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA



ISLAMABAD: General Manager Islamabad Serena Hotel Michel A Galopin and wives of diplomats on the occasion of International Women Day at Islamabad Serena Hotel. – DNA

NCOC to review
decision on
reopening schools

ISLAMABAD: The National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) on Monday decided to review the decision to reopen schools amid the rising trend of coronavirus cases across the country, according to the The Associated Press of Pakistan. The NCOC meeting, presided over by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Asad Umar, was attended by National Coordinator Lt Gen Hamood Uz Zaman Khan as well as representatives from each province via video link. Last month, Federal Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood had announced that schools in major cities would resume routine classes from March 1 in view of the declining trend of Covid-19 cases across the country. But the trend now appears to be reversing, with Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on Health Dr Faisal Sultan, issuing a stark warning to "remember that the pandemic is not over" last week. During Monday's session, the NCOC also discussed updates from the provinces on the rising Covid-19 positivity rate, progress in the vaccination campaign as well as the national vaccine strategy. The meeting also discussed deferring the opening up of cinemas, indoor weddings and dine-in restaurants, which were expected to be allowed with effect from March 15. The next review on this matter is set to be held in the first week of April. The NCOC expressed its concerns over public complacency in following non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) – alternative measures to treat the disease other than medical treatment. These include following the SOP guidelines issued by the NCOC, such as mask-wearing, hand-washing and maintaining social distancing, among others. – DNA

Navy conducts
exercises with
Japan, Oman,
Russia and US

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship ALAMGIR with embarked helicopter participated in bilateral exercises with Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force Ship ARIAKE, Royal Oman Navy Ship KHASAB, Russian Federation Navy Ships STOIKY & KOLA and United States Navy Ship JOHN PAUL JONES in Gulf of Aden and North Arabian Sea. Exercises were aimed to enhance interoperability and augment collaborative efforts to ensuring maritime security in the region.

PNS ALAMGIR is presently deployed to undertake Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSP) in Gulf of Aden and North Arabian Sea. These patrols are conducted as PN initiative to contribute toward regional maritime security and to support international efforts against the menace of maritime terrorism, piracy and narco-arms smuggling.

Chinese firm to invest
Rs. 800m in agri sector

SHJUAAT HAMZA

ISLAMABAD: After the launch of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)'s first Rashakai SEZ, colonization of the second CPEC Allama Iqbal Industrial City (AIIC) Faisalabad begins with planned Rs.53.6 b Investment. Gwadar Pro quoting Board of Investment (BOI) on Monday stated that AIIC SEZ Committee accorded "approval to 15 applicants and allotted land of 320 acres".

The applicants include a Chinese Firm Zhengbang Agriculture Pakistan Private Limited with a plan Rs. 800 million investment in the agri sector. Amongst the other 14 local firms, Zahid Jee Textile Mills, Ocean Ceramics, and Ittehad Metals to initiate business establishments worth Rs.11.8 billion, Rs.11.2 billion and 7.5 b respectively.

Also, the Vehari SEZ Committee during a meeting approved its first zone enterprise and the colonization of the zone started with admission of a firm Suraya Aslam Paper Private Limited to establish a project worth Rs. 100 million.

In another development, the SEZ Committee of Rahimyar Khan allotted land and approved zone entry to Naseem Export Private Limited with a planned Rs 4.5 b investment.

The application for zone enterprise entry and allotment of land were submitted and processed via SEZ's MIS Module designed by the federal Board of Investment (BOI) recently. The module ensures transparency and works as a one-window operation, a vision of the government to ensure ease of doing business.

Along with the allotment of land, these enterprises are now entitled to SEZ's benefits, including custom duties

and tax exemption under the SEZ Act 2012.

Minister of State and Chairman Board of Investment (BOI) Atif Bokhari said that the automation process of SEZs, envisioned by the Prime Minister Imran Khan, is now "bearing fruits".

"The SEZ MIS Module was approved to facilitate investors to gain admission in zones and ensure transparency in allocation of plots in various SEZs," he added.

According to Fareena Mazhar, secretary Board of Investment (BOI), the international investors could easily avail the opportunity to identify and select the potential locations for setting up their units in the SEZs. "BOI would provide timely facilitation particularly availability of utilities to SEZs", she said and added that Board of Investment (BOI) will ensure handholding of the investors and provinces at every stage of the industrial development.

