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Countering Islamophobia 'top priority': UN Chief

India putting regional peace at stake: Qureshi

UN Secy Gen statement a victory: Shibli



Briefs

Trump mulls full troop pullout from Afghanistan

DNA

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday at a White House news conference renewed his desire for a full military withdrawal from Afghanistan. However, Trump added that he had not set a target date, amid speculation he might make ending America's longest war part of his re-election campaign. "We're there 19 years and, yeah, I think that's enough. We can always go back if we want to." President Trump further said "Well, I think everyone knows we're down to less than 8,000 troops. We're with leadership in many different fields and in many different parts of that country. We're dealing with the Taliban, we're dealing with the president. The president now has gotten himself straightened out with the two presidents, but we're dealing with because they had, as you know, they had competing factors and factions."

Uzbekistan gold export increase

DNA

TASHKENT: In January-April 2020, Uzbekistan exported gold worth more than US\$1.55 billion. This is evidenced by the data of the State Statistics Committee. According to the agency, the growth compared to January-April 2019 made up 26.5%. The share of gold in the export structure of Uzbekistan in January-April 2020 reached 35.3%. Uzbekistan has increased gold exports in recent years. Gold exports in 2015 exceeded US\$823.9 million, in 2016 - US\$738.2 million, in 2017 - US\$1.6 billion and in 2018 - US\$2.91 billion and in 2019 - US\$4.92 billion.

PM Imran says

Fascist Modi gvot threat to regional peace

The Hindutva Supremacist Modi Govt with its arrogant expansionist policies, akin to Nazi's Lebensraum (Living Space), is becoming a threat to India's neighbours,"

NEHAL MIRAJ

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday said the "fascist Modi government" in India had become a threat to neighbouring States, putting region's peace in danger. "The Hindutva Supremacist Modi Govt with its arrogant expansionist policies, akin to Nazi's Lebensraum (Living

Space), is becoming a threat to India's neighbours," the prime minister said in a tweet giving reference of Hitler's policies justifying the German expansion in Europe based on racism. Imran Khan said India was a threat to Pakistan in shape of false flag operation, while other neighbours including Bangladesh faced the threat through Citizenship Act and Nepal and

China through border disputes. The prime minister said minorities in India were also under threat after being relegated to second class citizens. Imran Khan mentioned that India after illegal annexation of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir were subject to committing a war crime under 4th Geneva Convention and now also for laying claim to Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

India putting regional peace at stake: Qureshi

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has warned India's aggressive policy towards its neighbours is putting at stake the regional peace and security. Talking separately to PTV and a private news channel on Wednesday, he said the world community must take notice of it. The Foreign Minis-



ter expressed concerns over the construction of air strips and other infrastructure in the disputed territory of Ladakh. He said China does not want

confrontation with India and desires to sort out issues through dialogue. He, however, said China cannot remain oblivious to India's illegal constructions. Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the Indian atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir are before everybody and it is bent upon changing the demographic composition of the territory. He said India has also used the land of Afghanistan against Pakistan.

USAID commits US\$2 mln for Central Asian migrants

DNA

TASHKENT: The U.S. Government through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has committed US\$2 million dollars to protect migrants in Central Asia during the COVID-19 pandemic. This support will be delivered through the ongoing USAID-funded Safe Migration in Central Asia project, implemented

by Winrock International, and includes support to migrants from Uzbekistan. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a humanitarian and financial crisis for millions of migrants in Central Asia, many of whom have been stranded in transit and destination countries across Central Asia. The loss of jobs and remittances has left families without adequate resources and legal protec-

tions. Migrants also lack information about how to protect themselves from the virus, as well as the resources to do so. Through the Safe Migration in Central Asia project, USAID will deliver much-needed assistance including informational resources; referrals to essential services; alternative livelihoods support; and skills training to help migrants navigate the difficult situation they are facing.



ISLAMABAD: US Charge D Affaires Paul Jones awarding employees Irum who helped during pandemic. US embassy gives special awards to employees every month. DNA

OIC welcomes UN Secy Gen statement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (OIC-IPHRC) on Wednesday welcomed United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres' rejection of anti-Muslim bigotry during the situation of coronavirus pandemic. "(This) echoes his commitment to challenge and combat ethno-nationalism and all forms of intolerances which are rising in post-COVID scenario," the OIC-IPHRC said in a tweet. The OIC-IPHRC reiterated that instances of Islamophobia were violative of human rights law, undermined multiculturalism and posed a threat to international peace and security.

Illegal polls in occupied Karabakh

Azerbaijan sends letter to UN Secy General

The letter refers to the so-called "elections" held by Armenia in the occupied Azerbaijani territories on March 31

DNA

BAKU: Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Yashar Aliyev sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres within discussions on the topic titled 'Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development', Defence.az reports. The letter refers to the so-called "elections" held by

Armenia in the occupied Azerbaijani territories on March 31, and strong condemnation of these illegal activities by the international community. The appeal emphasized that on March 12 and April 14, Armenia held illegal "elections" in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan. "The "elections" are absolutely illegitimate, because they were held as a result of the ongoing military occupation and ethnic cleansing of Azerbaijani

territories. This means a violation of the Constitution and legislation of Azerbaijan, as well as the norms and principles of international law. The world community once again with a majority of votes confirmed the unacceptability of the results of these illegitimate, so-called "elections", the collective rejection of their validity, and therefore demonstrated a consistent and principled position on the lack of their power of influence."

EU's recovery plan

DNA

BRUSSELS: European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen will on Wednesday propose a 750-billion-euro post-virus recovery fund for Europe, but will have to win over sceptical member states to push it through.

