



Islamabad POST

Saturday, May 09, 2020

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Price Rs. 20

Pakistan President Arif Alvi thanks Azerbaijan for support

Shibli Faraz seeks people's cooperation



Healthcare be given Industry status: RCCI



Briefs

Pak sees highest spike in virus

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The day Prime Minister Imran Khan announced to ease lockdown restrictions in the country, 1,764 new cases were recorded with 35 fatalities, according to an update by the central authority tracking the spread of the virus. This was the highest jump recorded in a single day. The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the country has soared to 25,837 after the new infections. Of these, 9,093 were reported in Sindh, 10,033 in Punjab, 3,956 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1,725 in Balochistan, 558 in Islamabad, 394 in Gilgit-Baltistan, and 78 in Azad Kashmir. Meanwhile, 1,066 patients also recovered from the virus the same day, taking the total number of recoveries in the country to 7,530. PM Imran had on Thursday said the government has decided to ease the lockdown in Pakistan given the impact it has had on the economy.

Pak rejects Indian move

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Responding to media queries, the Spokesperson said Pakistan rejects Indian move for "inclusion" of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan in Indian TV weather bulletin. Like the so-called "political maps" issued last year by India, this move is also legally void, contrary to reality, and in violation of the relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions. This is another mischievous Indian action in support of a spurious claim and further evidence of India's irresponsible behaviour.

COVID-19 relief work and repatriation of Pakistanis

Pakistan President Arif Alvi thanks Azerbaijan for support

President phones Azerbaijan President Ilham Aliyev; greets him for successful NAM summit

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Dr. Arif Alvi held a telephonic conversation with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, to discuss matters related to the Covid-19 Pandemic, and enhancing bilateral cooperation to jointly address the situation. President congratulated President Ilham Aliyev on his timely initiative and successful convening of the Non-Aligned Movement's Summit-level Contact Group meeting on the theme "United against COVID-19" on 4 May 2020.

In this regard, President briefed President Aliyev about the latest situation of COVID-19 pandemic in Pakistan and the steps being taken by the Government for containment of the disease. President thanked for Azerbaijan's support for Pakistan's efforts in preventing and combating COVID-19 outbreak. He also thanked Azerbaijan for facilitating repatriation of stranded Pakistanis. While underscoring importance of Prime Minister Imran Khan's call for Global Initiative for Debt Relief for developing countries, President Alvi reiterated the need for close cooperation to mitigate the impact of the economic slowdown and devote more resources to manage the crisis. The President appreciated Azerbaijan's support for the Initiative. Emphasizing the close fraternal ties between Pa-



kistan and Azerbaijan, the President reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to deepen bilateral cooperation in all fields. President Alvi expressed deep concerns over spread of COVID-19 in the Indian Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir (IOJ & K) due to continued restrictions on movement and lack of unfettered access to medical and other supplies. President Alvi said that Covid-19 was being used as another excuse to discriminate against Muslim across India. He highlighted that India was trying to change the domicile rules in IOJ&K. He added that the basic purpose of this strategy was to alter demographic structure in IOJ&K which is against the 4th Geneva Convention. Noting the motivated campaign to demonize Indian Muslims in the context of the Covid-19, the President empha-

sized that it should be rejected by the international community. The President of Azerbaijan expressed his deep concern over the human rights violations in India held Kashmir and said his country strongly supported Pakistan's stance on Kashmir. He further stated that Azerbaijan considered Pakistan its close friend and would continue to support it at every forum. President Ilham Aliyev thanked the Government of Pakistan for supporting his country's stance on Nagorno-Karabakh. The two Presidents agreed to remain engaged on all issues of mutual interest.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan H.E. Mr. Kuninori Matsuda meeting with Information Minister Shibli Fraz. — DNA

Rights violations in Held Kashmir

President AJK Masood briefs French Media

MUBAHSAR BHATTI

PARIS: In a virtual meeting with French media, academia, think tanks, human rights organizations, and civil society, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan said that India was using the cover of coronavirus pandemic to break the will of Kashmiris by denying them their right to self-determination and by altering the status of the internationally recognized disputed region. The virtual video conference was convened

by the Embassy of Pakistan, Paris in which the Ambassador of Pakistan to France Mr. Moin ul Haque, prominent French media persons, scholars, intellectuals and civil society representatives participated. The President AJK in his address contrasted the worldwide Covid-19 lockdowns to save the people from deadly pandemic with the 9-month old lockdown in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir where 8 million Kashmiris were virtually under siege like conditions, without access to food, education, medicine, livelihood and freedom of movement and speech. He also apprised the participants of Indian attempts to change the demography of the disputed region first by unilaterally and illegally revoking Article 370 and 35A of its Constitution and later through new domicile law, which were in contravention of several resolutions of the United Nations Security Council which forbade both India and Pakistan to unilaterally change the status of the disputed region of Jammu and Kashmir.

PM reviews economic situation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday chaired a meeting to review the economic situation and future outlook of the economy in wake of COVID-19 situation. A detailed presentation was made by the Finance Ministry about the overall situation and the performance of various macroeconomic indicators during past nine months of the current financial year. The Prime Minister was also apprised of the economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 STRATEGY

FM for global multi stakeholder approach

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Friday stressed the need for a multi-stakeholder global perspective approach to address the COVID-19 pandemic keeping in view its socioeconomic impact across the world. He was addressing foreign intellectuals through video-link under his 'FM Connect Digital with Global Thought Leaders' initiative.