CAA to
allow new
airlines for
int'l flights

ATHAR SUFI

KARACHI: The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) has decided to facilitate new airlines under the Aviation Policy 2021 to allow operating international flights after completing the period of six months for domestic operations. The aviation authority has prepared recommendations to be sent to the higher authorities for allowing the new airlines to commence international flight operations. However, permission will be given to the new airlines on the condition of its performance, regulatory and punctuality. The performance review will include the timely departures and arrivals prior to getting permission for international flight operation. Moreover, it is declared mandatory to run domestic flights on social-economic routes by the airlines like Sukkur, Bawalpur and others.

UNODC
stresses for
more women
involvement

KHAYAM ABBASI

KYOTO: To achieve justice for women, we need more women in justice. Increases in women's representation and leadership in law enforcement and the judiciary have been linked to more investigations into crimes against women, better policing outcomes, and successful victim-centred approaches. They have also enabled systemic changes, including lower rates of violence, and greater integrity through diversity, which is key to disrupting corrupt practices. These are major victories for public trust and effective institutions. When women lead, we all win. But around the world, women are outnumbered by men in the justice and security sectors.

US, FB recognize Pak women entrepreneurs

"I am extremely grateful to USAID for enrolling me in this highly effective and engaging workshop," said Saira Jahan, owner of Moksha Resorts in Gilgit Baltistan

ABID RAZA

ISLAMABAD: The United States Mission to Pakistan, in partnership with Facebook, celebrated International Women's Day 2021 by recognizing the achievements of Pakistani women entrepreneurs who received #SheMeansBusiness training through the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Small and Medium Enterprise Activity. To date, USAID has provided training for 433 Pakistani women-owned micro, small, and medium enterprises under this initiative. The #SheMeansBusiness training initiative helps women-led businesses in Pa-

kistan and around the world utilize social media platforms, such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, to boost their online presence and sales. Through the USAID-Facebook partnership, Facebook Certified Trainers provide free online marketing training and support to women-led businesses that are struggling to market themselves to the right target audience.

"Women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and across the globe are triggering disruptions in the digital ecosystem and making tremendous strides to transform their innovative ideas into practical and profitable businesses and solutions," said USAID Mission Director Julie Koenen. "I

2022 Fulbright Student
Program announced

ISLAMABAD: The United States Educational Foundation in Pakistan (USEFP) has announced the opening of the 2022 Fulbright Student competition. The prestigious Fulbright Program is the flagship academic scholarship program of the U.S. Department of State and is offered in 160 countries. Since 2005, Pakistan's Fulbright Program is the world's largest in terms of financial contribution from the U.S. Government. The Government of Pakistan, through the Higher Education Commission (HEC), has also provided generous support. Every year approximately 100 Pakistanis begin master's programs, and another 50 begin PhD studies on Fulbright scholarships at leading U.S. universities. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the Fulbright program, which has been operating in Pakistan for 71 years. The Pakistan Fulbright Student Program fully funds graduate degree study, including tuition, maintenance, insurance, and air travel. On completing their degrees, returning Fulbright participants contribute to Pakistan's development and growth by teaching at Pakistani universities, or otherwise engaging in important civic and government service. – DNA

would like to thank Facebook for its efforts in supporting women entrepreneurs not just in Pakistan but across the globe. We look forward to expanding and building upon this collaboration."

"Women in Pakistan are extremely talented and have the potential to achieve great success; something we have observed over the years and continue to invest in," said Beth Ann Lim, Director of Facebook's Asia Pacific Policy Programs and Government Outreach. "Through the expansion of our #SheMeansBusiness program in Pakistan, we have designed trainings that will aid in the promotion of micro/small businesses being led by women – especial-

ly by those who are based in the rural areas."

During the event, women entrepreneurs who participated in the initiative shared how the training has helped them expand their businesses using online platforms.

"I am extremely grateful to USAID for enrolling me in this highly effective and engaging workshop," said Saira Jahan, owner of Moksha Resorts in Gilgit Baltistan. "Before this, I checked audience insights only to monitor engagement, but after these sessions, I use these tools to influence my strategy to identify target audiences, tourist trends, etc. The trainer made everything very easy to comprehend. Great initiative!"