Masses to get relief in budget: Hafeez

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Abdul Hafeez Sheikh has said the government is preparing 'Corona Budget' and vowed to provide maximum relief to the people in the upcoming budget. Talking to a private news channel, he said the government is facilitating the business community as it is playing an important role for boosting economic activities in the country. The adviser said the government is facing the challenges of coronavirus and economy at the same time and it is making efforts to strengthen the national economy and combating COVID-19 effectively. He said the government would introduce an agricultural policy in collaboration with all provinces and in this connection prices of fertilizer would be reduced to facilitate farmers. To another query, he said the government would facilitate the construction industry in the coming budget and it has reduced 90 per cent tax for Pakistan Housing Scheme. He said objective of the government was to provide maximum relief to the people and make their lives easy. -DNA

Uzbekistan's foreign trade turnover reaches US\$10.82 billion

DNA

TASHKENT: According to the results of January-April 2020, the foreign trade turnover (FTT) of Uzbekistan reached US\$10.82 billion, which, compared with the same period of last year, decreased by US\$1.3 billion. Of the total FTT, exports reached US\$4.41 billion (a decrease of 10.6% compared to January-April 2019 was recorded), while imports reached US\$6.4 billion (a decrease of 10.8%) A passive balance of foreign trade turnover in the amount of US\$1.99 billion was registered. Uzbekistan has trade rela-

tions with more than 150 countries of the world. The largest volume of its foreign trade turnover among them was recorded with the Russian Federation (16.7%), China (16.6%), Kazakhstan (8.3%), the Republic of Korea (7.4%), Turkey (5.6%), Kyrgyzstan (2.0%) and Germany (2.0%). Significant changes have been achieved in the structure of exports as a result of increased production of products that replaced imported goods and diversification of industrial production. In addition, there is a strengthening of relations with neighboring countries, and a lot of work

is being done to develop relations in the socio-economic, commercial, industrial and cultural spheres with these countries. In particular, there have been significant changes in the FTT in recent years with neighboring countries, such as Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. The presence of an active foreign trade balance with Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan can be considered as a positive result in the country's foreign trade. The largest volume of the FTT with other states (except for neighboring countries) falls on Russia, China, the Republic of Korea and Turkey.

Among the 20 major partner countries in foreign economic activity, there is also an active foreign trade balance with six countries, in particular with Afghanistan (US\$213.7 million), Kyrgyzstan (US\$138.8 million), Tajikistan (US\$93.7 million), Turkey (US\$42.8 million), France (US\$23.6 million) and Iran (US\$8.0 million). With the remaining 14 countries, a passive balance of foreign trade is maintained. One third of the FTT volume falls on the CIS countries and, in recent years, there is a tendency to increase this indicator. This, in turn, indicates the expansion of foreign

economic relations with the CIS countries. As a result of measures taken by the government of the republic to strengthen cooperation with the CIS countries and comprehensive support for foreign trade, the share of foreign trade of the CIS countries, compared to the same period of 2018, increased by 3.1% and their share in foreign trade, according to the results of January-April 2020, made up 35.1%. The volume of foreign trade turnover of other states in January-April 2020 decreased (a decrease of 10.5%) and made up 64.9% of the total foreign trade turnover.

The largest volume of exported goods among major partner countries accounted for mineral fuel, lubricating oil and similar materials, industrial goods, and various finished products. According to the results of January-April 2020, the volume of export of services made up US\$749.3 million, or 17.0% of its total volume and decreased by 22.8% compared to the same period of 2019. Over the past three years, the share of services in total exports has increased due to growth. In the export of services, the largest share falls on transport services (61.6%) and travel (tourism) (27.1%).

NDMA launches hotline

FARUKH SHAHZAD

ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Wednesday operationalised a hotline 051 111 222 999 for registering and resolving locust related complaints. The hotline has been established at the operation room of National Locust Control Centre (NLCC). A spokesman of NDMA said in a statement that the aggrieved farmers could register their complaints about the existence of locust in their respective areas or need of spray on the hotline for 24 hours.

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Online sales can create 780,000 jobs in Pakistan

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The online sales in Pakistan have increased significantly and if Pakistan pursues the development of logistics service and instant delivery service, it will create 78,000 jobs.

The traditional offline sales around the world have been seriously affected due to the outbreak of COVID-19. The online sales have been developing rapidly, and as far as I know, online sales in Pakistan have also increased significantly.

“If Pakistan pursues the development of logistics service and instant delivery service, and reaches the level of China, it will create 780,000 employment opportunities for Pakistanis according to the proportion of population. The number may grow to 1.56 million in the future,” Cheng Xizhong, visiting professor at Southwest University of Political Science and Law said in his article published by China Economic Net here on Tuesday.

Small and medium-sized enterprises are now facing great difficulties due to the pandemic, but various online sales platforms have provided them with new opportunities.

More and more companies of clothing, shoes and hats, electronic products, frozen food, etc. have begun to sell their products on online platforms.

Online sales have become an important business mode during the pandemic period, and will also become the future development trend of business.

From January to April this year, the total retail sales of social consumer goods in China increased by 6.1 percent over the same period of last year. It is estimated that domestic consumption in China will increase further in the next few months of this year. We would like to share China's experience with Pakistani friends.

He believed that the development of e-commerce needs strong support from at least two industries: the mobile communication technology and the logistics service. Now, no matter in urban or rural areas, e-commerce, logistics service and mobile communication are highly developed in China. We may stay indoors and buy whatever we need through online platforms.

In Pakistan, e-commerce is developing rapidly, but mobile communication and logistics service may be a little behind as some people in rural areas may not have mobile phones. There is also a conceptual problem. As far as I know, some Pakistanis still like to go shopping in department stores and pay cash, which is considered as a kind of enjoyment. But in the current pandemic period, it would be better not to go out.

Attack on Sikh temple condemned

ISLAMABAD, May 27 (APP):The Kashmiris from across the Line of Control (LoC) and the world over including senior All Parties Hurriyat Conference leader and Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Chairman Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai have strongly condemned an attack on a Sikh temple in the United Kingdom and have expressed solidarity with the Sikh community.

According to Kashmir Media Service, Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai in a statement issued in Srinagar while condemning the incident that took place at Guru Arjan Dev Ji Gurdwara in Derby, UK, said that the incident was also painful because the Sikh nation had always championed the just cause of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Chairman, Shabbir Ahmed Dar in a statement also expressed deep shock and anguish over the cowardly and criminal act against the gurdwara saying the purpose of the act was to create disharmony between Muslims and Sikh brothers. Jammu and Kashmir Youth Social Forum Chairman, Umar Adil Dar in a statement condemned the vandalism at Guru Arjan Dev Gurdwara in Derby describing it as an individual act. He demanded thorough investigation of the inhuman act. He lauded the support of the Sikh community to the Kashmir cause.