The guests included Dr William Ury (Harvard University), Professor Kishore Mahbubani (National University of Singapore), Dr Kevin P Gallagher

(Boston University) and Dr Adil Najam (Boston University). Foreign Minister Qureshi discussed with international experts the post COVID-19 realities on the global geo-political and socioeconomic landscape. He apprised the intellectuals that in Pakistan, COVID-19 affected 24,073 persons and claimed 564 lives. He said Pakistan's healthcare system needed improvement to cater to the needs of emergency situations.

He said the government had allocated \$8 billion to deal the economic impact of coronavirus situation. Under Ehsaas socio-welfare programme, Rs144

billion were being distributed among 12 million needy people, he added. Qureshi said an amount of Rs75 billion was allocated for labourers and workers who lost jobs due to lockdown. He mentioned that Pakistan suffered a dip in exports by 41 percent and feared fiscal deficit to increase by 10 percent due to the current situation. He said Prime Minister Imran Khan in the same perspective proposed international community for 'Global Debt Relief', adding that announcement by G-20 Forum to provide financial assistance to weaker economies was welcoming. — Picture on Back Page

PM greets new Iraqi PM

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Imran Khan has conveyed felicitations to Mustafa al-Kadhimi on his assumption of office as the Prime Minister of Iraq. The Prime Minister expressed the confidence that under Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi's leadership, the goals for reforms, national unity and development in Iraq would be further advanced. Underlining the close fraternal ties



between Pakistan and Iraq, Prime Minister Imran Khan conveyed that he looked forward to working with Prime Minister Al-Kadhimi to further deepen bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.

Inside...

Healthcare, education be given Industry status: RCCI
— Page 02

COVID-19 lockdown paradox: analytics or values
— Page 03

GAAC provides huge relief package to needy people

Sterilisation gates in Makkah, Madina Haram
— Back Page

All sections of Chinese society support Pakistan to fight epidemic: Report

DNA

ISLAMABAD: All sections of Chinese society are generously supporting Pakistan, donating medical supplies and funds, sharing experience of anti-epidemic and dispatching medical experts to overcome COVID-19 virus. According to Gwadar Pro, in recent fortnight, Chinese government and the people, enhanced their support to Pakistan in its efforts, to fight the epidemic. On April 24th, Chinese military sent a batch of medical supplies to Pakistan, such as masks, testing kits and protective suits. Chi-

nese military pasted cards with warm slogan and army emblem on the boxes of supplies. Peering with the shipments, a team composed of military medical experts was also dispatched to support Pakistan overcome the outbreak.

A high school in China Hebei province donated 5,000 medical masks to Pakistan. With the help of the Pakistani embassy in China, this high school has set up a donation channel. Students donated their pocket money and purchased masks uniformly. On the same day, a batch of medical supplies donated by the government of China's Ningxia Hui Au-



tonomous Region departed from the provincial capital. Including 1,000 N95 masks, 20,000 medical masks, 500 protective suits and so on amounted to more than 120 thousand CNY or RB 2.7million, those supplies was sent to support

Punjab to cope with epidemic. On April 26th, the first batch of medical supplies donated by China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG) for Pakistan to contain COVID-19 arrived at the Islamabad International Airport. Including more than 400thousand medical masks, 8,000 protective suits, thousands of other protective devices and 33respirators gross weighed 13tons.

This batch of supplies was considered as the largest donations Pakistan has received from foreign enterprises since the outbreak of the virus in the country. On April 30th, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Yao Jing handed

over 1500 packs of food such as rice, flour, sugar, oil and daily necessities to Minister of State for SAFFRON and Narcotics Affairs Shehryar Khan Afridi as donation for the Afghan refugees trapped in camps in Pakistan due to lockdown amid COVID-19 pandemic. On the same day, Zong (China Mobile Pakistan) has donated Rs7 million to Prime Minister Relief Fund for COVID-19 Pandemic Relief Fund 2020. SAPM Zulfikar Bukhari thanked the CRO for donating generously towards the PM corona relief fund and urged private sectors to join the government's efforts in fight against COVID-19.

Six jawans embrace shahadat

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted routine patrolling in Buleda, District Kech, 14 kms from Pakistan - Iran Border to check possible routes used by terrorists in mountainous and extremely treacherous terrain of Mekran. As the FC South Balochistan troops were moving back to their base after assigned patrolling duty, reconnaissance vehicle of FC troops was targeted with remote controlled IED. Resultantly, 1 officer & 5 soldiers embraced Shahadat while 1 soldier got injured. — DNA

Briefs

China offers 'Master's Programme 2020-21'

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The government of China has announced "Youth of Excellence Scheme of China (YES-China) - Master's Programme 2020-21" to promote the mutual understanding and friendship between China and other countries and to provide education opportunities to the youths in developing countries. As per announcement made on Higher Education Commission (HEC)'s official website, the Chinese government has established the YES-China for outstanding youth coming to China to pursue a master's degree. For the academic year 2020-21, eight master's degree programmes in seven leading Chinese universities are open to applicants from 79 developing countries including Pakistan. The application deadline is May 20 and this programme is only available for government sector employees including all public sector institutions of developing countries.