Kashmir Tehreek khawateen Chairperson Zamarda Habib in a statement issued in Srinagar while denouncing the attack stressed the need for Sikh-Muslim unity to thwart the evil designs of the common enemy. Hurriyat leaders Yasmeen Raja, Firdous Ahmad Shah and Khawaja Firdous in their statements also denounced the sacrilegious act.— APP

Boat conducts water monitoring in park

DNA

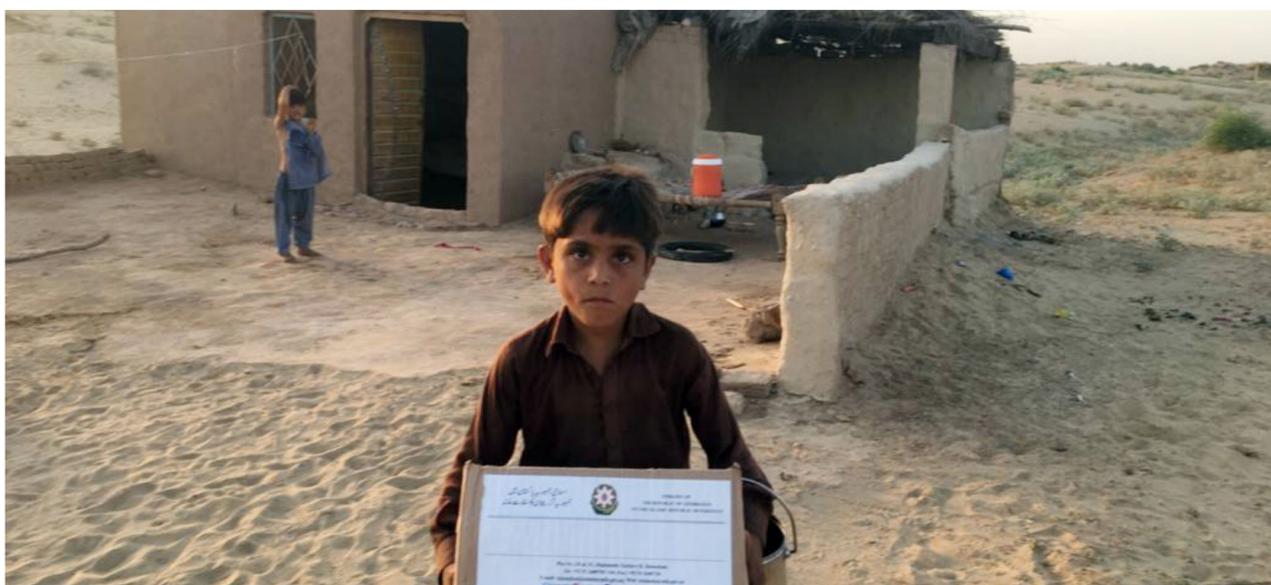
ISLAMABAD: An unmanned boat with 5G wireless technology has been used to monitor water quality in a Beijing park.

According to the Beijing Daily, the unmanned boat shuttles in the waters of Beihai Park to collect data on water quality and the surrounding environment, reported by Radio Pakistan.

The 1.2-meter-long boat is equipped with high-definition cameras and a water quality sensor, which can transmit real-time data to a monitoring platform through the 5G network.

The boat can be remotely controlled or travel along a preset route. It can automatically avoid obstacles by scanning through its radar.

After charging for two hours, the unmanned boat can travel in the waters for five to six hours. It can transmit several water quality parameters such as pH value and turbidity back to the monitoring platform and update the information every 15 seconds.



ISLAMABAD: Embassy of Azerbaijan distributed grocery items to over 400 families in various parts of Pakistan in the wake of COVID 19.—DNA

Speakers shed light on Sino-Pak relations during a webinar

DNA

ISLAMABAD: “Pakistan and China enjoy a unique relationship, which has grown with the passage of time, and at present it is far more diverse and vibrant, than ever.”

This was stated by Zahoore Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific), addressing a webinar organized to commemorate 69th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China. On 21st May, 1951 diplomatic relations were established between Pakistan and China. To mark the occasion, China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized a webinar. H.E. Yao Jing, Ambassador of China

in Pakistan made keynote remarks, while Mr. Zahoore Ahmed, Additional Secretary (Asia-Pacific) at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was the Chief Guest. Panelists included Pakistan's former diplomats who had represented Pakistan in China over the past decades.

Dr. Talat Shabbir in his introductory remarks underlined that during past 69 year's relationship between China and Pakistan witnessed changes in international system. Pakistan and China have complete identity of views on all major regional and international issues. He highlighted that CPSC continues to strive towards deepening and promoting Pakistan-China bilateral relationship through research, analyses and outreach activities.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Director-General ISSI, in his welcome remarks, underscored that it is special occasion to mark establishment of diplomatic relations. Projects such as construction of Karakorum Highway, JF-17, FTA-I and II, and CPEC are building blocks that have only strengthened the relationship over the decades. He said work of CPSC and ISSI have assumed greater importance in the age of narrative and it is extremely important for both sides to maintain constant communication and coordination to save the relationship from detractors.

Speaking at the occasion, former foreign secretary Salmaan Bashir paid tribute to leaders and diplomats who have nurtured the relationship over the decades.

He noted that it is truly genuine friendship which cannot be quantified and explained through traditional theories of the international relations.

Meanwhile, former diplomat, Raiz Khokhar opined that Pakistan-China relationship is a story of model state-to-state relationship that has evolved over the decades. Pakistan cannot thank China enough for extending vital support during difficult times in 1965 and 1971.

Additional Secretary Zahoore Ahmed, highlighted that at present we are in new stage of the relationship which is dynamics and multidimensional. Most importantly, relationship with China remains a central pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy. He specifically highlighted extensive support

of China to Pakistan during the recent COVID-19 crisis, which he noted underscored strength of the relationship.

Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former Ambassador to China, underlined the significance of strategic cooperation for regional stability, and noted that Pakistan-China relationship has assumed regional and international importance. Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman ISSI and also former ambassador to China underscored that five principles of peaceful co-existence continue to guide the bilateral relationship.

He highlighted that youth needs to be engaged in various facets of expanding cooperation for enhancing people to people contacts. In his keynote remarks,

Ambassador Yao Jing commended CPSC and ISSI for organizing the webinar to commemorate establishment of bilateral relationship, which he noted continues to be guided by mutual respect and mutual support to each other.

He underscored that a key feature of bilateral engagement is non-interference in internal affairs and support to each other's core interests. These central tenets have remained consistent over the decades. He said China is satisfied with the current direction of the relationship, as it has expanded in recent years to economic sphere.

Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, DG-ISSI, delivered concluded remarks and thanked esteemed guests and panelists for joining the webinar.

ICCI calls for increasing budget of Islamabad

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Ahmed Waheed, President, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded that development funds of Islamabad should be increased in the next budget so that the city could develop better and play an active role in improving the economy.

He said that development works in Islamabad were stalled for the last many years due to which not only the citizens were facing problems but growth of business and industrial activities was also suffering. He said that street lights in industrial and commercial areas were not working while footpaths and roads were also in broken condi-

tion. He further said that sanitation, water and sewerage systems in Islamabad were also in disarray. He said that for the last 4 years, no development work was done in markets and industrial areas due to which the condition of these business and industrial clusters has deteriorated significantly. He emphasized that development budget for Islam-

abad should be increased to address these issues and urged that CDA & MCI should focus on better development of industrial areas and markets to facilitate the growth of business activities.

Muhammad Ahmed Waheed said that Islamabad was the capital of the country so it should be a role model in terms of develop-

ment for other cities of the country. He appealed to Amir Ali Ahmed, Chairman CDA/Chief Commissioner Islamabad and Sheikh Anser Aziz Mayor Islamabad to plan development projects of Islamabad for the next year in consultation with business community so that with joint efforts, it could be developed as a modern city of the country.

Zong 4G shines as a ray of hope

LAHORE: Zong 4G marks this Eid as a tribute to the resilience of the Pakistani Nation as it releases its much-awaited campaign titled #humhainone. As the world continues battling with the pandemic, Zong 4G has come forward with a message of hope, optimism and unity.

The star of the campaign is Pakistan's No. 1 Singer, Atif Aslam, who hosts international model Polina Chepurnova in a journey through the No. 1 Travel Destination of 2020 - Pakistan. The captivating TV advertisement is a unique blend of cultural heritage, traditional music and the openhearted hospitality of the people of Pakistan. As the country's widest 4G network of 14,000 cell sites connecting Pakistan's largest customer base, Zong 4G has always stood with the people of Pakistan.

People urged to take SOPs seriously

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Aftab Jahangir on Wednesday said that the government has efficiently conveyed the Corona related messages and SOPs to masses however the people have not taken these measures seriously. He expressed concern that unfortunately the general public has not observed social distancing and safety measures during Eid shopping, while it is a critical situation and any carelessness can further spread the virus, a private news channel reported.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Mayor Zeeshan Naqvi visited I 10 area and inquired about water related problems of the residents.—DNA

AIOU formulates policy of financial assistance during lock-down

SAIFULLA ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has formulated a policy for providing financial assistance to

deserving students on the basis of their attested documents during the lock-down period of COVID-19.

The students who have applied for assistance in phase-2 of semester Spring 2020 would only be re-

quired to provide attested documents in support of their applications, to their respective regions.

These documents will be verified by the Regional Assessment Committee (RAC) and as per the pol-

icy, approved by the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Zia Ul-Qayyum, the students will be accommodated in the payable fee in the coming semester on the basis of the committee's recommendation. According to

the Director Students' Affairs, Rana Tariq Javed, the University's Regions offices across the country will follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for meeting with the students to decide the merit of their applications.

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Dealing with displacements

COVID-19 is raging across the world but even in these trying times people are being displaced or forced to migrate. There are two major reasons for this: one is the continuing conflicts in various hot-spot, and second is lack of livelihood forcing people to move. According to some latest figures, over half a million people have been displaced from their homes in conflict zones during the past two to three months. Though the UN and other peace organizations have been calling for a global ceasefire during the pandemic, warring factions have paid no heed to such pleas. Most of the armed conflicts around the world have seen no letup in casualties and fatalities coupled with mass displacements and migrations. There are as many as 20 countries where major displacements have taken place in recent months; the highest number being in Africa and especially in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

These displacements are imposed on people when gun-wielding warlords with their soldiers invade villages and force people to leave their homes and move on into wilderness. The victims of these atrocities become extremely vulnerable to disease and starvations as their families have no wherewithal to protect themselves against the coronavirus or to fight against the militants. The worst part is that the world community has taken no notice of such recent displacements and no plan has been developed to tackle an impending crisis when these displaced people start contracting the virus in large numbers. There has not been any major effort to halt the conduct of hostilities and settle disputes through talks.

There has to be a systematic response not only to the pandemic but also to the displacements caused by civil wars and insurgencies. Attacks and fighting have continued from Afghanistan and Yemen to Chad and Congo, with devastating impact on children and women.

Other countries that have witnessed mass displacements include Central African Republic, Myanmar, Niger, Somalia, and Syria. In these countries thousands of people have been rendered homeless by continuing conflicts. Then there are migrants who were on the lowest paid jobs and now find themselves even without that meagre living. According to the UN data nearly 10 percent of the population in at least 15 countries have been forced to migrate because of Covid-19 and the resultant joblessness. Increasing border restrictions also have an impact on the mobility of migrants and the humanitarian organizations are unable to reach such people. The world should not forget about these people who are facing miserable conditions in displacement and migration. The UN should lead a coordinated effort to counter this menace, and the world community must come together to help the UN in this matter.



What next?

AFTER the air-crash tragedy that claimed 96 lives onboard with just two miraculous survivors in Karachi, speculations are rife about the possible causes of the crash. But before discussing that, we would like to highlight a couple of other things too. First, the irregular construction of multistoried buildings in close proximity with the airport should be a cause of concern for building-control authorities not only in Sindh but in other provinces too. When the unfortunate plane crashed on a residential area in Model Colony, the streets were too narrow for the rescue vehicles to reach the crash site. It is a common occurrence in most cities of Pakistan that house owners extend their home boundaries well into the streets illegally, and thus the approach roads and the width of streets keeps narrowing. It is good that the Edhi and Chhipa Trust ambulances, and rescue workers from other state and non-state organizations were prompt in reaching the crash site.

In most cases, whenever an accident takes place our rescue efforts are not well-coordinated. Individuals and organizations respond to the tragedy in their own way, resulting in haphazard rescue work. Finally, when such tragedies take place, we go into an overdrive to propound various theories without waiting for the inquiry to complete.

People also start showing their apprehensions about the impartiality and transparency of such inquiries. This is because in the past most inquiry reports were not released and shared with the public. In this particular case, we would like to underscore the importance of a thoroughly professional and independent inquiry involving technical experts of civil aviation, Airbus representatives, and maybe a couple of senior pilots who can critically analyze the available data from the black box, and from air-traffic control.

In the past we have seen that such inquiries were delayed till the time people forget about them; this practice must stop.

Finally, may we say that it would have made for sensitive solidarity had the prime minister visited Karachi. Such matters are fairly serious and we as a nation need to reconsider our attitudes. We suggest that while the inquiry is being held, a thorough review of the nearby localities of all major airports in the country should be carried out. All high-rises and towers in the vicinity of airports must be dismantled.

All major cities of the country must have a functioning and well-oiled rescue mechanism that should spring into action immediately after any such unfortunate accident. And finally, we must stress the importance of an independent and transparent inquiry into the crash so that the facts can be shared with the people.

Just bury the hatchet

Ali Sukhanver



Even senior Indian security officials are admitting that at present the Border incidents are at their highest since 2015. The basic purpose of the recent talks in the last days of this May was not to settle down the deep rooted conflicting issues between the two countries but to 'lower down the temperature' between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

The recent talks between the Indian and Chinese military hi-ups have ended after adding more tension to the situation. Experts say that things are heading towards a serious break down in relations between the two countries. Even senior Indian security officials are admitting that at present the Border incidents are at their highest since 2015. The basic purpose of the recent talks in the last days of this May was not to settle down the deep rooted conflicting issues between the two countries but to 'lower down the temperature' between the nuclear-armed neighbors. The most interesting fact pointed out by the officials is that 'neither army was willing to compromise'.

At present the basic reason of this rising tension rather the bone of contention is that India is working on construction plan of a road at the Pangong Tso which would connect the disputed border between the two countries. Pangong Tso also known as the Pangong Lake is an endorheic lake in the Himalayas. An endorheic means a basin-like shape limited drainage water reservoir which normally retains water but does not allow outflow to other external bodies of water, such as rivers or oceans. Instead it converges into lakes or swamps, permanent or seasonal. At its broadest point the width of the Pangong Tso Lake is about 5 Km and this 134 km long lake travels from India to the Tibetan Autonomous Region, China. On construction of this connecting road, China has serious reservations as this road may prove a security threat to China. In the first week of this May, the Chinese and Indian troops had serious clashes on the banks of the lake leaving dozens of soldiers injured. Most of the injured ones were from the Indian Army. Once again

on 9th of May the two armies had another serious clash close to the site of the Doklam standoff.

Doklam is a narrow plateau lying in the tri-junction of India, China and Bhutan. According to China, Doklam is a disputed territory between China and Bhutan. China considers the presence of Indian troops in that area is as a transgression. On the other hand India claims that it acts in the area on behalf of Bhutan, with which it has a 'special relationship'. The situation of conflict and confrontation between the two countries at Doklam is not new, even three years back in 2017; the situation became tense in the same way when the military troops of the two countries engaged in a warlike scenario.

Doklam is not the only point of confrontation between China and India; Siliguri Corridor is also one of the points of conflict. This is a narrow passage close to an isolated plateau in the mighty Himalayan region. It is the place where three countries India, Bhutan and China converge. This passage connects India's northeast states with the rest of the country. Commonly this corridor is known as 'Chicken's Neck' where the word 'Chicken' refers to India. Encroachments and illegal advancements by the Indian troops in this area have always been a strong reason of conflict and dispute between the two countries. Keeping the neighboring countries engaged in a state of war has become a routine matter for India. From Pakistan to Nepal, none of the neighboring countries is having safe and friendly relations with India.

Recently the government of Nepal has also expressed its resentment on Indian activities inside its territory. This resentment was specifically with

reference to the Kalapani Territory. According to the details in the second week of this May the Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a strategically crucial link road which connects Dharchula in the Indian state of Uttarakhand to the Lipulekh pass near the Line of Actual Control. The southern side of the pass is called Kalapani territory and Nepal claims this territory as its integral part. The Government of Nepal has warned the Government of India to refrain from carrying out any activity inside the territory of Nepal. The people of Nepal are also taking this 'inauguration' as a serious intrusion and invasion to their country. On 9th of May several people gathered outside the Indian embassy in Kathmandu and protested against the construction of this road-link. They were holding placards and raising slogans against Indian hegemonic designs. According to different news agencies, people in a large number joined the protest despite a nationwide coronavirus lockdown.

Creating a warlike scenario is never a wise desire particularly in the days when the whole world is in a state of war with the pandemic of Covid-19. In shape of Corona, we all are facing a stronger rather merciless enemy. We are left with just two options; either to destroy this brutal enemy or let it destroy all of us. So in the larger interest of the world and for the sake of our survival, we will have to behave intelligently. Indian stubbornness, if not controlled, may lead to a new war in the region which would directly or indirectly affect the peace of the whole South Asia.