JKNF pays tributes to Riyaz Naikoo

ISLAMABAD: Jammu and Kashmir National Front (JKNF) has paid eulogizing tributes to Hizb operational Commander Riyaz Ahmed Naikoo and other martyrs who were martyred by the Indian occupation forces during a cordon and search operation in south Kashmir. The JKNF spokesman, in a statement issued in here, said that commander Naikoo and Adil were the proud sons of the soil whose years' long unwavering struggle against Indian imperialism would remain an inspiration for the coming generations. "The whole Kashmiri nation is proud of these brave sons who sacrificed their precious lives for the noble cause", the spokesman said adding that the blood of martyrs was like a seed of resistance that will continue to germinate and haunt the oppressor in many different forms. - APP

IESCO notification

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday notified power suspension programme for Saturday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesman, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 07:00am to 10:00am, Dandot feeder, 07:00am to 11:00am, Qazi Abad, Dhok Pathan, Tehi, Kot Sarang, Balawara, Kotli Sattian, Lakho Road, Katarian, New Kalyam, Jinnah Camp, Kurri Road, Muslim Town, Khurram Cly, Fazaia, Noor Muhammad, Service Road feeders 08:00am to 11:00am, Dharabbi, Dhurnakka, D.S.Bilawal, Bilalabad feeders and surrounding areas. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Syed Fakhar Imam welcomed Chinese Ambassador Mr. Yao Jing on the occasion of Reception Ceremony of the Medical Equipment donated by the Chinese Ministry of Agriculture & Rural Affairs (MARA). - DNA

Healthcare, education be given Industry status: RCCI

DNA

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has urged government to extend the incentive packages given to construction sector to other sectors as well. It was also suggested that sectors such as healthcare, education and gems and jewellery be formalised.

Addressing a video conference on tax laws and incentives given to the construction sector at chamber house, RCCI president Saboor Malik said that country's economy is going through a difficult phase. There is a need to extend the incentives to other sectors as well to attract foreign direct investment and enhance trade activities at the national level. Similar to the announced construction package, no source of income should be asked for a certain time period for any investments made in any industry to boost the industrialisation in the country. He urged the government to lower the sales tax rate amidst the COVID-19 lock down in the country to provide stimulus to the falling economy while allowing the business activities with SOPs. He said that

the Federal Board of Revenue should revise its revenue targets considering low economic activity and prioritise facilitating the businessmen in these times of crisis. Senator Mian Atiq while addressing the meeting lauded RCCI efforts for organizing the video conference for members to get the latest information on government's recent package for the construction sector and

other tax laws. Former President Dr. Shmail Daud recommended that the social sectors need urgent attention from the government and must be given industry status. Senior Vice President Noshirwan Khalil Khan, Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sauroosh, and a large number of members attended the meeting via Zoom.

Faisal mother passes away

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The mother of Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Information, Broadcasting Senator Faisal Javed Khan passed away on Friday morning in Islamabad. According to Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) Central Media Department, her funeral will be offered this afternoon and would be laid to rest. PTI also appealed to people to remember and offer fateha and special prayers for departed mother of Senator Faisal Javed.

COVID 19: Guidelines for protection of children issued

SHAHEEN QURESHI

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Human Rights issues guidelines for protection of children during COVID-19 to create public awareness. According to the guidelines issued, parents can help children at home in their studies due to closure of educational institutions. Parents must motivate their children to wash their hands again and again for twenty seconds. If any person in the family poses symptoms of Corona virus must self isolate to protect children and other family members.

If you find symptoms of Corona virus cough, flu and fever in children, immediately contact your doctor. In case of any concerns, you can contact help line 1099 of Ministry of Human Rights for guidance. You must encourage your children to communicate and talk in case you find any symptoms of stress in children. The symptoms of stress are lack of sleep, hunger and sadness. You can contact on helpline of Ministry of Human Rights in case of any physical and psychological problem in your children. Children can be victims of secondary effects of Co-

rona virus. The closure of schools and playgrounds have led to increased use of internet among children. It is important to ensure that your children and family members have access to correct information related to Corona virus. It is also important to keep check that children do not become victim of some online misconduct. Parents must encourage their children to keep in touch with their teachers and friends through phone and video chat. The awareness material is shared through official social media accounts of Ministry of Human Rights.

Experts discuss PM package

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Iqbal Institute of Policy studies conducted an online interactive session to discuss Prime Minister Imran Khan's Construction Incentive Package in order to increase the employment opportunities in the country amidst COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister's construction incentive package concentrates on tax rebates and incentives in the construction center, the intention of which is to ensure a quick activation of economic activity and to encourage investors to invest in low cost housing schemes.

PTCL provides ration to needy families

FIAZ CHAUDRHY

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), embarks upon a massive Ramadan ration drive to provide relief for families affected during the Coronavirus pandemic. The ration drive initiative will be covering 25 cities across Pakistan in the coming days. The ration packs for an entire month comprising of essential food items, were distributed amongst a few beneficiary families at a special ceremony organized at District Commissioner (DC) Office, Kohat. The ceremony was attended by senior management from PTCL, along with high-ranking officers of the KP Gov-

ernment. Majority of the ration distribution was conducted by the District Administration at the Mohammadzai Union Council of Kohat. This ceremony marks the 1st phase of the ration drive that will continue throughout the month of Ramadan. On the occasion, Zia ulah Bangash, Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), said, "We are grateful and much obliged at the support given by PTCL and its staff who have generously contributed to help the nation in these trying times. "We appreciate their contribution and efforts at this time in need and I would also like to pay tribute to the services that they are providing to keep the country connected."