May 28: Pakistan Became Declared Nuclear Power

Sajjad Shaukat



Showing aggressive deigns against Pakistan, on May 11, 1998, India conducted three nuclear tests and on May 13, 1998, two nuclear tests. Notably, both the countries have waged three wars, especially on the issue of the Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK). Therefore, in response, Pakistan successfully carried out its five nuclear tests on May 28, 1998 and the sixth one on May 30, 1998. In this regard, it took only 17 days for Pakistan to successfully carry out its five nuclear tests on May 28, 1998 and the sixth one on May 30, 1998, at Chaghi in Balochistan. For the purpose, about five thousands scientists including Dr Samarmand Mubarak and particularly Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan had worked day and night and made the defence of the country impregnable. Therefore, with national zeal and fervour in different parts of the country, Youm-e-Takbeer (The day of greatness) is celebrated every year on May 28 as the national day to mark the conduction of nuclear tests.

It is noteworthy that in 1974, India conducted first nuclear test in Rajasthan's Pokhran to pressurise Islamabad. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to power, he paid much attention to the nuclear programme, as he knew that India would apply its coercive diplomacy on Islamabad or could attack Pakistan. Meanwhile, during many crises such as Kargil issue of 1999 and attack on the Indian parliament by the militants in 2001, New Delhi concentrated its troops across the Pakistan's border, with the intention to invade Pakistan, while raising a series of false allegations against Islamabad. Pakistan was also compelled to deploy its Army along the Pak-India border. But, India did not dare to initiate a war because of Pakistan's 'Nukes.' Similarly, in the past, Indian rulers had intended to implement their doctrine of limited war in Kashmir, but

they could not do

so owing to Pakistan's atomic weapons. And in the aftermath of false flag Mumbai terror attacks of 2008, India accused Pakistan's primary spy agency ISI of supporting the militants. Although Pak diplomats denied Indian self-fabricated story, but New Delhi adopted a threatening posture against Islamabad. Once again, it deployed its troops across the Pakistani border. Again, Pakistan also concentrated its military to give a matching response to India.

Likewise, in the aftermath of the false flag terror of Pulwama, very tension escalated rapidly between the two countries on February 27, 2019. In response to the Indian so-called pre-emptive air strike near the town of Balakot, close to the border with Pakistan's sector of Kashmir, Pakistan Air Force (PAF) shot down two Indian Air Force (IAF) fighter jets and launched aerial strikes at six targets in the (IOK). Pak Army also captured an Indian pilot.

The truth about India's surgical strikes exposed, when Indian top civil and military leaders failed in providing any evidence. The then Indian India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj also demitted that no Pakistani soldier or citizen died in the air strike in Balakot. Nevertheless, after the Pulwama assault, India tried to make ground for a prospective invasion of Pakistan. But, it failed in acting upon its plans to wage a conventional war due to Pakistan's atomic weapons.

In fact, since Narendra Modi, the leader of the ruling party BJP, became Indian Prime Minister; he has been implementing ideology of Hindutva (Hindu Nationalism) by persecuting the Muslims and creating war-hysteria among the Hindus against Pakistan.

In this respect, Indian extremist rulers' various moves such as abrogation of the special status of the Jammu and Kashmir to turn Muslim majority into minority in the Indian Held Kashmir, continued lockdown in that region, martyrdom of thousands of the Kashmiris there, issuance of a notorious map to bifurcate the Kashmir region into two union territories and introduction of new domicile law against the majority of Kashmiris, including continued shelling by the Indian forces show that New Delhi has completely ended any sort of dialogue with Islamabad to settle the Kashmir dispute.

Now, the entire world is facing the coronavirus pandemic which has, rapidly, been taking the lives of many persons. At this crucial juncture, international community is coping with this deadly virus. But, under the guise of coronavirus, India has politicised the COVID-19 epidemic by accusing the Indian Muslims and Pakistan for spreading the virus in India. Availing the opportunity, Indian rulers have imposed various kinds of restrictions on the Muslims, while Hindu extremists have set off a series of assaults against Muslims across the country. In this connection, DG of Inter-services Public Relations (ISPR) Maj-Gen Babar Iftikhar said on April 24, this year: "Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa stated...India's attempt to link coronavirus with Muslims and Pakistan has failed badly...New Delhi has been promoting Hindutva and saffron terrorism... The fire of hatred which was first ignited in Indian-Occupied Kashmir has now spread across India...the whole world is facing the crises due to the coronavirus pandemic...India is still adamant on promoting RSS agenda in the region". In its reaction to the Indian 15-Corps Command interview with BBC on April

13, 2020, Maj-Gen Babar Iftikhar termed India's insinuation about infiltration and ceasefire violations (CFVs) "baseless" and elaborated that they were "designed to divert global and domestic attention from the 'unending fiasco...No less delusional are the allegations about Pakistan infiltrating COVID-affected individuals into IOJK'".

Referring to the LoC, in a statement, ISPR pointed out on April 29, this year, "A Pakistan Army soldier and two civilians embraced martyrdom when Indian Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violations along the Line of Control... Pakistan Army responded effectively, resulting in heavy losses to Indian troops, Chief of Army Staff General Qamar Javed Bajwa said the Indian Army will always get a befitting response to ceasefire violations...The Indian forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary have been continuously targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars...India has committed 913 ceasefire violations this year".

It is mentionable that Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on August 16, 2014 had threatened Pakistan with nuclear war, while BJP leader Dr. Subramaniam Swami had also stated in the same year that India needed only two years to defeat Pakistan militarily, and the only solution of Kashmir was war, as "there is no peaceful, democratic solution". Taking cognizance of Indian war-like diplomacy, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan and Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has, repeatedly, been stating to inform the international community and the UNO that New Delhi can arrange any Pulwama-type false flag operation to carry out another military adventure inside Pakistani

side of Kashmir—and any conventional war between both the countries could result into atomic war, having "severe repercussions, if they 'silently witness ethnic cleansing of Muslims in IOK... they have failed to implement the UN resolutions on Kashmir...[which] remains a nuclear flashpoint in the South Asian region'".

It is worth-mentioning that the US dropped atomic bombs on Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as Tokyo had no such devices to retaliate. After the World War II, nuclear weapons were never used. These were only employed as a strategic threat. Nonetheless, unlike the former Soviet Union and the US who followed the principles of nuclear deterrence, popularly known as balance of terror, war-like situation exists between New Delhi and Islamabad due to the perennial firing by the Indian forces across the LoC in wake of the unsettled issue of Kashmir. So, India's any military adventure or a prolonged conventional conflict with Pakistan could culminate into nuclear war.

Moreover, it is owing to atomic bombs that Pakistan can talk to India with honour and dignity, discouraging India from casting an evil eye on our motherland. However, May 28 is celebrated as Youm-e-Takbeer by all the segments of society, including general masses; as on this very day, Pakistan became the 7th declared nuclear power in the world.

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Briefs

Iranian official in Kabul

DNA

KABUL: A probe team led by Iran's deputy Foreign Minister Mohsin Baharwand on Tuesday met with Haneef Atmar, Afghanistan's acting foreign minister, and the two sides discussed issues around the investigation of the border incident, the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs said in a statement. On May 22, the Afghan Foreign Ministry said that talks between Afghan border commissioners and Iran concerning last month's alleged drowning of Afghan migrants by the Iranian border police ended without results on Friday. "Mr. Mohsin Baharwand expressed his deep sorrow over the incident and condemned the incident in the strongest possible terms," said MoFA. According to the statement, the Iranian delegation said that such an act was not acceptable to the people and government of Iran and that Iran is ready to investigate the case together with the Afghan probe team to maintain justice. At the end of April, over 50 Afghan migrants were trying to cross the border when they were "tortured and drowned" by Iranian guards, according to eyewitnesses.

Iran eases restaurant curbs

TEHRAN: Iran further eased restrictions aimed at curbing the spread of the novel coronavirus Tuesday by allowing restaurants to accept customers, as it announced another 57 deaths from the virus.

Since the first cases of COVID-19 appeared on its soil in mid-February, the Islamic republic has sought to halt the spread of the virus without imposing lockdowns. A deputy health minister signalled the easing of restrictions on eateries. "Restaurants which before this decree were only allowed to distribute food will be allowed to accept customers from today," Mohsen Farhadi told state television. Farhadi called on restaurants to respect health protocols to ensure distancing of two metres, a measure he said would reduce client numbers by 50 percent.

Britain's Turner Prize cancelled

LONDON: London's Tate Museum on Tuesday cancelled this year's Turner Prize because of the coronavirus and said it will award £10,000 grants to 10 deserving British artists instead. Judges would have traditionally announced a short-list for the prestigious competition this month and revealed the winner - and awarded an accompanying £25,000 (\$30,800, 28,100 euro) prize - in December. But Tate Britain said "the tight timetable for the exhibition would not have been achievable under the present restrictions." -APP

UN chief terms countering Islamophobia his 'top priority'

Pakistan had proposed the establishment of a dedicated OIC Working Group on Islamophobia. Several OIC countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Malaysia and Egypt welcomed Pakistan's proposal and need for a concerted OIC position on Islamophobia at the United Nations

DNA
ISLAMABAD: United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has said that countering anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia is his "top priority" and he "fully agrees" with the assessment that it could pose a threat to international peace and security. The UN Chief gave the statement recently at the virtual meeting of Organiza-

tion of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states at the United Nations (UN) in response to the comments from Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, who drew his attention to the rising cases of anti-Muslim violence and Islamophobia in India and urged him to adopt a more focused and consistent system-wise approach to fully tackle the menace. Speaking at the meeting organized by OIC on the

theme of "COVID-19 Solidarity: Promoting Co-Existence and Shared Responsibility", Guterres voiced his concern over the rise of Islamophobia and called for fighting this phenomenon collectively, the informed sources said. In his remarks, Ambassador Akram raised concerns about the alarming rise in Islamophobia and stigmatization of Muslims in India in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. He also



highlighted the oppressive measures imposed in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir since August 5, last year when New Delhi

annexed the disputed region in violation of UN resolutions.

While terming these developments a matter of "grave concern", Ambassador Akram noted that such vitriolic hate speech, state-sponsored Islamophobia and deliberate targeting of Muslims in India was not only a human rights challenge but could also endanger peace and security in the region. Earlier, the Permanent Representative of the OIC Observer Mission in New

York, Agshin Mehdiyev, also noted the exploitation of COVID-19-related fears where the public discourse had been weaponized against Muslims by stoking Islamophobia.

In this regard, he made reference to the OIC's latest statements urging the Government of India to take immediate steps to end discriminatory treatment of Muslims.

Earlier this week, Pakistan had proposed the establishment of a dedicated OIC Working Group on Islamophobia. Several OIC

countries including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Iran, Azerbaijan, Qatar, Malaysia and Egypt welcomed Pakistan's proposal and need for a concerted OIC position on Islamophobia at the United Nations. The remarks made by the UN Secretary-General indicate that the OIC will pursue Pakistan's proposal for collective action to counter Islamophobia. As a Pakistani diplomat remarked, no Indian puppet can prevent OIC countries from condemning the rising Islamophobia of India's Hindu extremists.



MILAN: Most of the shopping centers in Milan, Italy have reopened. -DNA

Female peacekeepers perform well in Congo

UNITED NATIONS: Ahead of the International Day of U.N. Peacekeepers, the leader of first-ever Pakistani Female Engagement Team (FET) serving the U.N. mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), known as MONUSCO, has said that through hard work they have established strong bonds with local people, especially women, as part of the world body's efforts to promote peace in the central African country. "Resultantly, enhanced protection has led to a decrease in sexual violence cases, recruitment of child soldiers and threats by armed groups in the region," Major Saba Anwar, the team leader, said in an online interview with APP correspondent in New York from her base in DRC's province of South Kivu. -APP

UN Secy General statement victory of Pakistan stance: Shibli

DNA
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Wednesday said that the statement of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on countering anti-Muslim hatred being his top priority was victory of Pakistan's stance. In a tweet, the minister welcomed the United Nations Secretary General

pledge to root out Islamophobia as his top priority. He said that attributing coronavirus to Muslims was a reflection of BJP's extremist thinking and its myopic mindset. He said that extremist attitude towards Muslims in India was a violation of human rights. United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had told a virtual meeting of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states at

the United Nations (UN) that countering anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia was his "top priority". He said he "fully agreed" with the assessment that it could pose a threat to international peace and security. The UN Chief was responding to the comments from Pakistan's Ambassador to the UN, Munir Akram, who drew his attention to the rising cases of anti-Muslim violence and Islamopho-

bia in India, and urged him to adopt a more focused and consistent system-wise approach to fully tackle the menace. While voicing his concern over the rise of Islamophobia, the secretary-general had called for fighting this phenomenon collectively, the sources said. The meeting organized by OIC on the theme of "COVID-19 Solidarity: Promoting Co-Existence and Shared Responsibility".