Over charging in Attock to be checked

ATTOCK: District administration is trying its best to control over charging and hoarding of edibles across the district to ensure maximum relief to the people living in urban and rural areas. District Officer Industry Rabia Naseem said that on daily basis prices of the edibles are being monitored and efforts made to ensure implementation of price lists issued by the administration in all tehsils. She said although administration is utilizing all resources to control price hike, over charging and hoarding yet cooperation of the people was mandatory. - APP

COMSTECH project on food security on cards

ISLAMABAD: The capacity building project of COMSTECH the Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) on the use of New Breeding Technologies for Food and Nutritional Security has been selected for this year's project funding under COMCEC project funding scheme. The Economic and Commercial Cooperation Standing Committee of the Islamic Cooperation Organization (COMCEC) is one of the four Standing Committees of the OIC, which was established in 1981 and based in Ankara, Turkey. The project envisages institutional and human resource capacity building of Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, seven OIC member states, by conducting

training courses on the introduction of New Breeding Technologies in Agriculture to achieve nutritional food security, said a news release. Scientists from National Institute of Biotechnology and Genetic Engineering (NIBGE), Pakistan are among leading trainers in this project. The project was conceived and designed in close collaboration with NIBGE, Pakistan, and Nigde Ömer Halisdemir University (NOHU), Turkey. It directly helps to ensure food security and nutrition in the 7 OIC member countries while indirectly works to increase resilience of the food system in the member countries. Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General COMSTECH congratulated Ms. Khazima, Programme Manager for leading the efforts in this inter-OIC capacity building in this critically important field.

MAY 2020

Pakistan's Premier News & Diplomatic Affairs Magazine

Find us on:

www.centreline.com.pk

www.dnanews.com.pk

www.islamabadpost.com.pk

@ Postislamabad / @Editordnanews

A sister concern of

Islamabad POST

11# Block 18-A, Awan Plaza, G-8 Markaz, ISLAMABAD-PAKISAN Ph: 051-2261960, 051-2266165



Fiscal woes

THERE have been discussions about increased fiscal woes for Pakistan as the number of infected people touches 25, 000 in the country and death toll also moves swiftly towards the 600 mark. Though the current fiscal woes are compounded by the Covid-19 crisis, we need to keep in mind that even before this pandemic the government was unable to generate the desired revenue and meet expenses in accordance with the budget stipulations in 2019 which were overambitious from the beginning. That the coronavirus pandemic has hit the country's economy in a hard way is no more surprising news. What is surprising is the manner in which the government is neglecting the post-crisis period in the next fiscal year. In all likelihood, it will be much more painful than it has been in the past two years since the PTI-led government came to power in 2018. The country is faced with the challenge of repaying nearly 20 billion dollars of debt payment in the next two years, which will be much harder with declining remittances and exports.

As many as five million jobs are already at stake, while world powers launch policies to protect their interests that would adversely affect global trade and employment opportunities. As the banks face problems regarding liquidity, fiscal space for the government will be further constrained. There will be a dire need to reset the IMF programme targets for Pakistan. The nearly 20-billion-dollar payment due in the next two years will include some of the principal amount and a staggering amount of interest on debt to international creditors. To fulfil these obligations, we will be once again soliciting additional amounts from the international market in the form of new loans. But even then, it will not be easy as the tightening of financial conditions will result in more complications in the refinancing of external debt. Though the government has been able to curtail its bill of imports, declining exports and remittances are likely to cancel out any benefit the government is expecting to accrue from a reduced bill of imports. This government's policy from the day it assumed power has been to curtail imports rather than improve our export potential which has been stuck at less than 25 billion dollars a year, as opposed to a much better performance by Bangladesh. We need to see the Bangladesh model closely and learn from it. What have they done to outpace Pakistan which boasts nearly 50 million more population? They have been able to create much better goodwill in the international community than we have. Their budget focuses more on pro-people development with appropriate allocations to enhance human potential rather than enhancing the potentials of certain segments of society. For Pakistan, it will be a challenge to accommodate the thousands of unemployed returning back to the country, while we already have millions in line to get benefits and seek jobs. We need long-term planning right now, rather than ad-hoc measures that may soon fizzle out.

Pakistan's First And Only Diplomatic Daily

Editor-in-Chief: Ansar Mahmood Bhatti

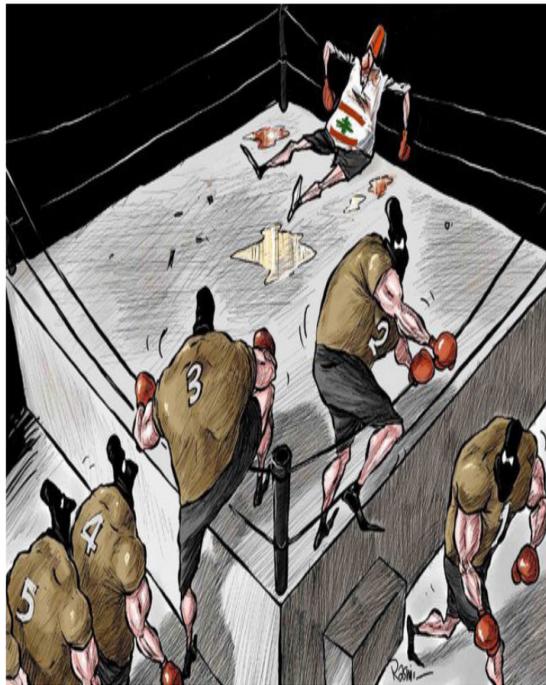
Deputy Editor: Abid Raza

Vol: 01 Issue: 42

Email: dailyisbpost@gmail.com

Phone: 051-2266165 / 051-2261960

Off: Awan Plaza, Block 18-A, G-8 Markaz Islamabad



Journalists at risk

IN the situation that prevails in the world today due to the Covid-19 virus and its potential to spread rapidly, especially in overcrowded spaces, the New York based Committee to Protect Journalists along with 191 partner organisations has written to the UN secretary general urging action.

The CPJ states that at least 250 journalists are currently detained around the world, and has passed on its FreeThePress campaign signed by more than 11,337 concerned citizens to organisations and powerful individuals around the world warning that these journalists have no control over their surroundings, cannot choose to isolate themselves and are often denied even basic medical care. Some are elderly or in poor health. These journalists are located in 33 countries and the majority of them are behind bars to prevent them from voicing their opinions or because the views they expressed dissented from the opinions of their governments. UN Special Rapporteurs, the European External Action Service and the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention have all received details of the threat faced by these journalists.

In Pakistan, the editor-in-chief of the Jang/Geo Group remains in detention in a case dating back 34 years. Concern has already been expressed over his health. The WHO and other organizations warn that people living in conditions where they are deprived of their liberty and must coexist in crowded environments are also especially vulnerable to the Covid-19 virus. The WHO has recommended that selected categories of prisoners be released to reduce numbers in jails.

A move towards this was made in Pakistan, notably by the Islamabad High Court, but then quashed by the Supreme Court of the country, which held that rule of law must prevail and no legislation existed allowing for such release.

It should be noted that journalists and indeed all political prisoners held for voicing their opinion make up a special category of detainees. These people are generally not a danger to society and in fact have been placed in direct danger under the prevailing circumstances.

The CPJ has also pointed out that at this time of world crisis, a free press is especially important to ensure the free flow of information. Certainly, this is true in our country where there is much doubt over official figures and data given out.

We should act in line with the CPJ demands and join in the call to free all journalists that have been detained just because of what they choose to say or write or print.

COVID 19 lockdown paradox: analytics or values

Haris Gazdar

There are around 1.5 million deaths in Pakistan every year. Not all of them are what are defined as 'premature' deaths. COVID19 is a highly contagious disease. It has, to date, affected 10,000 people in our country of whom 230 have died. The rate of fatality has risen from 1.4 per cent to over 2 per cent in just the last two weeks. Even if just a tenth of our population gets infected, at the current rate of fatality we can expect around half a million deaths. An infection rate of a third would lead to a doubling of the total number of deaths compared to a normal year

IS there a trade-off between saving lives and saving livelihoods? Individuals make decisions about this more often than they might notice.

There are too many hazardous occupations to list: mining, security services, bomb disposal, firefighting, sanitation work, waste disposal, high rise construction jobs, and so many more. But also there are multiple health hazards in occupations otherwise deemed not to be hazardous – street workers' exposure to traffic fumes, agricultural workers' exposure to chemicals etc. These are hard choices for the most part. We try to reduce hazard (health and safety regulations for example) but also, ultimately, leave it as a matter of individual choice.

A person, supposedly, decides for herself or himself if a risk is worth taking. There are many flaws in this construction of choice, but also enough in it for most of us to sleep easy, while people put themselves at risk doing jobs that need done for our safety or comfort. What happens when some new source of risk emerges? Such as COVID19? Our collective choice will determine whether this becomes one additional source of ill-health and death that individuals will have to face, or not. Do we accept it, as we accepted rising levels of air pollution, or traffic accidents, as a fact of life? Or do we say, as we did with respect to terrorism, that this new source of threat is not acceptable, that we will make all efforts to stop it becoming a norm? As a society we have the capacity for both fatalism and activism in good measure. Which do we choose to deploy now?

There are around 1.5 million deaths in Pakistan every year. Not all of them are what are defined as 'premature' deaths. COVID19 is a highly contagious disease. It has, to date, affected 10,000

people in our country of whom 230 have died. The rate of fatality has risen from 1.4 per cent to over 2 per cent in just the last two weeks. Even if just a tenth of our population gets infected, at the current rate of fatality we can expect around half a million deaths. An infection rate of a third would lead to a doubling of the total number of deaths compared to a normal year. If actual fatality rates are much lower, as some have suggested, the number of deaths might be as 'low' as 40,000. For context – road accidents claim around 40,000 lives while air pollution causes 135,000 deaths in a year. The total death toll in the 'war on terror' was estimated to be around 30,000.

For communities and countries, the analysis of a trade-off between saving lives and saving livelihoods is even more complex than it is for individuals. For individuals we can and do take shelter behind the manufactured assumption of people being free to make their own choices. But for a community or a country the choice involves saving Person A's life over Person B's livelihood or vice versa. Because there is no simple technical way of resolving this problem it makes sense to pay attention to collective choices already made.