UK govt minister quits

DNA
LONDON: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government suffered its first resignation over the controversy surrounding senior aide Dominic Cummings' trip across country during coronavirus lockdown when Douglas Ross, a minister for Scotland, quit in protest on Tuesday. "The reaction to this news shows that Mr Cummings' interpretation of the government advice was not shared by the vast majority of people who have done as the government asked," Ross said in a Twitter statement announcing his departure from government.

China welcomes release of Taliban prisoners

DNA
BELJING: China on Tuesday welcomed the release of Taliban prisoners and reduction of fighting and violence in Afghanistan and said it was conducive to promoting intra-Afghan dialogue and realizing peace and stability. "The Afghan people's aim for peace and cessation of violence are more than anything," Chinese Foreign Ministry's Spokesperson Zhao Lijian said during his regular briefing while commenting on release of Taliban prisoners by Afghan government. He said the reduction in fighting and violence was also a shared aspiration of the regional countries and the international community. Zhao Lijian said China welcomed and appre-

ciated the release of Taliban prisoners and reduction of violence between the Afghan government and Taliban. "It is conducive to promoting intra-Afghan dialogue and realizing peace and stability," he added. The spokesperson reiterated that China stood ready to work with international community to offer support and assistance to peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan. Yesterday, Afghanistan National Security Council's spokesperson said the Afghan government had released 100 Taliban prisoners on May 25. He also announced that the prisoners release would continue in batches of 100 daily until 2,000 prisoners were freed hoping it would eventually lead to a lasting peace in war-torn Afghanistan.

Airbus technical team visits PIA plane crash site to continue probe

DNA
KARACHI: The technical team of the plane manufacturing company, Airbus, arrived at the site of the PIA aircraft crash on Wednesday to investigate the incident. The team, comprising technical experts, had arrived in Karachi on Tuesday to conduct an investigation into the PK8303 plane crash. They will continue with their probe today (Wednesday) as well. According to sources, drone cameras will once again be used during the investigation at the site and the 11-member investigative team will use forensics today to probe the crash. Moreover, sources added the team, along with a local investigative group, will focus on finding the cockpit recording today. A flight safety team of PIA will also accompany the Airbus team at the site of the crash.

After a green light from the Airbus team, the remains of the plane were moved from the site, including the cabin, tail and other parts to the airport, sources said. Sources, however, added, the plane's engine, landing gears would be shifted in a few days. The shifting of the gear had been earlier halted due to the technical team's investigation. On Tuesday, the Airbus team was briefed about the crash by PIA and fire department officials. The Aircraft Accident and Investigation team were present with the Airbus technical team as well to ascertain the situation. The technical experts had studied the remains of the plane and inspected the engines, landing gear, wings and flight control system of the aircraft. The team had then inspected the Jinnah International Air-

port runway and later visited the control tower as well. Airbus is conducting an independent investigation into the crash, which reportedly happened due to an engine failure. Cockpit voice recorder of PIA flight PK-8303 still missing: spox The cockpit voice recorder of the ill-fated PIA flight PK-8303, which crashed in a Karachi neighbourhood on Friday, had still not been found by Tuesday, a spokesperson of the airline had confirmed. PIA spokesman Abdullah Hafeez Khan had said that hectic efforts were being made to recover the voice recorder from the crash site. The airline spokesperson said that the recorder might have fallen into one of the houses in Model Colony area. He had requested the residents to hand it over to the authorities if they found it in their houses. "Voice record-

er is important for the plane crash inquiry," Khan said. He also advised the citizens against keeping anything of the aircraft at their homes as memorial saying this could be dangerous for their safety. The airline had on Saturday said that the black box of the jetliner was found, which included both the flight data recorder and cockpit voice recorder. The PIA plane crashed into a narrow residential street in Karachi on Friday, damaging several houses in a densely-populated area in the vicinity of the airport. Of the 99 people aboard, 97 were killed and only two passengers survived. Soon after the crash, authorities had cordoned off the mishap site and banned the transfer of objects from there until the Airbus team arrived to carry out a formal investigation into the incident.

Pak students inspired with Xi's reply

BEIJING: Nearly 100 Pakistani students studying in different Chinese universities have expressed their opinions over Chinese President Xi Jinping's warm reply to a letter from Pakistani students at Beijing University of Science and Technology. A few days ago, Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a letter to Pakistani students at Beijing University of Science and Technology with a warm response. -APP

Sufficient petrol stock available

DNA
ISLAMABAD: The Petroleum Division (PD) while rejecting a news item appearing in a section of electronic media about shortage of petrol said sufficient fuel stock was available in the country to meet for 13-day needs. "There is sufficient stock of petrol available to cater for the demand of country, contrary to news reports in a section of electronic media," a spokesperson for the PD in an official statement here late Monday night said. The statement came after

the news about petrol shortage in Karachi city appeared in a section of electronic media. As of May 25, he said, the useable stock of petrol stood at 255,000 metric tons, which was satisfactory for meeting the country's 13-day requirements. Further, a vessel carrying around 58,000 (MTs) petrol had berthed at Keamari Port on Monday, which would commence its discharge after sampling and testing, the spokesperson said. "Besides, imports of the product are lined up.