Why did we choose to draw a line under terrorism even though it was a smaller source of death than air pollution or road accidents? Was it because it arrived suddenly rather than slowly and incrementally? Was it because it threatened, if not stopped, to escalate exponentially? Was it because there was a global consensus that supported our effort? Was it because it threatened to overturn our existing order, and make us a global pariah? We made our collective choices on the basis of who we thought

we were, on the basis, yes, of political considerations, but anchored in values. And once we had decided to combat terrorism how did we frame the issue of its economic impact? Did we debate the cost of eradicating terrorism, or did we belt up and created a narrative about the cost that terrorism was imposing on our economy?

Understanding the epidemiology of COVID19 is science in the making.

That in itself would be reason enough to follow validated global practices to slow the disease down, so that our mental and organisational capacities gain time to catch up. We know more now than we did two weeks ago, and will undoubtedly have learned more in the coming two weeks. The same goes for any analysis of the economic impact of the disease as well as measures for its containment. What happens to our economy depends not only on the morbidity and mortality faced by our people, but also on the measures that we as well as our trading, aiding and 'remittance' partners take. In uncertainty of this magnitude – with possible estimates of deaths ranging from 40,000 to over a million – it is not surprising there are diverse perspectives on the trade-off between saving lives and saving livelihoods.

The questions we have to ask ourselves are the following: how low would the probability of a million additional deaths have to be for us to NOT to put almost everything we had into containing that number? This cannot be answered only through analytics. It is about who we believed we were, as individuals and as a collectivity. How we responded will then shape what we become.

The author is a Senior Researcher at Collective for Social Science Research.

Economic Dynamics and Resource Envelopes

Asad Sayeed

Much of the confusion regarding the policy on lockdowns is underpinned by an implicit notion that the State lack resources to provide adequate protection to the poor and simultaneously ramp up the health infrastructure. But how limited is the resource envelope? This debate has not happened yet in Pakistan. Knowledgeable commentators have put estimates in the range of 2.5 to 5% of GDP

Part of this confusion is also reflected in determining the fiscal response to the pandemic. Granted that it is an evolving situation but some determination of size of the resource envelope that can be brought to bear for ramping up the health infrastructure, the provision of social protection and saving small businesses during the pandemic will help different tiers of government to calibrate their responses in a more focused manner. It will also reduce uncertainty in markets and the public at large. Transparency will not hurt in an emergency. It can only help.

Dynamic Thinking on the Economy

From what we know about epidemics in general and Covid-19 in particular, flattening the curve of the disease requires slowing down the economy. Bringing down the rate of spread (known as R naught in epidemiological lingo) through a lockdown at one or several points in time will impact the economy differently. Therefore, the relevant metric to assess the economic impact in this situation should not be the here and now but an annualized cycle (short-term) and the medium-term future period, say the next 2-4 years. Historical analysis of the Spanish Flu of 1918 as well as preliminary modelling on the Covid-19 pandemic done by Yale University demonstrates that initial lockdowns reduce the spread of the disease and ease medium-term pressures on labour supply and aggregate demand through reduced rates of fatality and morbidity. By not implementing a lockdown until the R naught declines (or the curve of Covid-19 positive cases starts declining) we will be trading off livelihoods in the immediate term with more cycles of the pandemic in the future.

We will thus have more cycles of shortages in labour supply – because of higher rates of death, morbidity, and caregiving for those who are sick – as well as disruptions in supply chains and aggregate demand in the short and medium future. Strict initial lockdowns can result in a V shaped recovery in terms of economic growth, whereas a more ambivalent response will mean the recovery will be U shaped and if the virus is allowed to run riot, then we are staring down an L shaped economic outcome over the next four to five years. Choices made along this spectrum now will determine economic outcomes in the short to medium term future.

It goes without saying that lockdowns hit those without a secure means of livelihood (casual and daily wage workers as well as those in small businesses) the hardest. Lockdowns will also collapse if supply chains for essentials are not kept functional. Thankfully so far, the sup-

ply chains have by and large worked relatively smoothly throughout the country. The matter of social protection, however, has left a lot to be desired. The Federal Government is in the process of disbursing Rs. 144 billion amongst 10 million plus women who have been on the BISP register through the Ehsaas Program. While there may be some overlap between those who have specifically lost livelihoods because of the lockdown, these lists are predominantly rural and the pandemic spread so far is mainly in the urban, metropolitan areas. This misspecification in targeting is being addressed now through a separate scheme, losing precious time, which in turn has impacted the legitimacy of lockdowns.

A muddled narrative on the lockdown as well as delay in rolling out appropriate social protection support has given currency to the notion of 'smart lockdowns.' These models are based on the observation that both the administrative capacity and legitimacy of a full lockdown is limited and the short-term cost of a full lockdown is too high in terms of livelihoods. Therefore, after widespread testing, there should be a 'smart' lockdown of those geographical 'hotspots' where there are more Covid-19 cases, while keeping other areas open. This method is premised on proactive (rather than the currently prevalent reactive) testing. This begs the question about the fiscal and administrative capacity to test proactively and to do it fast enough and its data processed swiftly so that a smart lockdown can be implemented. As a result, even after a fortnight of the mantra of smart lockdowns being peddled, it is yet to begin at any level.

The Resource Envelope

Much of the confusion regarding the policy on lockdowns is underpinned by an implicit notion that the State lack resources to provide adequate protection to the poor and simultaneously ramp up the health infrastructure. But how limited is the resource envelope? This debate has not happened yet in Pakistan. Knowledgeable commentators have put estimates in the range of 2.5 to 5% of GDP. Whether it is within this limit or can be more is essentially a function of the subjective assessment of the political leadership on their perception of the pandemic. Another way to think about the resource envelope the nation is willing to roll out is to juxtapose the situation with a war with a visible enemy.

The Covid-19 pandemic has altered the contours of Pakistan's fiscal space on both sides of the ledger. On the one hand, fiscal space has been created because of aid from donors – the IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank,

debt deferment from the G-20 – and from a significant reduction in international oil prices and savings on interest payments because of the decline in interest rates. On the other hand, the lockdown has reduced tax revenues (both FBR and provincial revenues). Pakistan's exports have taken a hit because of the global nature of the pandemic and remittances from overseas Pakistanis are expected to reduce also. Whether or not both sides balance each other out is, however, just one element of fiscal space. The government has room to reallocate resources from the existing allocations, mainly from PSDP expenditures and the defence budget. The federal government also has ample room to borrow domestically and if push comes to shove, the central bank can enhance money supply, even though that will be inflationary. To put it simply, the federal government's fiscal space has a fair degree of elasticity. The other issue regarding the resource envelope is distribution of resources across the federal government and the federating units. Because of their constitutional mandate, the bulk of the health expenditure is being borne by the provincial governments. They are also incurring a cost in administering the lockdown and where possible providing social protection as well. They are, however, in a fiscal bind. Because of the reduction in FBR revenues, the provinces will take a hit on their share of divisible pool taxes and their 'own source' revenues will also decline because of the lockdown. Additionally, the borrowing capacity of provinces is close to naught.

In this situation, it is the federal government that has a two-fold responsibility. One, to determine the fiscal space that is available and second, to create mechanisms for the provinces to overcome their resource constraints. Will the federal government provide grants to provincial governments, create a special zero interest rate credit line for them through the central bank or deduct it from future shares of their divisible pool allocations?

These are important questions that need discussion and resolution. Fortunately, Pakistan's constitutional architecture allows for these matters to be resolved. The National Economic Council, the Council of Common Interests and the National Finance Commission are forums where these issues can be debated and resolved amicably. As the pandemic peaks and the annual budget season is on the anvil, these matters have to be brought on the front burner.

Asad Sayeed is a Senior Research Associate at the Collective for Social Science Research (CSSR), Karachi, Pakistan.

LIKE many other countries, Pakistan continues to debate the trade-off between lives and livelihoods in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Much of this debate, it appears, has had two distinguishing features in Pakistan; (i) that it is static – in the sense that it views immediate losses in comparison to immediate gains in terms of lives and livelihoods, rather than its impact over clearly defined short and medium terms; and (ii) that a muddled narrative is being put out by different stakeholders – the federal and provincial governments, other state agencies, doctors, big business and small traders. That competing interests will pull in different directions is routine but when the political leadership is unable to aggregate this diversity and put forth a coherent perspective in an emergency, it inevitably leads to confusion amongst the public at large and fragmentation at the policy level.

Briefs

President visits NA

DNA

ISLAMABAD: President Arif Alvi on Friday directed that social distancing should be maintained in the upcoming session of the National Assembly for the safety of the parliamentarians and staff against the threat of coronavirus. During a visit to National Assembly, the President was apprised by Deputy Speaker National Assembly Qasim Khan Suri and NA officials about the arrangements being made for the session to be held on Monday. The President visited the hall of the National Assembly, reviewed preparations for the session and instructed that members should be asked to follow safety guidelines and sit one seat apart from each other. He expressed satisfaction at the arrangements for the session.

SMEs to get benefit: Dawood

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister for Commerce and Investment Abdul Razak Dawood Friday said the recent amendment in the Secured Transaction Act-2016 would help in operationalizing e-registry of movable and immovable assets which would in turn enhance easy access to credit particularly by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). These amendments would also be instrumental in improving Pakistan's ranking in "getting credit" indicator by more than 20 positions in the World Bank's ease of doing business report, said a press release issued by the Ministry of Commerce here. The adviser said the recent amendments in companies act 2017 would lessen the administrative burden on businesses.

COVID 19: GAAC provides huge relief package to needy people

DNA

PESHAWAR: Whenever Pakistan nation face natural disaster either the huge influx of Afghan refugees or disasters of earthquake or terrible floods, German Aid for Afghan Children under the dynamic and able administration of Dr. Eroze has always extended helping hand to minimise hardships of Pakistani national. Recently Corona disease has

been declared an other international disaster throughout the whole world claiming hundreds of precious lives.

At this very need of time GAAC has decided to provide basic human needs in shape of food stuff and sanitary items to the vulnerable poor community who are suffering from long lockdown.

In this respect distribution plan has been made with the consent and approval of local authority in Charsadda District wherein

free distribution is being made to the needy people.

The people of the area have shown their satisfaction for this valuable intime help.

They thanked Dr.Eroze President GAAC and Engineer Alam Shahab Country Director GAAC Pakistan for their support and help.

In an interview with Engr I Alam Shahab he showed his desires tokw continue their food distribution amongst poor community in future also.



Senate session on Tuesday

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani on Friday summoned the session of Senate on April 12 (Tuesday) at the Parliament House here at 11.00 a.m. The Chairman has summoned the session in exercise of powers, conferred by Clause (3) of Article 54 of the Constitution of Pakistan, said a press release issued by the Senate. - APP



ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi addressing foreign Intellectuals via video link on Friday. - DNA (News of Page-1)

Protest lodged with India: FO

DNA

ISLAMABAD: A senior Indian diplomat was summoned to register Pakistan's strong protest over the ceasefire violations by the Indian occupation forces along the Line of Control (LoC) in Nezapir and Rakhchikri Sectors, on 7th May 2020, resulting in serious injuries to six innocent civilians. Due to indiscriminate and unprovoked firing by the Indian occupation forces, 14 years old Faiza, 10 years old Seerat, 7 years old Aaiza and their mother Sona Bibi, residents of Degwar Naran village; 44 years old Abdul Majeed resident of Mandhar vil-

lage; and 22 years old Muhammad Yasir, resident of Kirni village, sustained serious injuries.

The Indian occupation forces along the LoC and the Working Boundary (WB) have continuously been targeting civilian populated areas with artillery fire, heavy-caliber mortars and automatic weapons. In 2020, India has so far committed 989 ceasefire violations. Condemning the deplorable targeting of innocent civilians by the Indian occupation forces, it was underscored that such senseless acts are in clear violation of the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, and are also against all established humanitarian

norms and professional military conduct.

These egregious violations of international law reflect consistent Indian attempts to escalate the situation along the LoC and are a threat to regional peace and security. It was added that by raising tensions along the LoC and the WB, India cannot divert attention from the grave human rights situation in the Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K).

Indian side was called upon to respect the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding; investigate this and other such incidents of deliberate ceasefire violations and maintain peace along the LoC and the WB.

UBG seeks viable budget proposals

ABID RAZA

LAHORE: Central Chairman United Business Group (UBG) Iftikhar Ali Malik Friday sought viable proposals for 2020-21 budget from business community across the country for timely submission to the federal government for fully ensuring growth-oriented and business-friendly environment to boost the economic activities during coronavirus pandemic. Talking to a delegation of leading importers and exporters led by Waseem Ullah Anjum Arain he said Pakistan is passing through ordeal due to coronavirus pandemic and at this uncertain time, business community should come forward with a clear vision to come out of the quagmire of this crisis and

in this regard, they should make proposals which help the government to revive the economy through upcoming budget 2020-21. He said the private sector wants to supplement the government's efforts, aimed at economic revival of the country, he said, adding that joint proposals will help make budget document business-friendly, which would ultimately result in a robust export-led growth.

He said they will demand duty on primary raw materials, secondary raw materials, intermediate goods, semi-finished goods and finished goods should be levied on the basis of cascading duty structure. Iftikhar Ali Malik urged the government to focus on ease of doing business in the upcoming

budget, which will attract the much-needed investment to trigger economic growth in the country. The government is highly appreciative of the contribution of the traders and the business community towards strengthening the economy and promoting tax culture, he said. He further said the government should increase the budget of health sector in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. He said that all the taxes imposed on health products and services should be waived so that masses can access the same. He also demanded the government that FBR should establish a special cell to study the impact of the virus on businesses and taxpayers. The findings should be used to finalise a corona response package to stimulate the economy, he added.

Prices illegal drugs increased: UN report

DNA

UNITED NATIONS: Governmental measures across the world to curb the Coronavirus pandemic have led to the widespread disruption of trafficking routes for illegal drugs, mainly by air and on land, upping some prices, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) said in a new report. The pandemic is having a mixed effect on drug production in different regions and on smuggling by air, land and sea, but the overall trend in countries where drugs are consumed appears to be relatively uniform.

Shibli Faraz seeks people's cooperation

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Senator Shibli Faraz on Friday said people's cooperation was vital for the success of lifting the restrictions of lockdown. In a tweet, he said Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for various

businesses will have to be implemented strictly.

He said that lockdown would have to be imposed again if precautionary measures were not strictly observed.

He said coronavirus pandemic was a common issue, which can only be defeated with unity.

The Minister said gradual easing of lockdown shows government's ap-

proach of compassion for weaker segments of society. He said this step would also help support small businesses in the country.

He said a long-term lockdown could ruin employment of people involved in small businesses.

He said economic activities and steps for protection of people's health should go side by side.

Sterilisation gates in Makkah, Madina Haram



DNA

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia has installed "advanced self-sterilisation gates" at the entrances of the grand mosques in Makkah and Madinah in an effort to combat the spread of the

coronavirus. According to Saudi24, the move is part of the government's "Together Guarded" initiative which has seen precautionary measures put in place since the pandemic hit the kingdom's shores. The General Presidency

for the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque inaugurated the advanced self-sterilising portals which sterilise people with antiseptic spray and are equipped with thermal cameras to detect temperatures from six metres away and a smart screen

for reading temperatures, where it can read the temperature of several people at the same time. All workers at both mosques will be required to pass through the gates before entering them, and the systems themselves will be sterilised periodically.



کمیته آلمان برای اطفال افغان

German Aid for Afghan Children

KINDERHILFE-AFGHANISTAN

CORONA in Pakistan

Verteilung von Hygiene-Kits

in Afghanischen Flüchtlingslagern

in Peshawar / Pakistan

April 2020